

And the Winner is....A Guide to Judging Foods

Karen Blakeslee, M.S.

<http://www.rrc.k-state.edu/judging/index.html>

April 2023



In General...

As a foods judge, know basic food science principles, nutrition knowledge, sensory qualities of optimum baking, and know factors for success and failure. Do your best to put aside personal likes and dislikes for making an impartial evaluation.

If you have any food allergies or sensitivities, you should not be a foods judge.

Why is Food Safety Important?

- Every time you cook, it is a science experiment!
- Not all recipes are appropriate for the fair
- Be smart about food safety

Is This Food Exhibit Safe?

- Does it require refrigeration?
- Would you eat this food at room temperature?
- Will this product hold up to its standard when it is judged or displayed?
- **Food safety violations will be disqualified!**

Foods NOT Safe or Recommended for Fairs

- Icings and frosting made with raw eggs
- Cream cheese frosting
- Chocolate ganache
- Heavy cream frosting
- Lemon curd
- Fresh fruit or vegetable as garnish
- Dairy based fillings such as cream cheese, sour cream or ricotta cheese
- Certain pies
 - Custard pie
 - Cream/meringue pie
 - Fresh strawberry pie
 - Chiffon pie
- Bread or cake baked in a canning jar

- Contains hard liquor, beer, wine
- Baked in clay flower pots, not food grade
- Friendship bread
 - Unless shown the starter was refrigerated
- Bacon or meat
- Flavored oils, not acidified left at room temperature
- No raw flour – no bake cookies – **NEW!**

Foods Safe for the Fair

- Dairy products incorporated into the entire batter
- Eggs mixed into the entire batter
- Egg glazes on top of baked goods then baked
- Egg white powder (Meringue powder)
- Eggs in pie crusts
- Fruit baked into a product
- Baked fruit pie
- Pecan or any nut pie
- Frostings
 - High sugar content
 - Small amount of liquid
 - Flavorings (cream cheese, fruit flavor)
 - Shortening holds up to heat better
 - German Chocolate cake frosting is like pecan pie
 - Commercially made frosting
- Cheese mixed into entire batter
 - Hard cheese
 - Cottage cheese
 - Ricotta cheese
 - Cream cheese



State Fair 2023

For frostings and fillings, must show calculation to prove it contains at least 65% sugar. See <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3544.pdf> for details.

And the Winner is....A Guide to Judging Foods

Karen Blakeslee, M.S.

<http://www.rrc.k-state.edu/judging/index.html>

April 2023



Tools for Judging Foods

- Cutting board
- Serrated knife
- Small paring knife
- Small offset spatula
- Fork
- Hand towels
- Wash cloths
- Water to drink
- Carrots or plain crackers to cleanse your mouth of strong flavors



General Judging Steps

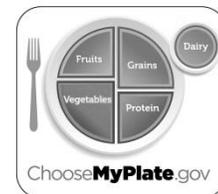
- Look over the entire product, color, shape, size
- Lift the product for lightness and texture
- Touch the product for texture
- Cut or break open the product
 - Across the center, side to side
 - Slice of cake, pie
 - Break or cut cookies
- Break off a piece to check texture, grain, tenderness, lightness
- Smell it for characteristic or unpleasant odor
- Taste for flavor and mouthfeel

Most Common Baking Problems

- Incorrect ingredient measurements
- Overmixing and Undermixing
- Oven problems
 - Wrong oven temperature
 - Underbaked/Overbaked
- Baking pan issues
 - Greasing pan too much
 - Wrong size of pan
 - Type of pan

Is it Nutritious?

- Prize winners do not always equal high fat or high sugar!
- Consider Dietary Guidelines
- Use of whole grains, fiber
- Low in fat
- Low in sodium
- Reduce added sugars
- Proper portion size
 - Bar cookies – 2-inch
 - Drop cookies – 2 half dollar coins
 - Cinnamon roll and biscuit – hockey puck
 - Dinner roll – bar of soap
 - Muffin – tennis ball



Other information

- **When Are Baked Goods Done?**
 - <https://www.rrc.k-state.edu/doc/judging/When-are-Baked-Goods-Done.pdf>
- **Read the Fair book Rules!**
- Judge's Guide for Foods and Nutrition Exhibits
 - <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/4H488.pdf>
- Labels
 - http://www.kansas4-h.org/events-activities/fairs/kansas-state-fair/docs/foods-and-nutrition/Foods_Label.pdf