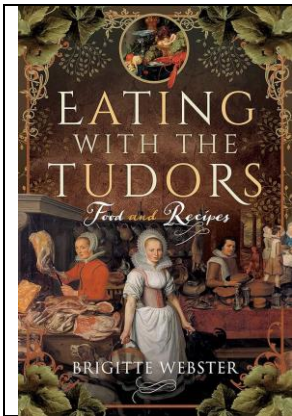




Celebrating Christmas, Tudor Style
Tudor Christmas Recipe



Eating with the Tudors: Food and Recipe

Brigitte Webster

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Recipe available thanks to permission of Brigitte Webster

To Make a Twelfth Cake

Transcribed original recipe

Take a peck of flower, and fower pound of currance, one ounce of Cinomon, half an ounce of ginger, two nutmegs, of cloves and mace two pennyworth, of butter one pound, mingle your spice and flower & fruit together, put as much barme as will make it light, then take good Ale & put your butter in it, all saving a little, which you must put in the milk, & let the milk boyle with the butter, then make a posset withy it & temper the Cake with the posset drink & curd & all together, & put some sugar in & so bake it.

Original source: *Elison Fettiplace's Receipt Book*, 1647

Modern (British) recipe

730 g flour
225 g currants
ground cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, and mace to taste
very little ground cloves
220 ml milk
220 ml ale
50 g butter
little sugar, to taste
25 g fresh yeast or 10 g dried yeast

Note: conversion for American measurements (approximate)

3 ¼ cups flour
1 cup currants
1 cup milk
1 cup ale

¼ cup butter
2 tablespoons fresh yeast or 2 teaspoons dried yeast

Mix the flour with the currants and the spices. Prepare your “posset” by gently warming the milk up to body temperature in a pot. Add the ale, butter, and a little sugar. Dissolve the yeast in a little of this posset. Add the yeast mixture to the flour mixture and knead until it feels like a bread mixture. You may need to add more milk or flour as you go. The right texture is more important than precise measurements. When the right texture is achieved, place the dough into a bowl, cover with a cloth and leave it somewhere warm to rise for about an hour or so. You know that it has risen enough when it has doubled its size. Knead the dough again and place it into a greased loaf pan. Allow it to rest and rise again in a warm place, covered with a cloth. This might take between 30 and 40 minutes. Bake in the preheated oven at medium heat until it is baked. This might take 2-3 hours. Check with a baking skewer—if it comes out clean when poking the cake, you know it is ready.

(Original recipe for a huge manor household. This recipe, converted by Hilary Spurling, is reduced.)

Additional Information

There are references to a special fruit cake, sometimes containing a pea or bean to identify the King or Queen of the revels, in the Tudor period. There is no surviving Tudor recipe for this cake, but the recipe here reflects references in that time.

Note: My great thanks to my friend and Tudor food expert Brigitte Webster for allowing me to share this recipe from her book. Find out more about Brigitte and her work at tudorexperience.com.