Judge’s Guide for Foods and Nutrition Exhibits
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Introduction

Purpose of Food and Nutrition Exhibits

The purpose of 4-H food and nutrition exhibits is to provide an opportunity for 4-Hers to share what they learned in project work. When exhibits are judged, members have an opportunity to:

1. Be recognized for their efforts.
2. Gain satisfaction from doing, striving and learning.
3. Be inspired to do their best.
4. Learn expected standards.
5. Practice good sportsmanship and self-control.

Purpose of the Manual

Judging baked foods at county and state fairs is a challenge. This manual contains guidelines and information that will assist judges in evaluating products. It will also provide useful information for Family and Consumer Science professionals, project leaders, parents and 4-Hers as they assist others, or prepare and evaluate their own food products.

Judging Food Products

Judging food products requires a knowledge and understanding of basic food science principles, good nutrition, sensory qualities of an optimum product and the factors that contribute to the success or failure of the product.

This publication defines the standard for typical baked food products that you will find in most 4-H Foods and Nutrition divisions. With the recent changes in the projects, many counties now offer exhibitors the opportunity to exhibit perishable food products. It is important that safe food practices always be followed for all exhibits, especially for perishable foods. Be sure that cold foods are kept cold and hot foods hot. Standards for perishable foods are not readily accessible, but you should be able to adapt the scorecard used at the Kansas State Fair, available on the Kansas 4-H website (www.kansas4H.org), for both perishable and non-perishable foods.

Human judgment is individual and subjective. Therefore, in order to be fair and consistent the judge must know the standard for evaluating each product. First impressions may not always be accurate. A lopsided cake may be just as tender as a symmetrical one. Evaluate all factors carefully – appearance color, density, tenderness, texture, and flavor – before making a final judgment. The judge must be careful to not let personal likes and dislikes influence or bias evaluation.

Evaluate the product as you see it. Begin and end with a positive approach. Emphasize the strong points; make suggestions for improving the weak. Evaluate each product on its own merit. In Kansas 4-H, compare the product to the standard, not to other exhibitors’ products. This type of judging is called the Danish System. Each exhibit is compared to the standard, and every exhibit is awarded a ribbon as it meets the criteria for the following ribbon color groups:

- **Purple** outstanding on all standards
- **Blue** exceeds minimum standard, but may have minor flaws where improvements can be made
- **Red** meets all minimum standards and may have visible signs of needed improvements
- **White** fails to meet minimum standards

When you are asked to name a champion exhibit, of course you will need to compare exhibits against each other. Most open class divisions use the American System. In this system, exhibits are compared to each other, and the top exhibits receive a different colored ribbon and are ranked first, second, and third, or as deep as the superintendent instructs you. Not all exhibits may receive a ribbon.

Conference Evaluation

Most 4-H divisions now use conference evaluation as the preferred method of judging. This requires the 4-H member to be present. If the member is not present, judge the product against the standard, and use a score card and written comments to communicate your reasons for the placing.

Conference evaluation is designed to increase the value of the 4-H judging experience for both the 4-H exhibitor and the judge. The process
involves an experienced and knowledgeable judge interviewing the 4-H member while evaluating the project exhibit against a standard.

**Benefits to the Member:**
- Improves communication and other life skills.
- Recognizes personal success and progress.
- Encourages new ideas.
- Learns from the experience of the judge.
- Explains personal goals and objectives of the project.
- Describes methods and procedures used in the exhibit.
- Asks direct questions and gets firsthand information.
- Develops empathy as a decision maker.

**Benefits to the Judge:**
- Helps the member feel good about the project.
- Shows the members that the exhibit is being judged, not the member.
- Finds out what the member wanted to achieve.
- Hears what processes were used to create the exhibit.
- Asks direct questions and gets firsthand information.
- Provides a learning experience for the member, parents and the public observing the judging by making open comments about the strengths and weaknesses of the exhibit, with recommendations for improvement.

**Recipe for Conference Evaluation:**
- Get acquainted, introduce yourself; call the 4-H'er by name.
- Begin positively.
- Be friendly and encouraging.
- Ask “sharing” questions. “How did you make this?”
- Ask “process” questions. “Was this hard to do?”
- Begin to ask questions that “generalize.” “What would you do differently?”
- Finish with questions that “apply” to the real world. “When would you serve this bread to your family?”
- Be sensitive to the member’s personality and needs.
- Use accepted standards to evaluate.
- Explain the placing, giving suggestions for improvements, if needed.

**When You Evaluate Baked Products**

Use your senses.

- **Look**
- **Touch**
- **Smell**
- **Taste**
- Look at the outside appearance of products — color, shape, and size.
- Lift product for lightness and texture.
- Touch the crust and check for a velvety, moist surface.
- Cut it with a sharp, smooth-edged knife to observe grain. Cut a 1-inch slice of cake from near center. Cut biscuits laterally. Muffins are cut from top to bottom.
- Break off a piece to observe texture. Look at it carefully for a fine grain. Touch it for softness and lightness.
- Smell it for a pleasant, characteristic odor.
- Taste a few crumbs for flavor and check the mouthfeel.

All judges should come prepared. A small straight-edged knife; a long, serrated knife; a hand towel or washcloth; and pencil are essential. Since water may not always be available or easily accessible, one might also want to take a bottle of cool tap water and a cup.

**Note:** If much judging is done, unsalted crackers, an apple, carrot sticks or a drink of tap water (not ice water) between samples helps clear the mouth of definite flavors. Do not sip coffee, tea or other beverages, as they impart their own flavors and impair judgment.
Terms Used in Judging

General Appearance: The shape, condition of the crust, color of the exterior surface and volume.

Shape
- broken
t- oval
- thin
even
- round
- uneven
flat
- symmetrical
- asymmetrical
thick
- irregular

Condition of top crust
- dry
- level
- rounded
ruptured
- pebbled
- sticky
peaked
- pocked
- sunken
greasy

Exterior color
- black
- golden brown
- spotted
burned
- gray
- rich
bright
- light brown
- yellow
dark brown
- normal white
discolored
- pale
dull
- practically no browning

Volume or size: Height, diameter or circumference of a product.
- average
- large
- small
excellent
- medium
- uniform
good
- poor

Lightness: Light in weight for size.
- well aerated
- flat
- compact
fluffy
- dense
- heavy

Crumb: Interior portion of product.

Texture: The size of the air cell and thickness of the cell wall make up the “grain” of the baked product.
- coarse
- grainy
- mealy
fine
- harsh
- rough
flaky
- lacy
- velvety
foamy

Color: Appropriate for the product, pleasing to the eye.
- bright
- golden brown
- rich
creamy
- lustrous
- snowy white
discolored
- normal
- speckled
dull
- off-color
- reddish brown
grey
- mottled
- dark chocolate
greenish
- pale

Moistness: Degree of moisture within the crumb.
- dry
- soggy
gummy
- wet
- moist

Tenderness: Ease with which product can be cut, broken, pulled apart.
- chewy
- tender
elastic
- tough
- rubbery

Flavor: Combination of taste and smell.
- astringent
- flat
- salty
bitter
- floury
- soapy
bland
- mellow
- stale
well blended
- nut-like
raw starch
- brisk
- eggy
strong
- burned
- rich
rancid
- delicate
- scorched
yeasty
- buttery
- unbalanced
sour

Mouthfeel or Consistency: Degree of firmness density, viscosity, fluidity, plasticity.
- brittle
- grainy
- solid
- crisp
- gummy
- stiff
- crystalline
- liquid
- soft
- crumbly
- pasty
- soggy
curdled
- rubbery
- tender
firm
- runny
- hard
- frothy
- sirup
- mealy
gelatinous
- slimy
- thin
tough
Food Safety

For the safety of all judges, food safety precautions must be followed. For the State Fair, only non-perishable foods will be accepted. No food item should require refrigeration. Those that do will be disqualified.

Perishable foods are those with egg custard and cream cheese type fillings and frostings, or foods that require refrigeration. Examples include cream or custard pies, breads with large amounts of fillings, and cream cheese frosting. They will not be allowed at the State Fair due to a lack of refrigeration. These products have higher amounts of dairy products and/or eggs that can support the growth of microorganisms at room temperature or warmer. Even though they are baked, they can still support microorganism growth at room temperature. Therefore, they need refrigeration for both safety and quality.

County fairs with refrigeration facilities may allow perishable type items. Check county fair guidelines for more information.

Fruit and pecan pies are acceptable. These products have high amounts of sugar and/or acid to suppress the growth of microorganisms at room temperature. German Chocolate cake frosting is also acceptable.

Alcohol

Any food item made with alcohol (i.e. beer, wine, hard liquor, etc.) will be disqualified. Flavoring ingredients such as vanilla, almond extract, etc. are acceptable.

Home-Style Canned Quick Breads

Home-style canned quick breads have been featured in popular magazines and promoted through mail order brochures and specialty shops. They are typically manufactured by small “home-based” operations and the process consists of oven-baking a batter in a wide mouth glass jar. After baking, the lid and ring are added to seal the jar.

From a food safety standpoint, inadequate heat treatment of this type of product coupled with favorable storage conditions could lead to development of botulinum toxins.

In a K-State study on the survival of inoculated *C. sporogenes PA 3679*, canned banana bread was baked at a temperature of 177°C (350°F). Even though this resulted in a highly desirable product appearance, it did not result in a safe product (totally free of inoculated Clostridium after storage) for human consumption, especially when baked products were stored under conditions (35°C or 95°F) that favor spore germination. When baked at higher temperatures to enhance food safety, it formed an excessive crust, which made an undesirable consumer product.

The standard procedure (that people would use at home) for home-canned quick bread recommends baking at 191°C (375°F) for 50 minutes. Even though this treatment resulted in non-detectable levels of sporeformers in uninoculated breads after 8 hours of storage at room temperature, the practice of making canned breads and cakes is not recommended.

Source: Aramouni, F.M.; K.K. Kone; J.A. Craig; and D.Y.C. Fung. “Growth of Clostridium sporogenes PA 3679 in Home-Style Canned Quick Breads.” *Journal of Food Protection* 57:882-886

Cakes

Cakes can be divided into two categories: shortened and unshortened. Foam, chiffon, sponge, and angel cakes are in the latter class because they contain little or no added fat. Characteristically, unshortened cakes contain a large proportion of eggs or egg whites, are leavened by steam and air and are baked in ungreased tube pans. Unshortened cakes are extremely light and fluffy with good volume and an open, even texture. In comparison, shortened cakes, or butter cakes as they were once called, are leavened by baking powder and/or soda and acid, as well as steam and air. They may contain a relatively large proportion of solid or liquid shortening and are baked in almost any size and shape. Liquids, spices, flavoring and other ingredients are varied to produce a wide assortment of shortened cakes. Typically, these cakes are somewhat heavier than foam cakes, yet well aerated with a moist, tender crumb and fine, even grain.
Shortened Cakes

Characteristics of standard product

Appearance
- Rounded top, free of cracks
- Uniform, characteristic color throughout crust and crumb
- Thin crust
- High volume

Texture
- Soft, velvety crumb
- Even grain
- Small, thin-walled air cells
- Free of tunnels
- Moist, smooth mouthfeel
- Not sticky
- Light — but not crumbly

Tenderness
- Handles easily, yet breaks apart without difficulty
- Seems to “melt in the mouth,” offers no resistance when bitten

Flavor
- Delicate, sweet flavor
- Well blended

Problems with shortened cakes and causes

Cracks on top
- Too hot an oven at beginning of baking period
- Batter too stiff
- Pan too narrow or deep

Peak in center
- Batter too stiff — too much flour
- Too hot an oven at beginning of baking period
- Overmixed after addition of flour

Fallen center
- Not thoroughly mixed after flour was added
- Too much fat, sugar or leavening
- Oven temperature too low
- Cake was moved during baking
- Pan too small for amount of batter
- Underbaked
- Not enough liquid

Tough crust or crumb
- Too little fat or sugar
- Too much flour or egg
- Overmixed after addition of flour
- Flour too high in protein

Sticky crust and noticeably shrunken
- Too much sugar
- Damp flour
- Insufficiently baked
- Incorrectly frozen and thawed

Sugary crust
- Too much sugar or leavening
- Ingredients not blended thoroughly

Soggy
- Wrapped before completely cooled
- Underbaked
- Too much liquid or ingredients with a high water content (ie., fruit, pumpkin, applesauce)

Bitter taste
- Too much baking powder

Unpleasant flavor
- Poor quality eggs or shortening

Heavy, low volume
- Poor quality shortening or shortening with no emulsifier
- Not enough leavening — gas lost before baking
- Overmixed — air incorporated during creaming is lost
- Too much fat, sugar, liquid or flour
- Not enough air incorporated during creaming
Insufficiently baked
Pan too small for amount of batter
Incorrect temperature for baking (too low)

**Overlight, crumbly, coarse textured**
Too much leavening, sugar, or shortening
Oven temperature too low
Fat and sugar insufficiently creamed
Undermixed — ingredients not blended thoroughly
Oil used instead of solid shortening

**Dry, tough**
Not enough fat, liquid, or sugar
Egg whites overbeaten
Overmixed after addition of flour
Overbaked
Too much flour, egg or leavening
Substitution of cocoa for chocolate with no increase in fat

**Dull color**
Poor quality ingredients
Low-grade flour

**Tunnels and occasional large holes**
Batter overbeaten
Uneven distribution of leavening agent
Not enough fat or sugar
Oven too hot
Failure to expel air when batter is placed in pan
Too much egg

**Not symmetrical**
Oven not level
Pan not centered in oven
Oven temperature not consistent
Paper liner in pan wrinkled
Batter not distributed evenly in pan
Batter not cut through with knife to release air pockets

**Pale color**
Shiny pan used

**Too much batter for the pan**

**Sunken**
Too little liquid
Too much sugar, shortening or leavening
Underbaked

**Gelatinous layer at bottom of cake**
Ingredients insufficiently blended

**Foam or Unshortened Cakes**

**Characteristics of standard product.**

**Appearance**
Thin, golden brown crust
Uniform crumb color
Rough, slightly cracked top crust
Symmetrical
Optimum volume

**Texture**
Light in weight in proportion to size
Well aerated
Finer, even, oval-shaped cells with thin cell walls
Sugary, slightly sticky crust

**Tenderness**
Moist
Soft crust and crumb
Delicate crumb that is easily broken apart

**Flavor**
Pleasant, well blended
Not eggy

**Problems with foam cakes and causes**

**Thick, hard crust**
Too hot an oven
Baked too long

**Sticky crust**
Too much sugar
Ingredients not blended thoroughly
Damp flour
Insufficiently baked

**Tough crumb**
- Baking temperature too high
- Overmixed

**Coarse crumb**
- Underbeaten egg
- Undermixed
- Too hot an oven

**Dark color**
- Inferior flour
- Not enough cream of tartar
- Wrong proportions — too much sugar

**Dry**
- Egg whites overbeaten
- Too much flour
- Too little sugar
- Overbaked
- Too slow a baking temperature

**Heavy**
- Air lost during mixing
- Eggs not beaten to optimum volume
- Cream of tartar omitted

**Shrunken**
- Too low a baking temperature
- Too little cream of tartar
- Insufficiently baked

**Uneven appearance**
- Ingredients not thoroughly blended in texture

**Cookies**
There are five main types of baked cookies — rolled, dropped, refrigerator, pressed, and bar or sheet cookies. Rolled cookies are made from a rather stiff dough that is rolled on a lightly floured board to the desired thickness and cut out into various shapes. Dropped cookies are made from a soft dough that is dropped from a spoon or dipper onto a cookie sheet. They may or may not be flattened. Refrigerator cookies are made from a comparatively rich dough that has been thoroughly chilled, then cookies are shaped into balls or sliced from a roll. Pressed cookies are made from a rich, stiff dough extruded through a decorative die. Bar cookies may be cake-like or compact and chewy: A stiff batter is baked in a shallow pan and cut into bars or squares when cool.

Cookie dough should be easy to handle but as soft as possible. The addition of too much flour causes dry, flinty, cracked cookies that have little appeal. Prepared and baked with care, all types of cookies can meet high standards.

No-bake cookies can be made from ready-to-eat cereals, oatmeal, chow mein noodles, nuts, raisins, or coconut, and held together with a cooked syrup. These cookies are generally made by younger, beginning skill members. They may melt or become sticky or oily, depending on the recipe and the weather.

**Characteristics of standard product**

**Appearance**
- Uniform shape
- Even contour
- Uniform color
- Ingredients evenly mixed

**Texture**
- Characteristic of type — soft or crisp

**Tenderness**
- Breaks apart easily when chewed
- Not crumbly or hard

**Flavor**
- Pleasing, well blended
- Free of unpleasant or distracting flavors

**Problems with cookies and causes**

**Flour streaked**
- Too much flour used during rolling
- Incorrect proportion of ingredients
Improper measuring techniques
Poorly mixed

Dry or crumbly
Wrong proportion of ingredients
Incorrectly measured
Poor mixing techniques
Not enough liquid
Overbaked

Bottom crust too dark
Cookie sheet not centered in oven
Dark cookie sheets used

Top crust too dark
Too hot an oven
Overbaked

Excessive spread, loss of shape
Cookies placed too close together on cookie sheet
Dough too soft — too much liquid
Dough placed on hot baking sheet

Doughy, raw flavor
Underbaked
Dough too stiff

Off flavor
Rancid shortening, nuts, seeds (sunflower, poppy) or coconut
Poor quality ingredients
Too much baking powder
Improper storage — causes cookies to become stale or pick up other odors and flavors

Sticky, hard
Too much sugar
Overbaked
Flour too high in protein

Tough
Overhandled
Too little fat or sugar

Irregular size and shape
Dough improperly handled when placed on cookie sheet

Pastry and Fillings
Pastry is a simple food system composed of fat, flour, salt, and water. But, often a quality product is not easily achieved. The key to success lies in the technique used to mix and roll the dough. Ingredients must be handled delicately, not mixed too much or too little, if a high quality pastry is to be prepared. Characteristics of standard product:

Appearance
Rough, blistered surface with no large air bubbles
Golden brown edges
Center of bottom and top crusts are light in color
Not shrunken
Attractively shaped edges
Uniform thickness

Texture
Layers are evident when pastry is broken
Crisp and flaky
Not mealy

Tenderness
Cuts easily with a fork but holds shape when lifted; not so tender that it falls apart

Flavor
Pleasant, bland
No trace of burned, raw, or rancid flavor

Problems with pastry and causes

Lack of tenderness
Insufficient fat
Protein content of flour too high (i.e., bread flour)
Fat not divided finely
Too much water
Dough overhandled during mixing and/or rolling
Too much flour used when pastry was rolled
Lack of flakiness (mealy or crumby)
Too much fat
Protein content of flour too low (i.e., cake flour)
Fat too warm when combined with flour
Fat divided too finely
Not enough water
Self-rising flour inadvertently used
Undermixed
Oil used instead of solid fat

Pale, dull color
Too little fat
Underbaked
Too much water
Too much flour on pastry board
Oven temperature too low
Rolled too thick

Shrunken
Over handled
Pastry stretched when placed in pan
Dough not rolled to uniform thickness
Unbalanced recipe

Burned
Overbaked

Smooth surface, not blistered
Overhandled
Too much flour used during rolling

Uneven edge
Crust not rolled in even circle
Edges not carefully shaped

Large air bubbles
Pastry not pricked before baking
Pan too small for amount of dough — causes pastry to buckle

Soggy lower crust
Filling too moist
Cooked filling too hot when added
Crust torn or broken — causes filling to run underneath the crust
Shiny pie pan used — causes crust to bake too slowly
Pie pan placed on baking sheet or aluminum foil — interferes with heat transfer
Oven temperature too low or time too short

Rancid
Poor quality shortening

Meringue
Appearance
Light brown on ridges

Volume
Light

Texture
Soft, cuts easily with knife; fine, uniform cells throughout meringue

Flavor
Sweet, mild, well-blended

Problems with meringues and causes
Dark brown, burned peaks
Overbaked
Too much sugar
Peaks too high

Pale
Underbaked
Too low temperature

Beads of liquid on surface
Overbaked
Too low temperature

Shrinks from edges
Not sealed to edge

Sticky, gummy, tough
Overbaked
Baked at too low temperature
Too tender
   Interior not baked long enough
   Meringue placed on cold pie filling

Liquid collects at surface between filling and meringue
   Egg whites underbeaten
   Meringue not baked long enough
   Baked too high temperature
   Cream of tartar omitted

Burned flavor
   Overbaked

Raw flavor
   Underbaked

*Pie Fillings*

(Note: At the Kansas State Fair, only non-perishable pies are allowed to be exhibited. This includes fruit and pecan pies. Custard or meringue pies are not accepted.)

Cream fillings are usually a custard base with both egg yolk and starch or flour used to thicken the mixture. Egg whites are usually reserved for meringue. Milk, water and/or fruit juice are typical liquids used. Custard fillings use the whole egg as the thickening agent and, milk as the liquid ingredient. A chiffon filling is often a mixture containing egg yolk and gelatin as structural ingredients. The mixture is folded into egg whites then poured into the pie shell. The filling is refrigerated for two or three hours. Fruit fillings usually consist of fruit, fruit juice, sugar, and a thickener such as flour, cornstarch and/or tapioca.

Cream Fillings

Consistency
   Smooth, holds soft shape when sliced

Flavor
   Pleasing, well blended
   Characteristic of ingredients

Problems with cream fillings
   Too thin
   Not enough starch or egg yolk
   Flows when cut
   Mixture not heated long enough before yolk is added
   In lemon pies, excessive heating after lemon juice is added can cause thinning of starch

Grainy
   Burner too high

Lumpy
   Not enough stirring
   Egg yolks not “tempered”
   Cornstarch wasn’t combined with sugar and salt before adding water

Too thick, gummy, sticky
   Improper proportion of ingredients
   Too much starch, egg yolk
   Not enough liquid

Custard Fillings

Consistency
   Smooth
   Firm, yet tender

Color
   Uniform
   Yellow

Flavor
   Mild, sweet egg flavor

Problems with custard fillings
   Too thin
   Underbaked, too much sugar
   Tough
   Baked too long, too much egg in proportion to other ingredients
   Porous
   Baked too long
   Weeping
   Baked too long
Baked filling not cooked enough before moving to baked crust

**Filling broken**
- Poor technique in transferring custard to crust

**Flecks of yellow and white**
- Not adequately mixed

**Chiffon Fillings**

**Consistency**
- Rigid when cut, but tender, light, airy, smooth

**Problems with chiffon fillings**

**Lumpy — due to egg yolk**
- Egg yolk mixture heated over too high heat
- Not stirred adequately
- Didn’t use double boiler

**Lumpy — due to gelatin**
- Gelatin not prepared properly before adding to egg yolk mixture

**Soft, flows when cut**
- Egg yolk mixture not heated sufficiently
- Pie not chilled
- Recipe doesn’t contain enough thickening

**Heavy**
- Egg whites not beaten sufficiently
- Poor folding technique

**Tough, rubbery**
- Proportion of egg yolk/gelatin too high

*Source: General Score Card for Judging 4-H Food Preparation Exhibits, Oregon State University, for adaptation of pie filling information.

**Flavor**
- Good fruit flavor

**Problems with fruit fillings**

**Gummy**
- Too much thickening agent
- Too high proportion of tapioca

**Too firm**
- Too much thickening agent

**Too thin**
- Not enough thickening agent
- Too much sugar

**Filling spills out on crust**
- Oven temperature too low
- Insufficient sugar and/or fruit
- Insufficient thickening
- Too much sugar
- Upper crust shrinkage, or not sealed

**Excessively sweet, with little fruit flavor**
- Too little fruit and fruit juices in proportion to sugar

**Spices cover fruit flavor**
- Too much spice

*Source: General Score Card for Judging 4-H Food Preparation Exhibits, Oregon State University, for adaptation of pie filling information.

**Biscuits**

There are two basic types of biscuits — rolled and dropped. Both are leavened by baking powder and contain similar ingredients but differ in the proportion of liquid and method of preparation. As a result, the appearance and texture of the two are dissimilar.

**Characteristics of standard product**

**Rolled Biscuits**

**Appearance**
- Cylindrical
- Pale, golden brown top crust
- Even height
Creamy white crumb with no brown or yellow flecks
Evenly contoured
Straight sides and flat, fairly smooth top
Uniform size
Free of excess flour

**Texture**
- Small, uniform gas holes
- Relatively thin cell walls
- Crumb peels off in sheets, flakes or layers

**Tenderness**
- Crisp yet tender outer crust
- Crust and crumb offer little resistance to bite
- Light and moist

**Flavor**
- Bland, mild
- No bitterness or rancidity

**Dropped Biscuits**

**Appearance**
- Pale, golden brown top crust
- White crumb
- Slightly pebbled surface
- Straight or gently sloped sides

**Texture**
- Less uniform, larger gas holes than kneaded biscuits
- Slightly thicker cell walls

**Tenderness**
- Crisp, tender outer crust
- Crust and crumb offer little resistance to bite

**Flavor**
- Bland, mild

**Problems with biscuits and causes**

**Not flaky**
- Not enough shortening
- Shortening under- or overmixed with flour

**Underkneaded**

**Tough**
- Lack of fat
- Overhandled
- Too much liquid or flour

**Pale crust**
- Too slow an oven
- Underbaked
- Flour on surface of biscuit

**Misshapen, uneven**
- Cutter twisted during shaping
- Dough not uniform in thickness

**Uneven browning**
- Uneven shape
- Uneven heat

**Flat, heavy**
- Not enough leavening
- Underbaked
- Too much flour or liquid
- Improperly mixed

**Coarse, uneven cells**
- Too much leavening
- Underbaked
- Ingredients inaccurately measured
- Undermixed

**Harsh, dry crumb**
- Dough too stiff
- Overbaked

**Bottom crust too dark**
- Baked on darkened pan

**Hard crust**
- Too close to heating element in oven
- Baked too long
- Too high a temperature
Crumbly, oily
Too much fat

Yellow specks
Uneven distribution of soda or baking powder

Floury surface
Too much flour used when kneading or rolling

Low volume
Improper manipulation
Not enough leavening, or leavening not effective, not fresh
Ingredients inaccurately measured
Wrong time and temperature

Doughy
Underbaked

Bitter or soapy
Too much leavening
Ingredients not blended thoroughly

Rancid
Poor quality shortening

Loaf Breads

Fruit or nut loaf breads are fast and easy to make. The ingredients, method of mixing, and baking technique are similar to those used for muffins. Some quick bread recipes are made by the cake method. Interesting variations are made by adding nuts, fruits, cereals, and other flours.

Quick breads are not always baked in loaf pans. For example, corn bread and Irish soda bread are baked in shallow pans, spoon breads in casserole dishes or layer cake pans, Sally Lunn bread in a tube pan, and Boston brown bread may be baked in loaves or steamed in covered cans or special molds.

Cracks in the crust are typical of quick breads and do not necessarily indicate an unsatisfactory product. Products should not be scored down because of cracked tops. However, some people prefer a loaf bread without a center crack. An explanation of why cracks form and hints to prevent them are given below.

Reasons for cracked crust

1. The large mass of batter in the loaf pan heats slowly. Therefore it is desirable to allow time for the leavening agent to react, and an increase in volume to take place, before the crust sets. When this procedure is followed a baked product with a smooth, rounded crust results. When baking is too rapid, a cracked top crust and a more solid crumb will result.

2. Using long, narrow pans will result in a loaf with a crease or small crack on top. Consistency of batter will influence the depth of crack. Batter touching the pan bakes first. As batter warms to baking temperature, it thins and allows a film of fat and sugar to run toward the center of the crust; thus a shiny line or a sticky crack forms down the center of the loaf.

3. A crack forms because the unbaked batter under the crust “erupts” when the leavening agent reacts.

Baking hints to prevent cracked crust

1. Preheat oven to 350° F and bake quick bread as soon as mixed.

2. Preheat oven to 375° to 400° F. Cover quick bread and allow to stand at room temperature 20 to 30 minutes before baking.

3. Tent a piece of heavy foil over the top of the loaf pan filled with batter. Allow foil to remain until batter rises and begins to brown, then remove foil carefully so that you do not touch the soft crust. This keeps the top moist and prevents a heavy crack from forming.

Characteristics of standard product

Appearance
Even contour, no “lip” at upper edge of loaf
Rounded top
May have a center crack
Evenly browned top and bottom crust
Uniform crumb color
Well-distributed nuts and fruit

Texture
Relatively fine crumb
Uniform grain
Free of large tunnels
Moist
Not mealy or crumbly

**Tenderness**
Crisp, tender crust
Firm but delicate crumb

**Flavor**
Pleasant
Characteristic of the variety of loaf bread

**Problems with quick loaf breads and causes**

**Low volume**
Inaccurate measuring techniques
Too little leavening
Too much liquid or flour
Insufficiently mixed
Fry line edge because sides of pan were greased

**Crumbly, dry**
Overbaked
Too little liquid or fat
Too much flour

**Compact, heavy**
Underbaked
Wrong type of flour
Too much flour

**Coarse textured, irregular grain, tunnels**
Too little fat or sugar
Overmixed

**Tough**
Too much flour
Overmixed

**Peaked**
Too much batter in pan
Overmixed

**Heavily crusted**
Too close to heating element of oven

Baked too long
Too high an oven temperature

**Soggy**
Wrapped while warm
Underbaked
Too much fruit

**Flat flavor**
Too little salt

**Muffins**
Muffins come in many varieties. Each has its own special characteristics. Plain muffins, sweet muffins, cereal muffins, and fruit or nut muffins differ in appearance, texture and flavor. When setting standards for muffins the type should be considered. For instance, a bran muffin differs from a plain muffin, yet general standards for quality can be applied.

**Characteristics of standard product**

**Appearance**
Rough, pebbled surface
Golden brown top crust
Even contour, slightly rounded top — no peaks

**Texture**
Fairly large gas holes uniformly distributed
Free of long, slender tunnels
Medium thick cell walls

**Tenderness**
Little resistance when bitten and chewed

**Flavor**
Bland or slightly sweet

**Problems with muffins and causes**

**Pale**
Too little batter in muffin cup
Overmixed
Too cool an oven
Unevenly browned
  Too hot an oven
  Oven does not heat uniformly
  Pans filled too full
  Wrong proportion of ingredients, too much baking powder or sugar

Too brown
  Incorrect time and temperature
  Too much sugar

Peaks
  Pans filled too full
  Overmixed
  Insufficient leavening
  Batter too stiff
  Oven temperature too high or uneven
  Dropped from spoon held too high above the pan

Tough, elastic
  Too much flour
  Too little fat or sugar
  Overmixed

Compact
  Wrong time and temperature
  Improperly mixed
  Insufficient leavening
  Too much flour or liquid

Irregular grain, tunnels
  Overmixed
  Too much liquid
  Inaccurately measured
  Too little fat or sugar

Smooth crust
  Overmixed

Hard crust
  Baked too long
  Oven temperature too high
  Too close to heating element in oven

Harsh, dry crumb
  Batter too stiff
  Too much flour
  Overbaked

Rough surface, sharp edges
  Undermixed
  Too much flour

Waxy, shiny
  Egg and milk insufficiently mixed

Flat flavor
  Too little salt

Gray interior
  Too much leavening

Yellow spots
  Ingredients insufficiently blended

Cracked
  Wrong-sized pan
  Too high an oven temperature

Sticky
  High proportion of sugar or sweetener, oil in recipe

Yeast Breads
  Standards of quality are easily established for dinner rolls and plain loaves of bread because there is little variety in the ingredients used and the physical characteristics of the product. The formula is usually relatively lean (contains little or no fat or eggs) compared to a sweet dough. Sweet rolls and coffee cake are made from a rich, soft dough that contains more eggs, fat, and sugar than the dough used for loaves of bread.

  The process of making speciality yeast products and a loaf of bread are similar. Adequate development of gluten either by kneading or beating is essential for a satisfactory product. When a no-knead or batter bread is made, the thin batter is mixed quickly and thoroughly without kneading. The batter is left in the mixing bowl for rising or
placed directly in the baking pans. Characteristically, batter breads have a more open grain, lacy appearance and uneven surface than kneaded breads.

A great variety of breads is possible by adding nuts, fruit, raisins, spices, herbs, and seeds; by substituting specialty flours for part of the flour; by shaping the dough in different ways; and by using various toppings and garnishes. Rolls from plain bread dough can be baked quickly in an oven at 425 °F. However, rich doughs are baked at lower temperatures, 350° F to 375° F, to prevent excessive browning of the crust.

**Characteristics of standard product**

**Appearance**
- Golden brown crust
- Good volume with even height
- Well shaped
- Symmetrical
- Smooth, unbroken top surface
- Loaf should have a shredded border (break and shred) along one side
- Characteristic crumb color, uniform throughout
- Free of flour streaks

**Texture**
- Even, moderately fine grain
- Slightly elongated cells
- Porous, honeycomb-like texture
- Free of large air pockets
- Light for weight
- Thin, even, crisp, tender crust
- Free of flour “line”

**Tenderness**
- Moist, silky crumb with a tender but elastic quality

**Flavor**
- Pleasing, well blended
- Fairly bland
- Nut-like or wheaty
- Free of sour or yeasty taste

**Problems with yeast products and causes**

**Uneven shape**
- Dough improperly shaped
- Crowded oven
- Too much dough for pan
- Insufficiently proofed

**Heavy, poor volume**
- Low-grade flour
- Too large proportion of low-gluten flours
- Insufficiently proofed
- Too cool while rising
- Under kneaded
- Yeast killed
- Collapsed, because over-proofing weakened the gluten
- Poor distribution of ingredients

**Cracked crust**
- Insufficiently fermented
- Cooled too rapidly

**Bulged, cracked crust**
- Too stiff a dough
- Uneven heat during baking
- Insufficiently proofed

**Thick crust**
- Baked too slowly

**Tough crust**
- Insufficiently proofed
- Low-grade flour
- Risen dough over-handled

**Pale crust**
- Too slow an oven
- Underbaked
- Too much salt
- Dough became dry during rising
- Too little sugar

**Dark, dull crumb**
- Under- or over-proofed
Wrong temperature while rising
Too cool an oven
Old or stale yeast

**Tough crumb**
Too much salt — retards fermentation

**Streaked loaf**
Poorly mixed
Addition of flour during molding
Surface of dough became dry before shaping

**Crumbly loaf**
Weak flour
Use of variety flours
Excessive or insufficient proof

**Coarse-grained**
Inferior yeast
Salt omitted
Low-grade flour
Fermented too long or at too high a temperature
Under-kneaded
Not enough flour
Too cool an oven

**Yeasty, sour or bitey flavor**
Poor yeast or flour
Fermented too long
Too high a temperature while rising
Too little sugar
Baked too slowly or incompletely

**No break and shred**
Dough not rolled and shaped properly before placed in pan

**Machine Breads**
The standards for breads made using the bread machine should be the same as handmade breads. Of course, you will have to allow for the “mixer” hole that is left in the bottom of the loaf. The following information provided by the Wheat Foods Council will give you some additional information as you evaluate machine breads and conduct conference evaluation with exhibitors.

**Operation**
Before using the bread machine, read the instruction manual and/or view the video that comes with your machine. Each machine is unique. Accurate liquid and dry measurements are essential. Spoon flour into a standard dry ingredient measuring cup and level off. Measure liquids in a transparent liquid measuring cup and read measurements at eye level.

Open the lid and touch the dough after the first five minutes of the mixing cycle. If necessary, add more liquid or flour. A perfect dough is soft to the touch, slightly sticky, and nearly cleans the bottom of the bread pan. Place ingredients in the pan in the order suggested by the instruction manual. It is imperative that the yeast not touch the liquids or the salt when using the delayed baking feature.

The ideal temperature for ingredients is room temperature. Some bread machines have a preheat cycle that brings ingredients to the proper temperature. If the machine doesn't have a cool-down or keep-warm cycle, remove the loaf promptly and cool on a wire rack to prevent a soggy crust. Room temperature, drafts or humidity may affect the results.

**Flour**
Bread flour is recommended for use in bread machines. Because bread flour has greater protein content and gluten strength than all-purpose flour, the resulting loaf usually has greater volume and is finer-textured. Add wheat gluten to improve loaf volume and texture in recipes using whole wheat, rye, or other whole grains. Use 1 to 1½ teaspoons wheat gluten to each cup of whole grain flour. An equal amount of additional water may be needed. Gluten-free breads can be made using oat, rice, potato, corn or soy flour.

**Yeast**
Instant, active dry and bread machine yeasts are available for use in bread machines. Consult the manual for recommendations. Check the yeast’s expiration date for freshness. It is economical to buy yeast in larger quantities, so place yeast in a sealed bag and refrigerate or freeze. Bring the amount needed to room temperature before using.
Sweeteners and Salt

White and brown sugar, honey, and molasses may be interchanged successfully. Do not use artificial sweeteners because they do not provide food for the yeast. Never eliminate salt because it adds flavor, acts as a growth inhibitor for yeast and strengthens the dough structure. Salt substitutes are not recommended because they give the bread an off-flavor.

Liquids and Eggs

The temperature range of liquid is 75° to 85° F for automatic bread machines. Check with a thermometer. It may be necessary to decrease liquid slightly in humid weather. Milk, buttermilk and water may be interchanged equally. Water gives a crisp, lighter crust; milk gives a softer, browner crust. Fresh milk can be replaced with nonfat-dry milk. Use an equal amount of water as the milk, and about 3 to 4 tablespoons of milk powder per cup of water.

When using the delayed baking feature, always use milk powder. Add it with dry ingredients and keep away from liquids. Reduce the amount of water in equal proportion to the amount of fresh milk added.

For food safety, never use perishable ingredients — such as fresh milk, meat, eggs, cheese, yogurt, orange juice and vegetable purees — with the delayed baking feature. Egg substitutes may be used instead of eggs.

Fats

Most breads contain a small amount of fat. Fat keeps bread tender and fresh, and aids in browning. Vegetable oil, solid shortening, butter, or margarine may be substituted in equal proportions.

Tips

Lemon juice or vinegar may help improve the structure of the loaf. Use one teaspoon per loaf. For high altitudes, some experimentation is required because the dough may rise faster. You may need to reduce the amount of yeast, sugar or flour, or add liquid or gluten. Consult your manual. When adding oats, multi-grain cereal, or cornmeal, soak in the liquid for about 5 to 8 minutes. Bulgur, cracked wheat or whole wheat berries need to be softened by cooking or soaking to keep them from scratching the pan.

To adapt your favorite bread recipe for the bread machine, first start with the amount of flour the machine needs, then calculate the other ingredients. Do not exceed the capacity of the pan. Refrigeration stales bread. Store bread in a sealed container at room temperature or freeze.

Troubleshooting

Collapses after rising
- Too much yeast or liquid
- Too little flour
- Used quick-rise yeast
- Too much dough for pan
- Liquids too hot

Too dry
- Too much flour
- Not enough liquid

Crust too brown
- Use a lighter setting
- Remove loaf a few minutes before baking cycle completes

Loaves don't raise
- Too little yeast
- Too little liquid
- Yeast not fresh
- Increase sugar and water
- Ingredient temperature wrong
- Use bread flour
- Machine calibration is off

Loaf touches lid
- Check amount and/or type of yeast
- Water temperature incorrect
- Use more salt
- Reduce sugar

Loaf has uneven or rough top
- Not enough liquid

Loaf too moist
- Remove from pan sooner
- Use a darker setting for longer bake time
Flour clumps on crust
During kneading cycle, push flour clumps into dough with rubber spatula

Poor color
Not enough sugar
Add milk, liquid or dry
Source: Grains of Truth about Bread Machines, adapted by permission from Cindy Falk, Kansas Wheat Commission and Wheat Foods Council, revised 2005

Microwave Baked Products
Since foods cook so quickly in the microwave, baked products do not always have the appearance of their conventionally baked counterparts. Texture is finer and volume is greater due to exaggerated expansion of air cells and lack of crust to impede rising. Surfaces are moist and soft. Frequently, properly baked products are more tender. Flavor is similar in microwaved and conventionally baked products.

The most noticeable feature of a microwave-baked product is its pale appearance. Advances in microwave technology have added features that may help correct this. Conventionally baked foods brown because the prolonged dry heat acts on the surface of the food to drive off moisture, carbonize fats and caramelize sugars. The result is a crisp, crusty texture and dark color. Careful recipe selection or judicious alterations of a standard recipe can compensate for the lack of color.

Overcooking is easy when microwaving, but if baking time is precisely controlled and standing time is taken into account, the end product should be as moist, tender and flavorful as one baked in a conventional oven. Unbalanced recipes, careless measuring, improper mixing methods and poor quality ingredients will cause the same disappointing consequences in a microwave product as one baked conventionally.

Cakes

Characteristics of standard product

Appearance
Higher and lighter than conventionally baked
Symmetrical

Texture
Light for weight
Velvety crumb
Even grain
Very tender
Soft outer surface

Problems with cakes and causes

Bottom underbaked
Cooled on wire rack instead of a flat, solid, heat resistant surface where retained heat can complete cooking

Tough
Batter too lean — not enough fat or sugar
Overbaked

Uneven surface
Baked as a sheet cake
Pan filled too full
Not rotated during baking to assure uniform cooking

Large air pockets
Batter not “cut through” with a knife or tapped to release air and produce an evenly filled pan

Recommendations for successful microwaved cakes

Recipes
Select rich formulas with whole eggs.
Good results are achieved with yellow, spice, or chocolate cakes and those containing oil
Bake angel and sponge cakes conventionally

Size and shape
Layer cakes bake more evenly than sheet cakes
Round and ring pans give a more uniformly baked product since there are no corners to overcook, and energy can penetrate from all sides.

**Pan preparation**
- Fill pans half full since batter expansion is greater in the microwave.
- Lightly grease pans — but do not flour them.
- Do not use vegetable spray coating — it tends to form a gummy layer.
- Line dish with a single layer of wax paper cut to fit the bottom of pan if cake is to be turned out.
- If approved by manufacturer, shield corners of a square pan with foil to reduce microwaves received.

**Baking**
- Microwave one layer at a time.
- Rotate pan halfway through baking cycle, more often as necessary.
- Frequency of rotation depends on amount of batter.
- Microwave slowly so cakes rise less rapidly and bake more evenly.
- When done, top will spring back, cake will pull away from sides of pan, and a toothpick inserted in center (but not in a moist spot) will come out clean.
- Any moisture on the surface will evaporate upon cooling.
- Cool cakes on a flat, solid, heat-resistant surface rather than a wire rack to finish baking with residual heat.
- Do not overbake.

**Pastry**

**Characteristics of standard product**

**Appearance**
- Light creamy color unless flavored or brushed with food coloring or egg yolk.
- Opaque, dry.
- Blistered top surface.
- Well shaped with attractive edges.

**Texture**
- Crisp and flaky.
- Tender but firm.

**Problems with pastry**

**Shrunken**
- Shell not pricked with fork prior to baking.
- Over-stretched when placed in pan.

**Soggy crust**
- Filling contains too much liquid.
- Unthickened filling not precooked.
- Filling seeped through crust prior to thickening because the prick holes were not sealed before the filling was added.

**Recommendations for successful microwaved pastry**

**Recipe**
- Pies that have separately cooked crust and filling are best suited for microwaving.
- Double crust pies should not be microwaved, bottom crust doesn't bake properly.
- Fruit pies can be prepared open face and topped with streusel crumbs or prebaked pastry cut-outs.

**Size and shape**
- A high, fluted pastry edge helps retain bubbly fillings.

**Pan preparation**
- Pastry should be crisp, flaky before filling is added.
- Precook fillings that contain a large amount of liquid.

**Baking**
- Place wax paper in the bottom of the oven to simplify clean-up in case filling bubbles over.
- Lift glass plate to visually check for doneness. Bottom should appear opaque and dry, the top dry and blistered.
Fruit pies are done when filling is hot and has started to cook in center
Cooking will continue during cooling

Cookies

**Characteristics of standard product**

**Appearance**
- Bars
  - Even height
  - No thin, crisp top crust
- Cookies
  - Well shaped
  - May be larger due to greater spread

**Texture**
- Rich and moist
- Refrigerator cookies may not be crisp

**Problems with cookies and causes**

**Interior brown spots**
- Develop in small cookies — cooking begins below the surface and causes some areas to overbake.

**Overcooked**
- Too much fat — fat quickly melts over batter, absorbs microwaves and causes areas to overcook

**Recommendations for successful microwaved cookies and bars**

**Recipes**
- Moist bar cookies and brownies microwave well because fat and sugar attract microwaves — formulas containing too much fat tend to overbake
- Large batches cannot be accommodated by the microwave; drop cookies may be more efficiently baked in conventional oven
- Oatmeal, peanut butter and sugar cookies, and cookies that do not brown normally (i.e. Russian tea cookies) microwave well
- Cookies with colorful ingredients or toppings are appealing
- Stiff cookie dough retains shape best

**Size and shape**
- Bar cookies microwave more evenly
- Drop cookies should be arranged in circle for uniform baking

**Pan preparation**
- Grease bottom of pan lightly
- Don’t grease sides of pan when baking bars
- If approved by manufacturer, shield top corners of bars with foil triangles to prevent overbaked, dried edges

**Baking**
- Elevate baking sheet on inverted saucer to promote more uniform cooking
- Dense, heavy foods (brownies or bars) take longer to bake than light, porous, cake-like bars
- Cool bars on heat-proof surface rather than a wire rack to finish baking
- Brownies and other dense batters may require up to 30 minutes standing time

Quick Breads

**Characteristics of standard product**

**Appearance**
- Even contour
- Pale unless dark ingredients or toppings are used
- Higher volume than conventionally baked, since there is no crust to inhibit rising
- Raisins, fruit and nuts, if used, should be uniformly distributed

**Texture**
- Fine, even grain with no tunnels
- Soft crumb and crust

**Problems with quick breads and causes**

**Edges overcooked**
- Baked at too high a power, dense heavy batters should be microwaved slowly to promote optimum rise and to cook center before edges become overdone
“Fry line” edge on top crust
Sides of pan were greased

Soggy bottom surface
Underbaked
Pan not elevated during baking
Product not allowed to stand in pan after removing from oven so trapped heat can continue baking bottom

Heavy, wet
Too much fruit or oil

Recommendations for successful microwaved quick breads

Recipe
Use recipes with natural color or creative toppings

Size and shape
Round pans and ring molds work well for quick coffeecakes
Arrange muffins in circle if specially designed muffin ring is unavailable
Select pans with straight sides for uniform baking

Pan preparation
Line loaf pans with wax paper to facilitate removal from pan
Don't grease sides of pan
Use double cupcake liners to absorb excess moisture
Fill muffin cups ⅓ full and other pans ⅓ to ½ full to allow for greater batter expansion
If approved by manufacturer, shield ends of loaf with foil strips to avoid overcooked edges

Baking
Coffee cakes with heavy toppings or topping in bottom of pan should be set on inverted dish or saucer to ensure thorough baking
Rotate muffins and quick breads midway through baking cycle for faster, more uniform cooking
Remove foil strips during last few minutes of baking
When done, no unbaked batter should be present at center of dish.
A toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, and top springs back when touched
Top surface may appear moist, but will dry upon cooling
Cool muffins on wire racks
Let loaf breads and coffee cakes stand 5 to 10 minutes on heat-resistant surface before removing from pan, and cool on wire rack

Yeast Breads, Rolls and Coffeecakes

Characteristics of standard product

Appearance
Pale, unless prebaked to desired degree of brownness in conventional oven or topped with colorful ingredients
Dry, gently rounded surface
Evenly shaped
Higher volume than conventionally baked bread since there is no firm crust to inhibit rising

Texture
Soft, dry crust — not crisp
Uniform cell structure

Problems with yeast products and causes

Collapsed, uneven shape
Pan too small
Large air pockets, formed during oven rise, cause bread to fall

Yellow or brown spots
Frequent penetration by microwaves in one area

Soggy bottom crust
Bread dish not elevated during baking

Tough, dry
Overbaked
Baked at too high a power
Recommendations for successful microwaved yeast products

Recipe
Moist, rich coffee cakes microwave well because of high sugar and/or fat content
Select recipes with ingredients that contribute color, such as rye or whole wheat flour, molasses or dark spices
Yeast products can be brushed with milk or melted butter and topped with cheese, poppy seeds, nuts, brown sugar, cinnamon streusel, or cracker crumbs before baking
Glaze or garnish after baking for color; apply toppings generously since surface expands about three times during rising and baking

Size and shape
Yeast dough can be shaped into loaves or rolls and baked in microwave-safe ring molds, round or bundt pans, pie plates or standard loaf pans

Pan preparation
Grease pan lightly and sprinkle with crushed bread or cracker crumbs, wheat germ, herbs or seeds (ingredients not only add color and texture, but absorb excess moisture that forms between the bread and dish during baking)

Baking
To prevent condensation and soggy bottom surface, set baking dish on roasting rack or inverted saucer to elevate above oven floor
Bake one loaf at a time
Rotate pan every 2 to 3 minutes
When done, bread should feel firm and well set, yet spring back when touched

Gluten-Free Baked Goods
Baking without gluten (as found primarily in wheat flour) can be challenging because gluten contributes important properties to various types of baked products like cookies, cakes, pastries and breads. Gluten development is not as important for cookies as it is for cakes, so gluten-free flours can be substituted with similar results. Cakes and other types of batter-based products, like pancakes, need gluten for its gas-retaining ability that produces a light and airy interior structure and a tender crumb.

Recipes calling for 2 cups of flour or less are more successful with gluten-free flour products. Those that use cake flour are easier to adapt as well, because that type of flour contains lower amounts of gluten. White rice flour and starches can be stored in the pantry but because of a higher fat and protein content, whole grain flours and meals should be purchased in smaller quantities and stored in refrigerator or freezer to prevent rancidity. Some types of flours are flour blends. Flours with stronger flavors would make up no more than 25 to 30 percent of the total blend and should be balanced with neutral flours and starches. It is not advised to use stronger flavored flours, such as bean flours, in delicate recipes. A higher percentage of these flours may be used in baked goods that include nuts, chocolate, or a high level of spice. Flour blends for quick breads often contain ½ teaspoon xanthum gum per cup of flour while yeast breads require ¾ teaspoon per cup.

Wheat/gluten-free flour dough will be stickier, heavier and softer than regular wheat flour dough because there is little to no elasticity to the dough without the gluten. For these reasons, using a batter beater, not a dough hook, and a heavy-duty stand-up mixer to beat extra air into the dough and help blend it thoroughly.

Gluten-free baking can be a trial-and-error process. Here are some tips that can help achieve successful results.

To Increase Nutrition
• Use a variety of gluten-free flours in combination to maximize nutrition (Table 1).
• Use whole grain or enriched, gluten-free flours (vitamins and minerals have been added).
• Substitute up to ¼ cup ground flaxseeds plus ¼ cup water for ¼ cup flour in a recipe (flax will absorb more moisture).
### Table 1: Profiles of Alternative Grains and Pseudo-cereals: Gluten-free Flours and Starches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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| **Amaranth**       | Pseudo-cereal native to South America  
Higher in protein, fiber and iron than most grains  
Provides structure and binding capability  
Pleasant, peppery flavor  
Best used in combination with other gluten-free flours |
| **Arrowroot**      | Legume flours include fava beans, garbanzo beans, soybeans  
Good source of protein and fiber  
Best used in combination with other gluten-free flours to balance taste and texture  
Bean flours complement sorghum flour |
| **Bean/Legume**    | Legume flours include fava beans, garbanzo beans, soybeans  
Good source of protein and fiber  
Best used in combination with other gluten-free flours to balance taste and texture  
Bean flours complement sorghum flour |
| **Buckwheat**      | Nutritious grain rich in B-vitamins, magnesium, dietary fiber and antioxidants  
Strong, somewhat bitter flavor  
Best used in pancakes or yeast breads in combination with neutral gluten-free flours |
| **Chia (Salba)**   | Like flax, ground chia seeds can add nutritional value to baked goods  
Neutral in flavor |
| **Corn flour**     | Used in breads, waffles, and tortillas |
| **Corn meal**      | Used in spoon breads and baking powder-leavened breads |
| **Corn starch**    | Works well in combination with tapioca starch |
| **Flax**           | Ground flax seeds increase nutritional value  
High in soluble fiber which allows gel formation; retains moisture and gives spongy texture to baked goods  
Nutty, bold flavor  
Adds color to baked goods |
| **Millet**         | Powdery consistency, color similar to cornmeal  
Delicate, sweet flavor  
Suitable for use in flatbreads and muffins |
| **Montina (Indian rice grass)** | Milled from a grass native to Montana  
High in fiber and protein |
| **Nut**            | Nut flours include almond, pecan, walnut, hazelnut, filbert, and chestnut  
Contribute flavor and nutrition to baked products  
Best used in combination with other gluten-free flours to balance taste and texture |
| **Quinoa**         | Pseudocereal native to South America  
Good source of protein, folate, copper and iron  
Mild, slightly nutty flavor  
Suitable for cookies, cakes and breads |
| **Potato flour**   | Neutral flavor  
Blends well with stronger flavored flours |
| **Potato starch**  | Provides a light consistency to baked products  
Helps retain moisture, combines well with eggs  
Bland flavor, low in fiber and nutrients |
| **Rice, Rice bran**| Comes in brown, white and sweet varieties  
Best used when combined with other gluten-free flours and binders or gums  
Neutral flavor  
Sweet rice flour is used in pie crusts and as a thickener |
| **Sorghum (milo)** | Tropical cereal grass native to Africa  
Sweet, nutty flavor  
Best when used with other neutral gluten-free flours and gums |
| **Teff**           | Small cereal grain native to Africa  
Taste similar to hazelnuts  
Very high in nutrients  
Ability to gel makes it a good thickener |
| **Tapioca**        | Starchy, sweet flavor  
Adds chewy texture to breads  
Used in blends to improve color and crispiness of crusts |
To Increase Moisture
• Add gelatin, extra egg or oil to the recipe.
• Honey or rice malt syrup can help retain moisture.
• Brown sugar often works better than white.
• Dough enhancers improve tenderness and staling resistance.

To Enhance Flavor
• Add chocolate chips, nuts, or dried fruits.
• Double the amount of spices.

To Enhance Structure
• Use a combination of gluten-free flours and mix together thoroughly before adding to other ingredients.
• Add dry milk solids or cottage cheese into recipe.
• Use evaporated milk in place of regular milk.
• To reduce grainy texture, mix rice flour or corn meal with liquid. Bring to a boil and cool before adding to recipe.
• Add extra egg or egg white if product is too crumbly.
• Do not over beat; kneading time is shorter since there is no gluten to develop.
• When using a bread machine, use only one kneading cycle.

Leavening
• Starch flours need more leavening than wheat flours.
• Rule-of-thumb: start with 2 teaspoons baking powder per cup of gluten-free flour and adjust downward as need for altitude.
• If baking soda and buttermilk are used to leaven, add 1⅛ teaspoon cream of tartar for each ½ teaspoon baking soda used to neutralize acid.
• For better rise, dissolve leavening in liquid before adding to other ingredients or add a little extra baking powder.

Texture/Lightness
• Sift flours and starches prior to measuring.

Combine and sift again (together) after measuring to improve the texture of the product.
• Hold gluten-free dough at least 1/2 hour (up to overnight) in the refrigerator to soften and improve the final texture of the product.
• In products made with rice flour or corn meal, mix with the liquid called for in the recipe. Bring to a boil and cool before adding to recipe to help reduce grainy texture.

Baking Pans and Utensils
• Bake in smaller-than-usual portions at a lower temperature for a longer time (small loaf pans instead of standard size; use mini-muffins or English muffin tins instead of large muffin tins).
• Use dull or dark pans for better browning.
• Keep a separate sifter to use with gluten-free flours to prevent crosscontact with gluten.

Freshness
• Gluten-free baked goods can lose moisture and quality quickly. Wrap them tightly and store in the refrigerator or freezer in an air-tight container to prevent dryness and staling.
• Refrigerate all flours for freshness and quality but bring to room temperature before measuring.

Troubleshooting

For bread machine breads

Bread top craters
Too much liquid, add more flour mixture 1 tablespoon at a time

Bread top mushrooms
Too much yeast, reduce by ½ teaspoon

Bread top rough
Not enough liquid. Add more, 1 tablespoon at a time.
Not enough sugar. Add more, 1 tablespoon at a time. Another option is to add more cornstarch to the flour blend.
Bread underbaked
Adjust bread machine cycle.
Bake in conventional oven.
Bake in smaller pans.

For cookies
Cookies spread
Refrigerate dough
Use shortening or part shortening
Butter temperature should be at room temperature
Bake on parchment paper lined cookie sheets
Use cool cookie sheets to slow spread

Browning of cookies
Dark cookie sheets make darker cookies
Baking too long.
Real butter browns best

For muffins and quick breads
• For more height, use a mixer to add more air to batter.

1,000 Gluten-Free Recipes. Carol Fenster, John Wiley & Sons

Evaluating Educational Exhibits
See the scorecard on the state 4-H website, which describes the standards for educational exhibits. These criteria can be applied to posters or free-standing exhibits. The message should make a strong connection to some aspect of the Foods and Nutrition project.

Judges and members should be aware of copyright issues. According to the 4-H Division of the Kansas State Fair premium book, “Exhibitors should avoid using copyrighted materials whenever possible by originating his/her own work. Exhibitors should use with caution a copyrighted and/or trademarked product or service (a brand name, label or product). The intent of using the copyright or trademark materials for educational purposes such as an exhibit, educational poster/display or public presentation is acceptable under the Fair Use (legal use) provision. Fair Use is a provision of the current copyright law that allows reproduction without payment or permission of limited portions of a copyrighted work for educational and other public interest purposes. Regardless of the Fair Use provision, the inference that a specific name brand product is good or bad inherently or through comparison must be done cautiously, using acceptable research/comparison methods and have a disclaimer that the conclusions are those of the participant and not those of K-State Research and Extension. A copyright and trademark are legal methods used by writers, artists, corporations and others to protect their original work. Protected items may range from books to music, logos to computer graphics. Copyrighted and/or trademarked materials used in banners, displays, demonstrations, posters or other activities for endorsement or promotion instead of educational purposes will be disqualified and will not be displayed or receive ribbons or premium. The use and inclusion of specific brand names for educational purposes does not imply endorsement or refusal by the Department of 4-H Youth Development, Kansas State University Agriculture Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service or the State of Kansas.”
Food Gift Packages

This class is growing in popularity at many counties and at the Kansas State Fair. The purpose of the class is to provide exhibitors an opportunity to demonstrate citizenship, food safety, creativity, and food science skills. Many advanced members use this as a way to broaden their foods and nutrition learning experiences. In their desire to experiment, they may, however, choose some unsafe products or techniques. Some 4-H’ers have picked up ideas from popular magazines or craft books for making “fad” food products. These may not be safe food choices.

No alcoholic beverages will be accepted in the gift package class. See the Kansas State Fair Foods and Nutrition Evaluation score card on the State 4-H website for the evaluation standards for this class. Gift packages should be food products appropriate for human consumption.

Judging Scorecards

All items exhibited within the gift basket must conform to the rules and regulations of the foods division. The entry form must include the recipe, the intended use for human consumption, and food safety precautions taken during and after preparation. Entries will count as non-perishable food products, not as an educational exhibit.

All scorecards for the Foods and Nutrition project can be found on the Kansas 4-H website at www.kansas4h.org
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