

# Telling History

*Costumed Storytelling and Interpretation, Hands-on History, Community Events*

## YE MEDIEVAL BANQUET

### AN ORGANISERS GUIDE

#### FOOD

- **Meat** – beef sides, pork, ham or made into **pies** (though on Fridays, Saturdays and Wednesdays no one ate meat)
- **Poultry** – chicken or other fowl
- **Fish** – salmon, plaice, haddock, mackerel, herring
- **Pottage** - stock with chopped meat and vegetables such as cabbage, lettuce, leek, onion, garlic, herbs and pulses.
- **Salat** - Salad of spring onions, watercress, leeks, onions, fennel, garlic, parsley, sage, mint, rue, rosemary and dressed with oil and vinegar and with flowers eg primroses, violets and borage flowers added
- **Biscotts** – shortbread or other biscuits
- **Gingerbread** (much like today) or **Gingerbread men** (decorated)
- **Fruit** –cherries, plums, and grapes
- **Roasted Pippins** - baked apples
- **Nuts** (though perhaps not now with all the allergies)
- **Cheese**
- **Sweet Cheese Flan** - Cheesecake (much like today)
- **Trenchers** - Round stale brown loaves (or very large baps) to use as plates – made from cutting in half through middle. These would have been gathered up in a basket and given to the poor after the meal.
- **White small rolls** for wealthy and wholemeal for the poor
- **Salt** – in a bowl at the top table
- **Dried fruits** – currants, raisins, figs, dates and prunes
- **Mustard and pepper**

Each food item to be served on its own (beautifully presented in elaborate platter designs) with a sweet food following a sharp and spicy dish, heavy meat follows a lighter fresh vegetable dish, a bright dish following a plainer one. The Medieval feast was a really dramatic and theatrical event, so a ceremoniously presented dish served as a high point of the festivities would be appropriate eg a Boars head or a marzipan subtletie. At a royal feast there may have been 3 courses of up to 20 dishes. Remember no potatoes or tomatoes

#### DRINK

- **Wine** (perhaps mulled)
- **Ale**
- **Mead**
- **Cider**

**Or for the children** - Ribena (looks like red wine) and Apple Juice

#### LAYOUT

High table on a platform (Dias)  
Goblets or glasses  
Spiced & herbed warm water in bowls to wash hands  
Spread greenery and herbs around the room

#### MANNERS

See separate sheet

#### FURTHER READING

Maggie Black (1985) *Food & Cooking in Medieval Britain – History and Recipes*  
English Heritage

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