



Medieval Recipes

Gloucestershire YAC is open to everyone aged 8–16 years and free to attend. YAC clubs get involved in all sorts of activities, including visiting and investigating archaeological sites and historic places, trying out traditional crafts, taking part in excavations, and lots more.

Gloucestershire YAC is based at Gloucester Cathedral. The club meets once a month on the third Saturday of the month. The sessions are free to all; including snacks at each session and trips to museums and sites.

It is an affiliated club of the YAC network, and is run by Gloucester Cathedral staff and volunteers.

If you'd like to get involved with Gloucestershire YAC, or find out more about how the club is run, get in touch with the team using the details below:

Contact: Amelie Wiseman

Tel: 01452521010

Email: education@gloucestercathedral.org.uk

Web: www.https://gloucestercathedral.org.uk/

Young Archaeologists Club Gloucestershire is made possible through the support of Gloucester Cathedral, our wonderful volunteer leaders and our delivery partners at the Museum of Gloucester.

We have been generously supported with grant-aid from the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society.

As part of our exploration into experimental archaeology this year, Gloucestershire Young Archaeologists have explored cookery, herbs as medicine, and gardens through time.

As a result we have compiled a number of recipes that you can try at home yourself.



Translating recipes using Latin dictionaries.

Gingerbread

We visited Gloucester Cathedral Library and explored the historical documents. In the medieval herbal – a book of recipes written in the 1390s by the monks at the Cathedral back when it was St Peters Abbey - we discovered the recipe below.

We worked together to translate the text from Latin to Old English.

De gyngbred' faciendum

¶ Ad faciendum gyngbred' . accipe unam quartam & dimidium mellis purificati . & unam unceam sucuris de cipre & misceantur & coquantur per spacium unius dimidie lente & videatur ne multum coquantur que tunc denigratur illud & si non satis decoquatur hoc post sciri per cultellum positum in illud & frigestium in aere & si illud frigestium super cultellum sic frangibile in ore tunc est satis decoctum . hoc facto deponas illud ab igne et tunc admisteas unam unceam zinzibim ita videlicet admisteas quod sit satis pungens et hoc post sciri que est frigestium sicut prius & positum super linguam.

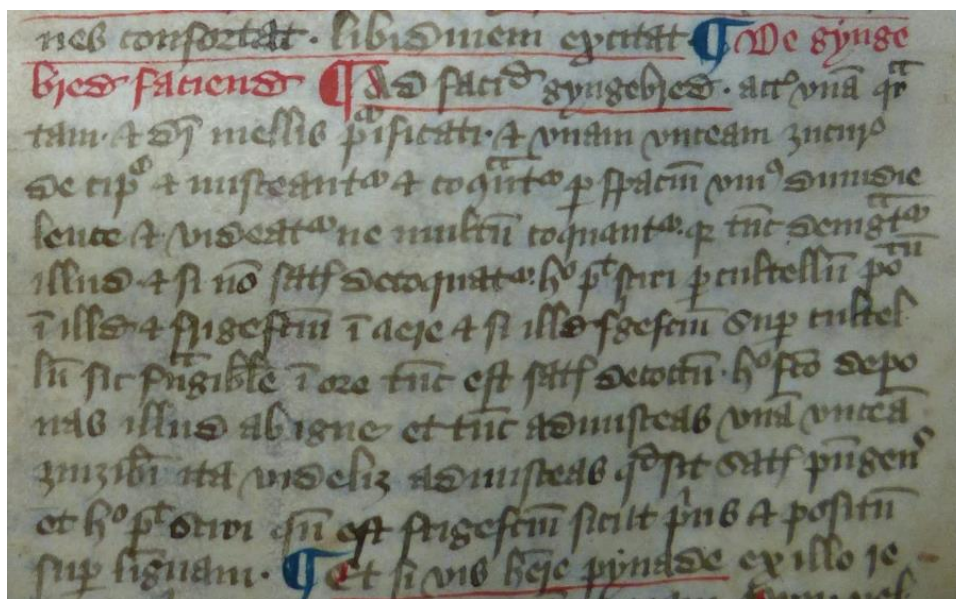


Photo of the recipe in the medieval herbal.

Translation

Take one and a half quarts of purified honey and one ounce of cyprus sugar and mix them and gently cook them for half a day.

And watch that it does not cook too much as then it will blacken and [watch that] it is not cooked enough.

After this, to know [if it is ready], put a knife in it and let it cool in the air. And if when it is chilled on the knife it is brittle in the mouth then it is satisfactorily cooked.

After this take it off the fire and then add to the mixture one ounce of ginger that it is satisfactorily pungent and after that to know that it is, chill it as before and place it on the tongue.



Mixing the honey and sugar together

We realised from the ingredients that the recipe would actually make a ginger caramel that could be formed into sweets.

We looked for similar ingredients to the historical ones - for example Cyprus Sugar is a sticky brown sugar so we used brown sugar in the recipe.

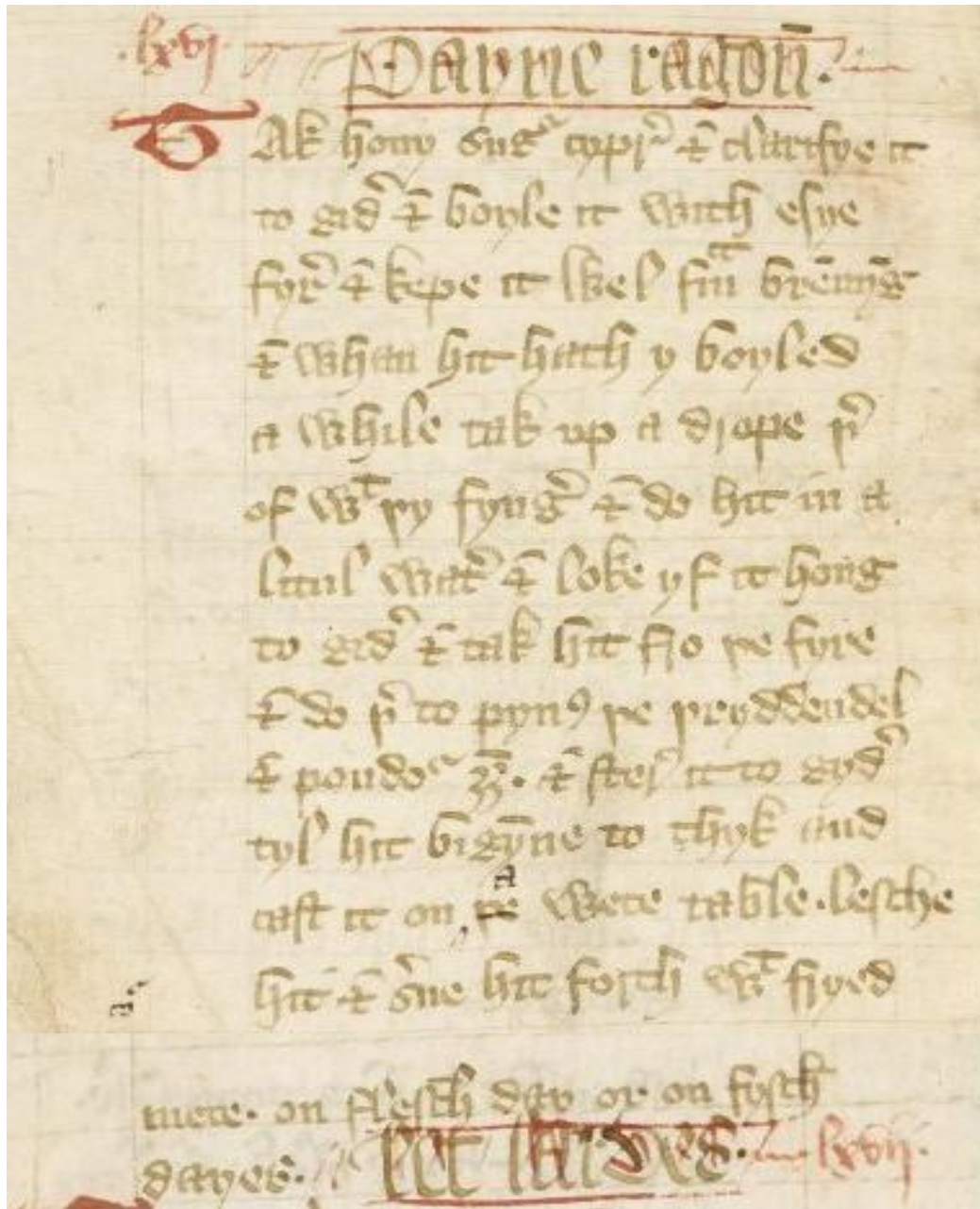
We also made the recipe applying modern cooking techniques from research – cooking the mixture until it had reached ‘hardcrack’ stage – a technique used in sweet making.

The hardcrack stage in sweet making is a critical phase where the sugar syrup reaches a temperature of approximately 149°C to 154°C. At this stage, the syrup sets into a hard, brittle texture, which is essential for making boiled sweets.

Since it was found in a book full of medicine and dye recipes rather than food or meals, we think this was probably used for a sore throat or upset stomach. We still use ginger to cure both of these today!

Pine Nut Candy

We found another interesting sounding recipe online which seemed a bit like medieval peanut brittle – but with pine nuts! Although we haven't tried it yet, we thought a savoury pine nut sweet could be interesting to try. This one, in old English, as known as 'Payne Ragon' and was meant to be a side dish to meat or fish!



Forme of Curye, ab. 1390 A.D - John Rylands University

Take hony fug⁹ and clarifie it togydre. and boile it with esy fyr, and kepe it wel f^o brēnyng and whan it hath yboiled a while. take up a dropeⁿ of wip þy fyn^g and do it in a litel wa^t and loke if it hong^o togyde^r. and take it fro the fyre and do⁹ to the thrid-dendele^r a powd^o gyngen⁹ and stere⁹ it togyd til it bi-gynne to thik and cast it on a wete^r table. lesh it and sūe it forth w^t fryed mete on flessh day⁹ or on fyfshē dayes.

1780 printing edited by Samuel Pegge.

Take honey sugar Cyprus & clarify it together & boil it with easy fire & keep it well from burning & when it has boiled a while take up a drop thereof with your finger & do it in a little water & look if it hangs together & take it from the fire & do thereto pine nuts a third part & powdered ginger & stir it together until it begins to thicken and cast it on a wet table slice it & serve it forth with fried meat on flesh day or on fish days.

1 cup honey

1 cup sugar

1 tsp. ginger

1/3 cup pine nuts

Toss ginger and pine nuts together in bowl, set aside. Combine honey and sugar into large pot with a candy thermometer and place over medium low heat. Stir the honey and sugar mixture constantly until it reaches the hard crack stage on the candy thermometer. Remove from heat then pour honey and sugar mixture over pine nuts and stir to coat the pine nuts. Pour out onto parchment paper. When the mixture starts to set, score with knife into bite size pieces. Let completely cool, break into bite size chunks.

Serves 32.

Pottage

A mixture of seasonal soup vegetables of your choice. We recommend:

- 1 swede
- 2 onions
- 2 carrots
- 1 parsnip

- A knob of butter or cooking oil
- 100g oats (use Gluten free for an allergen free recipe)
- Heaped tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- 570ml of vegetable stock (you could use water for an allergen free recipe)
- Salt & pepper
- 1 tbs dried rosemary
- 1 tbs dried thyme

You can vary the vegetables adding whatever you like and what is in season. Garden herbs and greens were added when they were available.

Making and cooking it

1. Prepare the vegetables by peeling and cutting them as fine as possible.
2. Put the onions in the saucepan with the butter/oil and lightly fry to soften. Once translucent add the other root vegetables. Season with salt and plenty of pepper and add the dried herbs,
3. Add oats and the stock/water and mix well.
5. Cover and cook slowly on a low heat for 20-30 minutes, stirring from time to time (if using greens like cabbage, or soft veg like peas, mangetout add these 15 minutes in to cooking on low heat)

If it looks too dry or stodgy at any point add more liquid – it should have a soup like porridge consistency.

6. Once the oats have thickened the sauce and the vegetables are softened, the pottage is ready. Serve with fresh parsley on top.



Recipe testing: chopping onions and carrots.



Hot Crossed Buns

“Hot cross buns, hot cross buns, one a penny two a penny, hot cross buns”

Just over 900 years ago the Alban bun was first produced on the site of St Albans Cathedral by a medieval monk. According to Ye Book of St Albans, in 1361 the monk – Thomas Roccliffe – “caused a quantity of small sweet spiced cakes, marked with a cross, to be made”. The cakes, which were given away on Good Friday, “so pleased the palates of the people who were the recipients that they became talked about, and various were the attempts to imitate the cakes of Father Roccliffe all over the country, but the recipe of which was kept within the walls of the Abbey”.

Many people now celebrate Easter with ‘Hot Crossed Buns’. Did you know it was once tradition to keep one hung up in your kitchen from Good Friday each year, to bring luck?!

To make your own you will need:

- 625g strong white flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoon mixed spice
- 45g unsalted butter
- 85g caster sugar
- Zest of one lemon
- 1½ teaspoon instant yeast
- 1 beaten egg
- 275ml milk
- 125g dried fruit

Sieve the flour salt and spice together than rub in the butter. Add the sugar, lemon zest and yeast. Add the egg and milk. Mix to form a soft dough. Add the fruit until well combined.

Place the dough on a surface and knead for 5 minutes.

Grease a large mixing bowl then place the dough into the prepared bowl. Cover with a tea towel and leave in a warm place to prove until doubled in size (about 90 minutes).

Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and divide into 12 equal pieces. Roll each into a ball then flatten slightly into a bun shape. Transfer to a baking tray. Spray clingfilm lightly with oil and place on top of the buns. Leave to rise for 40minutes. Preheat the oven to 240c/220 Fan/Gas 8.

Make a paste with flour and water. When the buns have risen, remove the clingfilm, add the paste onto the buns in a cross shape. Place in the oven for about 20minutes or until Golden brown.



An Alban Bun, the origin and inspiration for hot crossed Buns, pictured in front of the Cathedral that named them.

With thanks to <https://englishcathedrals.co.uk/>



WEIRD MEDIEVAL MEDICINES!

- ✱ Dandelion and sugar cough remedy
- ✱ Garlic based meals to prevent strokes
- ✱ Chive leaves used as a anti-septic
- ✱ Tarragon leaves to overcome insomnia
- ✱ Lavender to prevent fainting
- ✱ Rosemary under your pillow to stop nightmares