Salem Fair

JUDGING GUIDELINES

Information gathered and compiled by the Salem Fair Blue Ribbon Exhibits.

INTRODUCTION

Judging exhibits at a county or a state fair is a challenge!!

The information in this Judges' Guideline has been compiled from many Judges' guidebooks found online. We took the best information from each source to share with you. We hope that this Guideline contains information that will assist you, the judge, in evaluating entries. We also hope that it will provide guidance to the many exhibitors who enter into county and state fairs.

Information obtained from the following sources:

Prince William County Fair

Colorado State University

Colorado 4-H Extension

National Center for Home Food Preservation

University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service

College of Family and Consumer Sciences in cooperation with the
College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

North Dakota State University

Cooperative Extension Service | University of Kentucky College of Agriculture

Tasty Tidbits Montana 4-H Guide for Judges

University of Nebraska Lincoln Extension

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

Cooperative Extension Washington State University

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Services

TYPES OF JUDGING

There are two types of judging commonly used in county and state fairs: open judging and closed judging.

At the Salem Fair, we use Closed Judging. Closed Judging is done in a private area, where only the officials are allowed until the judging is completed. This system is used at the Salem Fair because of the large number of entries. The judging is conducted prior to the opening of the Exhibit Hall to visitors.

SYSTEMS OF JUDGING USED

American system - Look at all entries in a particular class and select only one first place, second place, third place, etc. If there are no high quality entries, the judge has the responsibility to place the top exhibit in the appropriate position, even if it is the second or third place.

Danish system - Divide all entries in a particular class into blue, red, and white ribbon groups according to quality. Quality may vary from fair to fair, and every effort should be made to encourage exhibitors. Because only the top from each county may be sent to State Fair, a higher overall quality might be anticipated than at most county fairs.

JUDGING FOOD ENTRIES

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

Judging food entries also requires basic rules and standards. Applying uniform standards is the only way to defend a judge's placing decisions, giving reasons for placements and avoiding pitfalls of personal bias.

Judging food entries requires practice on the part of the judge. It is essential that a judge be well informed about the food entries they are judging and that they know the standards required.

JUDGING IS

Judging is a term that implies a qualified person making decisions based on standards of food quality.

Judging is a matter of selection.

Judging is recognition of quality work on the part of the exhibitor who enters. Each exhibitor thinks his or her food entry is worthy of a prize.

Judging produces a ranking of a food entry against food standards. This ranking affects the exhibitor who has created the food entry. There is a lot of emotion and feeling of self-esteem or worth wrapped up in a food entry.

Judging recognizes outstanding features of a food entry. Judging of a finished food entry is a learning experience. It can help to develop understanding and encourage the exhibitor to do better the next time. It is important that the exhibitor knows the probable cause of a less desirable food entry. When the reasons are known, corrections can be made.

HOW TO JUDGE

When judging evaluate the entry as you see it. Begin and end with a positive approach. Emphasize the strong points; make suggestions for improving the weak points. Evaluate each entry on its own merit.

It is important as a judge to familiarize yourself with the desired characteristics of the food entry to be judged. You should score according to the quality description of the food rather than compare one entry with another.

When you evaluate most food entries 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 one-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 mouth feel.

JUDGES' RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important to familiarize yourself with the desired characteristics of the food to be judged.

As a judge you need to be informed. You need to know basic recipes and the various methods used to produce a quality food entry. For example, a cake may have been made from a standard recipe, used a healthier version of the recipe, or it could have been mixed by any one of several methods. The recipe and the method of mixing can make a difference in the outcome of the food entry. A well-designed recipe yields a good food entry if the method is correctly followed.

As a judge you need to be objective. Fair judging rules out personal preference. You may be called upon to evaluate a food entry you dislike or a food entry prepared differently from your preferred method.

As a judge you need to be positive. Point out what is good about the food entry you are judging. Suggest what could be done to improve it as a learning experience.

As a judge you need to be able to explain. Be sure to provide an explanation as to why an entry was given a certain rating.

JUDGES SHOULD...

Have a pleasant manner; smile; be prompt.

Be flexible; anticipate changes in time needed to do the job right.

Keep up-to-date with current techniques and trends.

Understand the abilities and tastes of the age level of exhibitors that are being judged.

Be familiar with the products being judged.

Take the time to get a general picture of the entries.

Recognize quality standards.

Don't give top placing if entries are not worthy.

Don't rule out unfamiliar ways of doing things if the results obtained are satisfactory. Judge the results that you see, rather than what "might" have been done.

Make quick and firm decisions.

Be as consistent as possible.

TIPS FOR FOOD JUDGES

1. Use all senses - seeing, touching, smelling, hearing, and tasting - in foods judging. Taste is the most subjective sense and it can be a deciding factor when all other factors are equal.
2. Be consistent in the methods you use in judging. This insures fairness to all exhibitors.
3. To check the tenderness and texture of a product: break open muffins, biscuits, rolls, and cookies. Cut loaves of yeast breads and quick breads from one-third to one-half the way in from the end. Cut out a thin slice to view the grain, moisture, blending of ingredients, etc.
4. Cut and remove wedges from cakes. Cut wedges large enough to provide optimum evaluation. Avoid cutting corners of cakes.
5. Open, when necessary, jars of jelly, jam, other preserves and pickles. Cut jelly with a knife to test consistency. Remove a portion of the product and reseal immediately.
6. Do not open canned fruits, vegetables, or meats.

STANDARDS

When standards are given, they are as neat as possible to the combined beliefs of many trained people. Though they must vary enough to make judging possible, standards need not be so rigid as to give exhibitors the false impression that there is only one correct way to do something.

Though many standards are based on scientific principles, others are merely the result of convention and convenience. Therefore, in order to be fair and consistent, the judge must know the standard for evaluating each entry.

Human judgment is individual and subjective. 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 their evaluation.

COOKIES

Cookies come in many shapes and sizes. There are six main types of cookies: rolled, dropped, refrigerator, pressed, bar, and no-bake cookies.

Rolled cookies are made from a stiff dough that is rolled on a lightly floured board to the desired thickness and cut out into shapes.

Dropped cookies are made from a soft dough that is dropped onto a cookie sheet. They may or may not be flattened.

Refrigerator cookies are made from a dough high in fat that is chilled. Cookies are then shaped into balls or sliced into a roll before baking.

Pressed cookies are made from a rich, stiff dough that is pushed through a cookie press.

Bar cookies may be more like a cake or may be chewy and are made from a stiff batter that is baked in a shallow pan and cut into squares or bars when cool.

No-bake cookies are made from ready-to-eat cereals, chow mein noodles, oatmeal, nuts, raisins, or coconut and held together with a cooked syrup. Their quality can become affected by heat and may melt or become sticky or oily, depending on the weather.

STANDARD	PROBLEMS	WHAT HAPPENED
SHAPE		
Uniform	Runs Together	Batter spaced too closely together on baking sheet before baking.
	Irregular shape, peaks or cracks	**Drop Cookies:** Improper dropping of dough Dough too thick or too thin **Rolled or Refrigerator Cookies:** Dough not chilled Thin sharp knife not used for slicing. Cutter not used for slicing.
VOLUME		
Medium, about 2-1/2 – 3”	Flat	Expired baking powder
	Uneven in size	Varying amounts of dough used
	Excessive spreading	Dough too warm Cookie sheets not cooled between use Incorrect oven temperature Liquid not measured accurately Flour not measured accurately Incorrect form of fat used, such as melted, whipped, or oil form.
CRUST		
Dry in Appearance	Shiny or sticky	Too much sugar Didn’t bake long enough

COOKIES (cont'd)

STANDARD	PROBLEMS	WHAT HAPPENED
COLOR		
Uniform	Too dark	Baked too long or oven too hot Baking sheet or pan with dark, non-stick coating or glass pan was used without lowering oven temp 25 degrees.
Light Brown	Pale on top, burned on bottom	Oven rack not in middle of oven For Bar Cookies – the pan may be too deep for the amount of batter in it. The pan should not be more than 2/3 full.
TEXTURE		
Rolled or refrigerator		
Crisp and tender	Soft	Cut too thick
Drop		
Moist, soft, and tender	Tough	Too much flour Dough over handled
Bar		
Moist and tender	Sticky	Too much Sugar
	Dry	Too much shortening, fat, or flour
	Crumbly	Too much flour
	Hard	Oven too hot or baked too long Flour too high in protein
FLAVOR		
Delicate, sweet Well blended	Rancid	Rancid fat or stale ingredients
Characteristic of ingredients	Bitter	Too much baking soda or baking powder or other leavening agent Too much or too little flavoring.
	Doughy, raw flavor	Underbaked Dough too stiff

CAKES

Cakes can be divided into two categories: **shortened** and **unshortened**.

Shortened cakes, also called butter cakes, are leavened by baking powder and/or soda and acid, in combination with steam air. They may contain a large amount of solid or liquid shortening and are baked in almost any size or shape. Liquids, flavorings, spices, and other ingredients help produce a wide variety of cakes. These are heavier cakes than unshortened cakes, yet have a moist tender crumb and a fine, even grain.

Unshortened cakes are also known as foam, chiffon, sponge, or angel food cakes. They contain little or no added fat. They usually contain a large proportion of eggs or egg whites and are leavened by steam and air and are baked in ungreased tube pans.

STANDARD	PROBLEMS	WHAT HAPPENED
SHAPE		
Level, slightly rounded top Symmetrical	Higher on one side	Uneven heat Oven rack not level Paper liner wrinkled Batter not evenly distributed in pan Batter not cut through with knife to release air pockets
Free from cracks or peaks	Runs over the top of pan	Too much batter for pan Oven not hot enough Too much leavening
	Humps or cracks on top	Oven too hot as first Pan too high in oven Too much flour
	Flat (cake doesn’t rise)	Not enough leavening, or not fresh Pan too large Oven too hot Too much liquid or fat
VOLUME		
Light in weight for size	Undersize	Not enough leavening Too much liquid or fat Wrong oven temperature Improper mixing
	Falls	Too much shortening, sugar, or baking powder “Peeking” at the item while baking Oven temp too low Too much batter in pan Under baking Cake was moved while baking
	Low Volume	Not enough leavening Too much batter in pan Incorrect oven temperature or time Too much liquid or shortening Over mixed Pan greased too heavily Incorrect cooling

CAKES (cont'd)

STANDARD	PROBLEMS	WHAT HAPPENED
VOLUME (cont'd)		
Light in weight for size	Low Volume	Not enough leavening Too much batter in pan Incorrect oven temperature or time Too much liquid or shortening Over mixed Pan greased too heavily Incorrect cooling
	Peaked Top	Batter too stiff Too much flour Too hot an oven at the beginning of the baking period.
COLOR		
Dry in Appearance	Uneven browning	Uneven oven heat Insufficient leavening Under mixed Too much leavening Insufficient creaming, mixing, or sifting Incorrect oven temperature and/or baking time Incorrect placement of pan in oven Pan too large (too light) Too much sugar (too dark)
CRUST		
Smooth and uniform	Hard	Wrong oven temp or baking time
	Sticky or shiny	Not baked long enough
	Tough	Too much sugar Not enough shortening or sugar Too much flour
	Sticks to pan	Over mixing Left in pan too long Didn't grease pan enough
	Moist	Insufficient or improper cooling Wrong oven temp or baking time Humid storage conditions
	Cracked	Too hot an oven at the beginning of the baking period Batter too stiff Pan too narrow or too deep

CAKES (cont'd)

STANDARD	PROBLEMS	WHAT HAPPENED
TEXTURE		
Tender, moist crumb	Tough Cake	Not enough shortening, sugar or baking powder.
Delicate, sweet Well blended Characteristic of ingredients	Bitter	Too much baking soda, baking powder or other leavening agent. Too much or too little flavoring.
	Rancid or stale	Rancid fat or stale ingredients (old, or rancid nuts, strong or rancid vegetable oil, poor quality eggs).
	Uneven flavor	Under mixed
	Strong	Too much of an ingredient

QUICK BREAD LOAVES and COFFEE CAKES

QUICK BREAD LOAVES

These are commonly made of fruit and/or nut mixtures. They are fast and easy to make. The ingredients, method of mixing, and baking technique are similar to making muffins. Some are also made more like a cake. Recipes typically will have interesting variations with the addition of nuts, fruits, cereals, and other types of flour. Quick breads are not always in loaf pans! For example, corn bread is baked in a shallow pan and spoon breads are made in casserole dishes or layer cake pans. Some may be baked in covered cans or special molds.

Why do many quick breads get a crack in the top? Some recipes may have a crack while others do not. Baked products should not be scored down because of a crack. However, some people do prefer an uncracked crust. The crack develops because there is large mass of batter in the loaf pan that heats slowly. Smoother crusts develop when there is a longer time for the leavening agent to react. This results in an increase in volume before the crust sets, resulting in a smooth crust. If the baking is rapid, a
crust with a cracked top and a more solid crumb will develop.

Using long, narrow pans will also result in a crease or crack on top. Consistency of the batter will influence the depth of the crack. Batter touches the edge of the pan first. As the batter warms to baking temperature, it thins and allows a film of fat and
sugar to run towards the center of the crust. This shiny line or sticky crack then forms down the center of the loaf. A crack may also form when the underlayer or unbaked batter “erupts” when the leavening agent reacts.

Ways to prevent a cracked crust include:

1. Preheating the oven to 350º and bake the bread as soon as it is mixed.
2. Preheat the oven to 375 - 400º. Cover quick bread and allow it to stand at room temperature 20 – 30 minutes before baking.
3. Tent a piece of heavy foil over the top of the loaf pan filled with batter. Allow the foil to remain until the batter rises and begins to brown. Remove the foil without touching the soft crust. This keeps the top moist and prevents a crack from forming.

COFFEE CAKES

This is a sweet, leavened quick bread like cake often made with or topped with nuts, raisins, fruits, cinnamon, and glazed with melted sugar, frosting, or streusel. Coffee cakes may also be classified as coffee breads, coffee rolls/buns, and Danish pastry coffee cakes.

There are two ways to categorize coffee cakes according to the leavening agent. Coffee cakes may be leavened with baking powder or yeast. The cakes made with baking powder involve a creaming process or muffin/quick bread method (stirring ingredients together separately and then combining quickly etc.) The yeast raised cakes are prepared with a fermentation process and involve several mixing methods, depending on the recipe. Some recipes for yeast based coffee cakes are the same sweet bread recipe used for rolls.

Some coffee cakes have a layer of filling that may contain fruit, jam or preserves, nuts, spices, or chocolate. Other cakes just have these ingredients mixed right into the batter. If a coffee cake's batter contains sour cream instead of milk, the cake will have a richer texture and taste. Coffee cakes commonly have a streusel crumbly topping made of butter, sugar, flour, and spices. Sometimes nuts and oats are also added. The streusel is sprinkled on the top of cakes, muffins, sweet breads, or crisps before baking. When baked the streusel mixture becomes nice and crisp and adds both taste and texture to the baked good.

Coffee cakes may be baked in any size or shape of pan. Many are in Bundt, tube, fluted or loaf pans which can produce several slices of cake. Others may be baked in oblong, square, round, or loaf pans or muffin tins.

QUICK BREAD LOAVES and COFFEE CAKES

STANDARD	PROBLEMS	WHAT HAPPENED
SHAPE		
Slightly rounded top	Peaked	Batter too stiff Batter mixed too much Pan too small
	Cracked	Oven too hot
	Too smooth crust	Batter over mixed
	Low volume	Pan too large Not baked immediately after mixed
	Center crack wet	Not baked long enough Oven too hot
	Dipped center (fallen)	Oven not hot enough Not baked long enough
COLOR		
Evenly colored, medium to dark brown	Pale	Not enough fat or sugar Wrong proportion of ingredients Bananas not ripe enough
	Dark	Oven too hot
	Uneven Coloring	Pan not in middle of oven Too many pans in the oven Uneven heat in the oven
TEXTURE		

Tender, moist crumb	Tough	Too little fat Too much mixing Too stiff batter
Round, even cells	Tunnels and holes Coarse, porous Dry, crumbly	Batter over mixed Batter too stiff Too much flour
Center crack dry	Soggy	Baked bread wrapped before completely cooling Not baked long enough Too much fruit
FLAVOR		
Rich, appealing flavor	Off flavor	Stale ingredients Too much leavening
	Flat, bland flavor (for banana bread)	Bananas not ripe enough Not enough salt
TOPPING		
Evenly spread	Too thick	Used more than necessary
	Strong flavored	Too much cinnamon

PIES

Only non-perishable pies are allowed to be judged or exhibited. This includes fruit or pecan pies. Custard or meringue pies are not accepted. Fruit filling pies usually consist of fruit, fruit juice, sugar, and a thickener such as cornstarch and/or tapioca. When baked, a typical homemade double-crust pie should have a blistery, pebbled surface that promises flakiness. It should be baked to a golden brown perfection, with a slightly, darker brown around its edges. It should be rolled fairly thin (1/8-inch) so that the entire crust will be crisp and fragile and easily cut with a fork, flaky and tender but at the same time not too crumbly.

STANDARD	PROBLEMS	WHAT HAPPENED
CRUST (Outside Characteristics)		
Evenly browned appearance, light and flaky texture	Too light OR too dark	Incorrect oven temperature Incorrect baking time Rolled out too thick or too thin
	Shrinks in pan	Dough handled too much Dough stretched too tight in pan Dough stored too long in refrigerator. Not pricked enough Used non-stick pie pan and did not secure sides
FILLING (Outside Characteristics)		
Bubbling through top of crust	Does not fill crust	Not enough filling used Shrinkage of raw fruit not considered
	Filling spills out on crust	Oven temperature too low Insufficient sugar and/or fruit Insufficient thickening Too much sugar Upper crust shrinkage – not sealed properly
CRUST (Inside Characteristics)		
Flaky and tender, evenly baked	Tough	Dough too warm when rolled out Too much water Over mixed Too much handling Too much flour used when rolling Not enough fat
	Crumbly	Improper cutting of fat Not enough water Too much fat Self rising flour was used
	Undercooked	Under mixed Used a shiny pie pan Baked pie on pan or cookie sheet

PIES (cont'd)

STANDARD	PROBLEMS	WHAT HAPPENED
FILLING (Inside Characteristics)		
Tender pieces of fruit, adequately baked and of equal size and shape	Undercooked	Under baked
	Dry	Oven temp set too low
	Layer of thickening	Not enough liquid
	Gummy	Too much thickening Under baked
		Too much thickening
FLAVOR		
Fresh flavor, with no off flavor from fat in crust, and a good proportion of ingredients – not too sweet or spicy	Poor flavor	Ingredients not fresh – rancid oil, old nuts, poor quality
	Strong flavor	Too much cinnamon or spice
	Too sweet	Too little fruit and fruit juices in proportion to sugar
	Doughy	Dough rolled out too thick Incorrect proportion of ingredients
	Excess of any flavor	Under mixed
	Raw, starchy flavor	Undercooked filling (thickening agent)

YEAST BREADS

There is little difference in the variety of ingredients used in yeast breads. The physical characteristics of these products are very similar. Yeast breads contain little fat or eggs, compared to a sweet dough recipe. Sweet rolls and coffee cakes 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 specialty yeast products and a loaf of bread are similar. Adequate development of gluten either by kneading or beating is important for a successful 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. Batter breads have a more open grain, lacy appearance, and an uneven surface.

The perfect yeast bread is varied. It can be coarse, heavy, crusty, chewy and flavorful, while others are light, tender and delicate in taste. Flavors in yeast breads can range from sweet to savory to mildly sour. Bread dough can be baked in loaf pans, as free-form loaves on cookie sheets or as individual-sized buns, twists, or rolls.

STANDARD	PROBLEMS	WHAT HAPPENED
SHAPE		
Well proportioned Evenly rounded Slight break and shred on edge of pan	Odd shape Cracks and bulges Higher on one side	Improper molding Raised too long or too short Pan too large or too short Rapid cooling in draft Dough too stiff Incorrect oven temperature Pans too close together Uneven heat
FLAVOR		
Blended flavor	Flat	Too little salt
	Yeasty	Too warm rising period Poor yeast or flour or too much yeast Too little sugar Baked too slowly or incompletely
	Musty	Moldy flour or ingredients Incomplete baking
	Sour	Not enough salt Rising time too long Too much eggs, milk, or sugar in proportion to yeast
	Rancid	Rancid fat

YEAST BREADS (cont'd)

COLOR		
Inside appearance: creamy white with silky sheen (or appropriate coloring for grain used)	Dark	Too cool oven Improper rising Stale yeast
	Dark streaks	Dough not covered when rising – surface of dough became dry before shaping Oven temperature too cool Bowl greased too heavily Rising time too long Improper or poorly mixing Too much flour or yeast added
	Poor color	Dough not covered during rising Rising time too long Too much flour during kneading and shaping Uneven mixing or baking
CRUST		
Outside appearance: crisp and tender, even golden brown	Tough and hard	Baked too slow Drying of top Uneven heat or over baked Dough not kneaded enough Too much flour during mixing and kneading
	Pale	Too slow oven Too much salt Too little sugar Dough became dry during rising Rising time too short Under baked
	Too brown on top	Oven too hot or baked too long Incorrect location in oven Rising time too short
	Not brown on sides	Pans too shiny – heat reflected away from sides Poor pan placement – overcrowding Uneven heat in oven
	Uneven, bulgy	Uneven shaping Pan not in middle of oven Insufficiently proofed
	Raw, starchy flavor	Undercooked filling (thickening agent)

YEAST ROLLS

STANDARD	PROBLEMS	WHAT HAPPENED
SHAPE		
Uniform size Attractive shape	Uneven shape	Improper shaping Uneven time in oven Rising time too long or too short
VOLUME		
Light in size	Heavy	Low grade flour Poor yeast Under kneaded Too cool while rising
	Poor volume	Under proofed
FLAVOR		
Blended flavor Slightly sweet and nutty Richer than bread	Flat	Too little salt
	Yeasty	Raised too long Too warm while rising
	Sour	Poor yeast or flour Raised too long Too slow baking Too warm while baking
COLOR		
Uniform Golden brown	Streaks	Poor mixing
	Drying of dough at top	Adding flour at last stage
	Dark crumb	Too cool oven Stale yeast
	Pale	Too slow oven Too little sugar Too much salt
CRUST		
Tender, crisp Smooth crust	Tough	Under proofed – not raised enough Low grade flour Too much salt
	Cracks and bulges	Over handling of dough Not raised properly in oven Cooled to quickly

YEAST ROLLS (cont'd)

TEXTURE		
Tender, elastic crumb	Thick	Too slow baking
Slightly moist	Crumbly	Soft wheat flour Too little kneading
Fine cells, soft and velvety		
	Compact at bottom	Not raised enough Under baked
	Sticky	Steamed by cooling in pan
	Coarse	Poor yeast Low grade flour Raised too much

MUFFINS

Muffins may be plain, sweet, made with cereal, fruit or nuts and differ in appearance, texture, and flavor. Different muffins have different standards – a bran muffin is of heavier texture than a plain muffin, but will have similar characteristics. Muffins are smaller versions of quick-breads and are easy to make. There are two types of muffins: bread-like and cake-like, each mixed using a different method and containing different proportions of fat and sugar to flour. Less sugar and fat makes a bread-like muffin with a more coarse interior crumb than a cake-like muffin. The fat used is usually in liquid form, either an oil or melted butter. Stirring must be kept to a minimum so the gluten is not overdeveloped. The interior crumb has small, and more irregular air holes. A higher sugar and butter content makes a cake-like muffin. The butter (room-temperature) and sugar are creamed together and need more stirring to develop the desired structure. The interior crumb should have smaller air holes and tender, more like a cake.

STANDARD	PROBLEMS	WHAT HAPPENED
SHAPE		
Round, pebbled top	Knobs or peaks on top	Too much stirring Too stiff mixture Uneven oven temperature
CRUST		
Tender	Tough	Too much flour Too little fat or sugar
Slightly rough, pebbly surface		Over mixed
	Shiny surface	Too much mixing Egg and milk insufficiently mixed
	Hard crust	Too long baking Too high temperature Too close to heating element in oven
	Rough surface with sharp edges	Under mixed Too much flour
FLAVOR		
Pleasing	Streaks of ingredients	Under stirring
	Off flavor	Too much baking powder Rancid fat
	Bitter, dry	Under stirred
	Flat	Too little salt

MUFFINS (cont'd)		
COLOR		
Golden brown \	Unevenly browned	Too hot oven Pans filled too full
	Pale	Wrong proportions
Creamy white inside, or paler in color than crust	Dark sides	Too much baking soda or sugar Too much batter in muffin cup
	Too brown	Over mixed
	Gray interior	Too cool oven Sides of muffin tin greased
	Yellow spots	Too much sugar Wrong time and temperature Too much leavening Ingredients insufficiently blended
SIZE		
Large in proportion to weight	Compact	Wrong time and temperature improperly mixed Insufficient leavening Too much flour or liquid
TEXTURE		
Moist and tender	Harsh, dry crumb	Over baking Too stiff batter
Rather coarse, but free from tunnels		Too much flour
	Tunnels	Over stirring – too much air Too much liquid Inaccurately measured Too little fat or sugar
	Heavy and irregular	Insufficient leavening Too much egg
	Tough	Not enough shortening
	Crumbly, dense	Under stirring – not enough air

BISCUITS AND SCONES

There are two types of biscuits – rolled and dropped. Both are leavened by baking powder and contain similar ingredients but differ in proportion of liquid and method of preparation. Rolled biscuits are more identical and dropped biscuits are more irregular in shape. Scones are similar to biscuits. They have a soft and sticky dough that has the ratio of one-part liquid to three parts wheat flour. They need to be baked in a moderate to hot oven so the dough sets quickly thereby producing a light scone with a light to golden brown floury top and bottom with white sides. The texture of the interior of the scone should be light and soft, and white in color. Scones have some height from rising in the oven, though not as much as a biscuit, are lightly browned on the outside and cooked all the way through on the inside. When opened, they should be slightly crumbly, tender and almost cake-like or flaky depending on how they are made.

STANDARD	PROBLEMS	WHAT HAPPENED
SHAPE		
Smooth, level top Straight sides	Uneven shape	Improper cutting, or cutter twisted during shaping
	Uneven sides	Dough not uniform in thickness Uneven heat Improper mixing or careless handling
FLAVOR		
Delicate	Bitterness or soapy flavor Bland, off flavor	Too much baking soda or baking powder Ingredients not blended thoroughly Stale ingredients or overworked the dough
VOLUME		
About twice unbaked size expired or not fresh	Flat and heavy	Incorrect proportions - too much shortening or not enough leavening Under baked Too much flour or liquid Improperly mixed
	Coarse, uneven	Improper mixing Too much leavening Ingredient inaccurately measured
	Low volume	Improper manipulation Not enough leavening Ingredients inaccurately measured Wrong time and temperature

BISCUITS AND SCONES (cont'd)

COLOR		
Creamy white Uniform, without streaks	Yellow specks	Uneven distribution of soda or baking powder Baking soda not dissolved or neutralized
	Uneven brown	Flour on surface
	Pale crust	Too slow oven Too stiff dough or excess flour used
	Dark bottom crust	Baked on darkened pan
TEXTURE		
Moist and tender Flaky, slightly crumbly, pulls apart in thin layers Fine, even holes	Tough	Lack of fat
	Coarse, porous, harsh dry crumbs	Improper mixing and too stiff dough Over baked Too much fat or not enough shortening Shortening under or over mixed with flour
	Crumbly, oily	Too much fat

BREAD MACHINE BAKED GOODS

Issues that are of importance when using a bread machine include having ingredients at room temperature, room drafts, and humidity of the room. Bread flour is an important ingredient, as bread machine loaves need the greater protein and gluten strength to produce a loaf with good volume and a fine texture. Extra gluten must be added to recipes using whole wheat flour.

STANDARD	PROBLEMS	WHAT HAPPENED
SHAPE		
Well proportioned Evenly rounded	Falls during baking	Loaf too big for bread machine Humidity too high Proportion of ingredients wrong Temperature of liquids too high
CRUST		
Crisp and tender, evenly raised	Cratered sunken top	Too much yeast or liquid Not enough flour Temperature of liquid too high High humidity or temperature in room Proofing too fast
	Mushroom top – rises then falls during baking time	Too much yeast Too much sugar Needs shorter cycle
	Too thick	Need lighter setting Left in pan too long
	Gnarly appearance	Too little liquid Too much flour
COLOR		
Even golden brown	Pale	Not enough sugar Baking temperature not high enough Crust set at too light of a color
VOLUME		
Light for size	Loaf does not rise	Flour too low in protein content Needed extra gluten Too much salt – no more than 1/4 tsp. per cup of flour Not enough sugar or old yeast Heavy or coarse ingredients Liquid too cold Ingredients not measured correctly
	Uneven top	Too much salt, sugar, or yeast
	Rises too high	Recipe too large for bread machine

BREAD MACHINE BAKED GOODS (cont'd)

TEXTURE		
Tender, elastic, slightly moist	Too moist	Set in pan too long No cool down cycle
	Dry and stiff	Too little yeast Not enough liquid Not enough flour
	Wet and sticky	Too much liquid Too little liquid
	Crumbly	Too little liquid or fat

GLUTEN FREE BAKED PRODUCTS

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 – 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 xanthan gum per cup of flour while yeast breads require 3/4 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 unpredictable. Use the following suggestions to help evaluate products made from gluten-free flour.

Baking Tips

TO INCREASE MOISTURE

Add gelatin, extra egg, or oil to recip.

Honey or rice malt syrup can help retain moisture.

Brown sugar 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.

GLUTEN FREE BAKED PRODUCTS (cont'd)

TO ENHANCE STRUCTURE

Use a combination of gluten-free flours and mix together thoroughly before adding 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 shorted since there is no gluten to develop.

When using a bread machine, only use 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 needed for altitude.

If baking soda and buttermilk are used to leaven, add 1 1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar for each 1/2 teaspoon of baking soda used to neutralize acid.

For better rise, dissolve leavening in liquid before adding to other ingredients or add a little baking powder.

TEXTURE/LIGHTNESS

Sift flours and starches prior to measuring, then combine and sift again (together) after measuring to improve the texture of the product.

Hold gluten-free dough to 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, the bring to a boil and cool before adding to recipe can help reduce the grainy texture.

BAKING PANS/UTENSILS

Bake in smaller than usual portions at a lower temperature or 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 flour to prevent cross-contact with gluten.

FRESHNESS

Gluten-free baked goods can lose moisture and quality quickly, so wrap them tightly and store in the refrigerator or freezer in an airtight container to prevent dryness and staling.

Refrigerate all flours for freshness and quality but bring to room temperature before measuring.

CANDY

When judging candy look for:

1. Taste
2. Texture – Grainy
3. Appearance – Shape/Molded
4. Color
5. Freshness
6. White Spots (choc. is old)
7. Water in chocolate
8. Overcooked Chocolate
9. Too perfect – may be commercial.

Types of Candies:

1. Chocolate Candy
2. Hard Candy
3. Chewy Candy
4. Whipped Candy
5. Grained (Cream fudge, Caramels)
6. Cotton Candy (Crystals)
7. Marzipan (Pasti)
8. Licorice
9. Jelly Beans

Outside Appearance:

1. Shape – molded
2. Surface – thick or thin
3. Size – uniform pieces

Inside Appearance:

1. Texture – smooth & creamy
2. Color – White spots? Water? Overcooked?

Flavor:

1. Eating quality
2. Smell
3. Taste – too waxy
4. Filling – freshness
5. Is it pleasant and satisfying?
6. Sweet to the taste?
7. Delicate flavoring

Food Preservation Judging Criteria

Criteria

Fruits and Vegetables	%
Appearance: uniform size, shape, color, pack full, not crowded or fancy, free from blemishes	60
Liquid: free from sediment	30
Container: perfect seal, clean, neat, label	10
Total	100

Pickles and Relishes	%
Flavor: pleasing, well blended	50
Texture: crisp, tender, firm	35
Appearance: clean, uniform size	10
Container: clean, neat, right size, label	5
Total	100

Jellies and Preserves	%
Flavor: pleasing, natural taste, syrup not runny, sticky, gummy or tough	35
Consistency: holds shape, tender, free from crystals	30
Appearance: clear, good color	25
Container: clean, neat, labeled	10
Total	100

Specifics

Recommended headspace is ¼ “ for jams, jellies, preserves, juice and purees, ½ “ for other fruit products, pickles and tomatoes processed in water bath, 1” for vegetables, meats and other products processed in pressure canner

Low head space could indicate not removing the air bubbles before processing

Debris or material at the bottom of the jar could mean improper cleaning before processing.

Carrot cores should be small, peas even in size and color, tomato juice not separated, applesauce not watery, berries recognizable shape

Over maturity is judged by excess starchiness in peas and beans, softness or mushiness of fruits and some vegetables, floating seeds (especially in cucumber products, dull or unnatural colors

Judging Guidelines:

- If judging youth, please consider the age of youth being judged.
- Ribbons should be given to the top three items.