

# An Evening with the Tudors

How to Create  
A Medieval Feast

**W**hether you love Renaissance festivals, the Showtime series, or novels about the Tudor dynasty, creating a medieval dinner feast for your friends is the perfect way to celebrate your passion.

I'll begin with a few friendly reminders about medieval manners, suggest a menu, and offer up a few fine details that will make your night authentic and outrageously fun. Who knew history could be so delicious?

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*A novel of Anne Boleyn and the angel who protected her*

# Medieval Manners

## FOR THE KING AND QUEEN:

As King or Queen, you are the host for the evening, and must be ready to assume certain responsibilities, including beheading the guests when need arises.

You should sit at a table at the head of the room.

The salt will be placed before you and may be passed to others at your discretion. If you lack discretion, pass the salt whenever the fancy strikes you.

Seat your guests in order of importance to you.

For a lovely icebreaker, plant a note of treason under someone's chair. Encourage the guests to find the hidden surprise and then condemn the poor soul to death. It's good to be king, yes? To avoid the preliminary torture, the guest may choose to implicate 3 others in the crime.

## FOR THE GUESTS:

When addressing the king or queen, always use "Your Majesty" with your initial introduction. Some believe you can use a more familiar term after the introduction but I don't advise it. With the Tudors, more is more. Unless you speak of Sir More, and then More is in big trouble.

Before the meal, rinse your hands in a bowl of water as it is passed to you. The King and Queen will go first. If you are the lowest seated person at the banquet, your hands won't be very clean after this washing!

There are no forks. You may use a spoon or a knife. When in doubt, eat with your hands.

Do not breathe directly on anyone. If you're a real medievalist, you haven't been brushing.

Do not eat your trencher. (A trencher is a piece of stale bread used to serve food.) Leave it for the servants.

If pot pie is served, cut away the top crust and set it aside. Do not eat it. Bread was a means of transportation for food, not the meal itself.

Throw your bones on the floor.

There are no napkins at a medieval banquet but you may wipe your fingers on your bread.

Wash your hands after the meal, too. The mark of a true lady is to have pristine hands at the end of the meal, no matter what she has eaten, and despite the lack of napkins. The water should remain pure after the washing. Good luck with that one, ladies.

## A Medieval Menu

Medieval feasts came out in courses, or “services,” as they were called. You can serve yours as a buffet if you don’t have plenty of servants handy. Below are the recipes we recommend, based on authentic dishes from the Tudor era but updated with modern ingredients.

Below the recipes you will find a suggested service order for those who wish to bring out the food in stages. You’ll find that guests who are on the Atkins diet will do quite well at your feast, because every service was focused on meats.

### TRENCHERS

At your local bakery or bakery section at the grocer, buy flat pieces of focaccia bread. Toast these at 250 degrees for 20 minutes to allow them to become crispy. You can also buy a large roll of bread and slice into thick, wide wedges.

### GILDED APPLES

1 package frozen meatballs  
Honey mustard glaze/marinade (or marinade of your choice)  
Fry the meatballs and top with the glaze.  
Sprinkle a bit of saffron on top for color

### DRIP PUDDING

2 cups flour  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 cup cream  
4 eggs  
Mix together. You may bake underneath a roasting meat, as the medieval cooks would, allowing it to catch the juices, or you may mix the meat’s juices and pan scrapings into the batter by hand. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes or until golden brown.

### MAKEROUNS

2 packages refrigerated egg noodles  
3 cups cheddar cheese  
½ cup butter  
Boil noodles and drain. Spread half the noodles into a greased pan. Sprinkle half the cheese on top, then dot with half the butter. Repeat.  
Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes.

### PORK POT PIES

½ pound pork, fully cooked and cooled  
1 pound bacon, fully cooked and cooled  
Seasonings  
1 package Pie dough  
Layer an individual-sized pie cup with pastry dough. (Yes, you can use refrigerated pastry dough. You’re royalty.)  
Layer with lean cuts of pork and bacon, seasoned with salt, pepper, sage or other spices. Layer the crust on top and trim. Bake according to pastry directions.

## TURKEY LEGS

Turkey legs (available year-round at Whole Foods Market)

Salt and pepper

Butter

Thaw turkey legs in the refrigerator. Rub well with butter, season with salt and pepper. Grill outside until thermometer registers 180 degrees. Or if you like, you can use your favorite buffalo wings recipe.

## HERB SALAD

One bag of field greens

Fresh herbs

Oil and vinegar dressing

Add fresh herbs of your choice, including lavender, thyme, rosemary, parsley, sage, mint, etc.

Dress with an oil and vinegar dressing

## SPICED WINE (Non-alcoholic version included)

1 bottle blackcurrant juice (available at Wal-Mart)

1/4 cup honey

2 cinnamon sticks

2 tablespoons cardamom seeds

5 whole cloves

2 teaspoons black peppercorns, whole

Slices of oranges and lemons

Pour spices into a square of cheesecloth, or into the center of a tea ball. Pour the juice and fruit slices over. Allow to simmer on the stove for 15 minutes, or heat in a slowcooker until ready to serve.

You may also serve this cold.

## STEWED PEARS

4 hard pears

1/2 bottle of red wine

1 tablespoon of ground cinnamon

3 tablespoons of brown sugar

10 stems of dried saffron

Combine wine with spices. Peel pears and layer in a shallow baking dish. Pour wine over. Bake at 350 for 15 minutes. Serve at room temperature.

## ADDITIONAL OFFERINGS MAY INCLUDE:

Roast

Roasted chickens or duck

Deer meat

Eggs (quail eggs preferable)

Bacon

Fish

Gelled meats (aspic)

Fruit fritters

Cheese

## Service Order

### FIRST SERVICE

Herb salad with vinegar dressing  
Meat pastries  
Makerouns

### SECOND SERVICE

Roasted chicken  
Gilded apples  
Bacon  
Fish  
Roast

### THIRD SERVICE

Deer  
Game fowl  
Fish  
Drip pudding  
Roast  
Aspic (think of this as meat in unflavored gelatin.  
Go there if you want. I don't care to follow, thank you.)

### FINAL SERVICE

Fruit fritters  
Cheese  
Stewed Pears  
Spiced wine

## Setting a Medieval Mood

### SUGGESTED MUSIC

Pastyme With Good Company by Henry VIII  
Several CDs are available under this name, and are composed of other songs Henry is believed to have written.

### SETTING THE TABLE

In the King's Harcourt Castle, service ware was made of pewter. It's extraordinarily heavy, which I suppose made it more difficult to pinch (steal), but every piece was counted before and after the meal. Pinch at your own risk. Unless you're playing Henry tonight, and then pinch at the lady's risk.

Set each place setting with a knife and spoon. There were no forks.

Serve food on trenchers, that is, stale flat pieces of bread.

No napkins. Remember, polite guests wipe their fingers on the bread.

Goblets could be made of leather, wood, or metals. Wine was often served in bowls, but no one will fault you if you choose to use nice glass goblets. And if they do, offer to rack them. (the guests, not the goblets.)

Candles can be used on the tables and tiki torches come close to recreating torches outside the castle. Use them to line the walk up to your house.