

HINTS AND TIPS FOR SHOWING

Always read the schedule very carefully and make sure you are giving what is asked for.

Co-operative Tables: The cloth should be ironed and of a suitable size for the table. If you are working in a confined space make sure your cloth doesn't go over onto the next table. Choose the colour carefully to show off the articles to their best advantage. Be wary of too many patterns or lace cloths. How many items are asked for, it is easy to make a mistake here so be careful. The set-up should not be too flat, it will not show the items very well, try and raise one or two articles if possible. It may look better if you keep food and craft items separated. Any stands etc. should be covered to match the display unless they are suitable to be seen. Cookery items should be neat and well presented. Use doyleys under sweet cakes and biscuits. Items that need to be cut e.g. flans, should not have a doyley under them. Flans or quiches should be turned out of their tins for showing. Small garnishes such as parsley, tomatoes, cucumber etc. can be used on the dish to enhance it. Savoury flans should be in a smooth sided tin and sweet in a fluted tin. Drinks should always fill the jug or bottle they are being displayed in. Bottles should be clearly labelled and clean. Provide a glass for tasting. Fresh flower arrangements are a housewives item and dried flower arrangements are handcraft. If putting flowers on a co-operative table be careful of the size. If accessories are allowed don't use too many and make sure the items for judging are clearly labelled or obvious. All craft items should be well finished and suitable to the theme. Try and use different crafts if you are given a choice. Remember that individual items should be small.

Individual Entries: All baking should be small and neat. Biscuits should be crisp, even cream filled ones. Scones and pancakes should not be too big either. If a particular flavour is being asked for it should be quite strong, e.g. cheese in cheese scones, or peppermint in peppermint creams. When displaying items on a plate, make sure you have the correct number. Pastry - shortcrust pastry should be crisp and if in a flan or tart should be properly cooked underneath, can be baked blind first if necessary, bakes better in a tin rather than a ceramic dish. Sponges - are they to be filled or filled and iced? If a sponge is iced all over it will be a gateau and could lose marks. Butter-cream piped round the middle gives a nice finish. Use bought jam to fill a sponge, it doesn't soak into the sponge like home-made does. When cutting tray bakes cut away the edges and try and cut them straight. Keep the edges neat and they should all be of the same size. If you are asked for squares then cut them square. Fruit cakes should be made a week or so in advance of a show as they will mature and cut much better than freshly made ones. Fruit loaves and gingerbreads should also be made a day or two in advance. Sponges should be made the day before. Always line your baking tins carefully with baking parchment as this will give a much better result, the cake won't have rough edges or stick to the tin. Peel off the paper before storing and displaying. Preserving - all jars should be clean and polished. They should be labelled with date and name of the produce. The jars should be filled right to the top and sealed with a waxed disc and cellophane or a new screw top lid. These should be put on when the jam is hot. Sealing is very important as this is what keeps the jam fresh. If you are using a pretty cover it should still be properly sealed first. If using a screw top lid, the lid should pop when the seal is broken. Marmalade with peel should have the fruit cooked slowly for a couple of hours before adding the sugar to soften the peel. Allow the preserve to cool a little before pouring into jars to prevent any peel or fruit floating to the top. Any fruit should be under rather than over ripe. Avoid over boiling as the preserve will be too dark in colour and won't set properly. Always allow the sugar to melt slowly before boiling. Once boiling, keep a fast rolling boil. Jelly should be clear with a good colour. For showing it is best to make smaller quantities of jam as it will be easier to set and you will get a better result. Chutneys should be made a few months in advance to allow them to mature and the flavours to mingle. If made too near the show, the spices and vinegar will be too strong. The chutney should be cooked slowly till it is thick, then put into jars and covered like jam or with wax. When you tilt the jar you should not see any liquid.