

# Judging the Shows

The notes below are intended as a guide to what the Judges will be looking for in entries and will hopefully allow participants to show off their entries to best effect.

But remember, above all else, 'Showing should be FUN'.

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## 1. Jams, Jellies, Curds and Marmalades

Preserves are marked on a combination of internal and external standards as follows:

1. **External standard** – container, cover, label and appearance
2. **Internal standard** – colour, clarity, flavour, consistency, texture of fruit and aroma

The following will help you to ensure your exhibit has the best possible chance of success:

- Jars must be clear glass with NO commercial markings, clean, well-polished and free of stickiness and finger marks
- Jars should be filled to the top
- All preserves should be labelled with small labels stating the main fruit used together with the day, month and year of making
- Labels should be plain, neat and straight and of suitable size for the container. Labels should be applied centrally between the seams of the jar and in the lower half of the jar
- Preserves should be covered with a wax disc and cellophane top

**Jams** – Typically shown in 375ml. or 1lb. jar

- Colour should be bright and characteristic
- No scum or foreign bodies, mould or sugar crystals
- Fruit evenly distributed, not too many stones
- Skins tender
- Consistency 'jellified' not runny or sticky, no loose liquid or syrup
- Flavour full, fresh and characteristic of the fruit

**Jellies** – Typically shown in 190ml. or 8oz. jar

- Should be brilliantly clear with no pulp, haze or scum
- Colour should be even, bright and characteristic
- Consistency should tremble, but hold its shape
- No air bubbles
- Flavour true of fruit, full and well balanced

**Lemon curd** – Shown in 375ml. or 1lb. jar

- Consistency spreadable, but not runny or rough
- No egg spots, peel, scum, sugar crystals and air bubbles
- Flavour fresh and well balanced, with no greasy taste

**Marmalade** – Shown in 375ml. or 1lb. jar

- If peel is included in the preserve, it should be tender and uniformly cut
- Colour will vary according to type, but bright and characteristic
- Consistency 'jellified', not runny or too firm
- No air bubbles or scum
- Flavour slightly bitter, characteristic and true of fruit used

## 2. Pickles & Chutneys

Vinegar preserves are marked on a combination of internal and external standards as follows:-

1. **External standard** – container, cover, label and appearance
2. **Internal standard** – colour, clarity, flavour, consistency, texture of fruit or vegetables and aroma

The following will help you to ensure your exhibit has the best possible chance of success:

- Jars must be clear glass with NO commercial markings, clean, well-polished and free of stickiness and finger marks
- There should be no air bubbles or scum within the contents
- Jars should be filled to within 1 cm of the top
- All preserves should be labelled with small labels stating the main fruit or vegetable used together with the day, month and year of making
- Labels should be plain, neat and straight and of suitable size for the container. Labels should be applied centrally between the seams of the jar just below shoulder height
- Chutneys and pickles should be 2-3 months old before exhibiting to allow the flavour to mature
- For the show, preserves should be covered with a cellophane top

## 3. Baking

Cookery exhibits are marked on a combination of internal and external standards as follows:-

1. **External appearance** – colour, shape and uniformity

**2. Internal appearance** – texture and the even distribution of ingredients

**3. Flavour** – flavour and aroma as entries must be enjoyable to eat  
Flavour is paramount. If entries are neck-and-neck, flavour will dictate a winner.

For all entries judges will cut the exhibit to display the inside and will taste to ascertain overall enjoyment.

- The judge's first impression will be what it looks like, so try to make your baking look special enough to stand out from the opposition
- This is the time to use a ruler when you are cutting up your brownies, and arrange neatly on the plate
- All exhibits should be clean/hygienic
- Do cover with some cling film to prevent the exhibit drying out
- Cakes should be well risen, even in shape and baking
- Ingredients should be well distributed throughout the cake, well mixed and evenly cooked
- For cakes, texture should be moist, fluffy and velvety, but not undercooked, and a good even texture all through the cake
- There should be no large air holes within the bake
- Flavour should be consistent and balanced
- In general, cakes should have a flat or slightly rounded top. A domed top with slight cracking is acceptable for light fruit cakes
- Read the schedule carefully to make sure that your entry complies in all components, i.e. size, weight, and numbers in each exhibit as appropriate. If it says a maximum of 20cm for a cake, make sure it measures 20cm or less or you will be disqualified. Likewise, if it says 5 hot cross buns, 4 or 6 won't do! – You will be disqualified for the wrong number
- Think about the way your exhibit will be displayed and choose a suitable plain plate. You can use a paper or a china plate of a suitable size
- Some exhibitors choose to use a doily under sweet entries, such as cakes. This is not essential but does enhance your entry but should only be used for sweet exhibits
- One point to beware: if you enter a number of cookery classes use different plates as the Judge will know which your entries are if you use one sort of plate

Do give yourself enough time to set up on the day. You want to have time to set up your exhibit attractively and you don't want to drop or damage anything because you are hurrying.