

## Shrewsbury Cakes

*From A Delightfull daily exercise for Ladies and Gentlewomen by John Murrell (1621) [as reproduced in "Dining with William Shakespeare," by Madge Lorwin, p. 317]*

*Take a quart of very fine flower, eight ounces of fine sugar beaten and cersed [sieved], twelve ounces of sweete butter, a Nutmegge grated, two or three spoonfulls of damaske rose-water, worke all these together with your hands as hard as you can for the space of halfe an houre, then roule it in little round Cakes, about the thickness of three shillings one upon the other, then take a silver Cup or glasse some foure or three inches over, and cut the cakes in them, then strowe some flower upon white papers & lay them upon them, and bake them in an Oven as hot as for Manchet, set up your lid [keep the oven door closed] till you shall see them white, if any of them rise up clap them downe with some clean thing, and if your Oven be not too hot, for they must not looke browne but white, and so draw them forth & lay them one upon another till they be could, and you may keep them halfe a year, then new baked are best.*

1/4 cup sugar	1/2 cup butter
1 cup sifted unbleached flour	1 tsp. nutmeg
1/2 Tbsp. rosewater	

Cream the sugar and butter together until fluffy. Sift the flour with the nutmeg. Add the rosewater to the sugar-butter mixture and stir in the dry ingredients only until blended; then chill the dough for 10 minutes. Sprinkle your work surface with flour and turn the dough out onto it. Pat the dough into a ball, then roll it out gently to 1/4 inch thick. Cut out the cakes with a 3-4" glass or cookie cutter. Place them on an unbuttered cookie sheet an inch apart and bake at 350° until slightly brown around the edges--from 12-15 minutes. Cool on a wire grill and store in an airtight container.

## Gyngere Brede

*From the Harleian ms 279.11.4, (15th c.), [as reproduced in Duke Cariadoc's "A Collection of Medieval and Renaissance Cookbooks," Vol. 1, p. 59]*

*Take a quart of hony & sethe it, & skeme it clean; take safroun powder, poudir Pepir, & throw ther-on; take grated Brede, & make it chargeant that wol be y-lechyed; then take powder Canelle, & strew ther-on y-now; then make yit square as thou wolt leche yt; take when thou lechest hyt a caste Box leves a-bouen, y-styked ther-on, clowys. And zif thou wolt haue it Red, colore it with Saunderys y-now.*

1 cup honey	5 cup fine bread crumbs	1/8 tsp. saffron
1/2 tsp. cinnamon	1/4 tsp. ground pepper	1/2 tsp. ginger

Optional: sandalwood, bay or box leaves, and cloves for garnish)

Bring the honey to a boil in a medium saucepan (non-stick is preferable). Add the pepper and saffron. Stir well. Add the bread crumbs a little at a time, stirring constantly, until it is a thick mass. Add the bread crumbs a little at a time, stirring constantly, until it is a thick mass. You may need to adjust the amounts of bread crumbs and honey. The type of bread and the freshness or dryness of the crumbs can make a big difference as to consistency.

Stir in the cinnamon and ginger. Turn off the heat and continue stirring until the mass has cooled enough to handle carefully. Wet your hands in cold water and carefully mold the gingerbread to the desired shape, re-wetting your hands as needed. The original recipe says to make it into a square and slice it. You can also make it into fancy shapes or figures – it works well as a modeling medium. If you want it red, color it by adding a little sandalwood to the mixture. If you make the plain square, you can garnish with leaves and cloves.

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