

## Hands-on Assignment: Modernizing and Recreating an Early Modern Recipe

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For this assignment, you will choose a historic recipe from an early modern cookbook, such as *The Court and Kitchin of Elizabeth*. Then you will modernize this recipe for a 21st century kitchen and reproduce it for us in a cooking video that you create at home. This cooking video will demonstrate your techniques and tell us about your recipe as you go. There will also be a written component to this assignment that will ask you to reflect on this experience and to think about the relationship between food, history, culture, and gender.

This project includes a number of components, so just take them one at a time:

A. Provide a copy of your *original* recipe, AND:

1. A written section that considers the provenance of the specific ingredients in your recipe (e.g., Where did the sugar come from? Were your ingredients local or imported? Exotic or everyday? etc.)
2. A written section that considers the original instructions (e.g., Were there cooking times or temperatures? Why or why not? Other things of note?)
3. A written section explaining the history of this particular recipe and/or recipe book. (e.g., What year was it written? Who wrote it? Who read it? Who owned it? What else was in the book? Was it in manuscript form or published form? Where can we find it now?) How do these specific qualities of the material text shape the way we interpret the recipe?

B. Provide a copy of your *modernized* recipe, AND:

1. A written section that explains your rationale for making the changes that you made (e.g., cost? availability? modern kitchen utensils? etc.)
2. A written section that reflects on your experience in the kitchen (e.g., What surprised you? What changes did you make? How did the recipe turn out? etc.)
3. A cooking video (uploaded to YouTube or as an mp4 file from Zoom) that shows us some of your techniques, results, and tips for modernizing this recipe. You can include both historical information and practical cooking tips in this video. Your recipe end result need not be "successful" but should still teach us something!
4. A written section that weaves together theory and practice, making direct reference to our course readings (such as Wendy Wall's *Recipes for Thought: Knowledge and Taste in the Early Modern English Kitchen, 2016*) as needed to supplement your position. You may tackle a position on plural literacies; on women's networks of knowledge; on the

relationship between food and culture; the implementation of hands-on pedagogy; or another topic of your choice.

While cooking videos can be done collaboratively (with fellow classmates, family members, etc.), writing should be done individually. You are welcome to share drafts and collaborate on your findings, but everyone is responsible for their own written sections. If you prepared more than one dish, you only need to focus on one for this assignment. Each of these sections should be about 1-2 pages double spaced, though some will likely be shorter and some will likely be longer. I'm less worried about page count than I am about content and depth of analysis.

**Example of a modernized recipe from *The Court and Kitchin of Elizabeth*, “To make a made Dish of Apples,” pp. 62-63:**

*To make a made Dish of Apples.*

Put on a Skillet of water with some Currants a boyling; then pare about a dozen of Pippins, and cut them from the Core into the said water, when they are boyled tender, pour them into a Cullendar, when the water is drained from them, put them into a dish and season them (but if you have time stay until they are cold, lest it melt your Sugar, besides it will spoil the Tast) with Sugar, Rose-water, Cinnamon, and Carraway-seeds, then roll out two sheets of past; put one in the Dish bottome, and all over the Brims, then lay in the Apples in the bottom round and high, wet it round and cover it with the other sheet; close it and carve it about the brims of the Dish as you please, prick it and bake it, scrape Sugar upon it and serve it up.

This recipe from *The Court and Kitchin of Elizabeth* might be updated in the following way:

### **A Dish of Apples**

Prep: 30 minutes

Cook: 1 hour

Total: 1 hour 30 minutes

Servings: 8

Yield: 1 pie

**Ingredients:**

1 c. fresh currants  
12 baking apples  
1 tbsp cinnamon  
1 tbsp caraway seeds  
1 c. sugar + 1 tbsp sugar for pastry topping  
1 tbsp butter, melted for pastry topping  
¼ c. rose water  
2 pre-made pastry sheets OR homemade pie pastry

**Homemade rose water recipe:**

12 red roses  
Pot of water

Boil the petals of a dozen red roses for 20 minutes or until the rose petals turn white. Strain in a colander and reserve the water, which should be a bright magenta color.

**Homemade pie pastry recipe:**

1 teaspoon salt  
2 ¼ c. flour  
2 tbsp butter, chilled  
¾ c. shortening, chilled  
5 tbsp cold water

Mix flour and salt together. Cut shortening and butter into flour mixture and mix using a stand mixer until small pea-sized texture emerges. Add cold water one tbsp at a time until dough holds together. Divide into two halves and refrigerate 15 minutes. Roll out dough on wax paper with a rolling pin, yielding two pie crusts, one for the top and one for the bottom. Cut top crust into desired pattern or shape.

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. Boil water in large pot.
3. While the water boils, peel and core apples.
4. Add currants to boiling water.
5. After currants are softened, add apples to boiling water and boil until soft, about 10 minutes.
6. Drain currants and apples in a colander and let cool.
7. Add sugar, rose water, cinnamon, and caraway seeds to the cooled currants and apples, coating and mixing well.
8. Place one rolled pastry in the bottom of a 9-inch baking dish.
9. Add apple mixture to the pastry in the baking dish.
10. Cover apple mixture with second pie pastry, in whichever pattern you prefer (lattice, etc.), making sure to cut a hole for steam.

11. Wet pastry edges and crimp together.
12. Brush melted butter and sugar on the top of the pastry.
13. Bake for 15 minutes at 425 degrees, then lower the temperature and bake for 35 minutes at 350 degrees. Best served warm.