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therefore be reasonably argued that we can never recapture the truly authentic food experiences of the past unless we literally work from the ground up. Given this caveat, and using ingredients as close to period varieties as possible, it is still feasible to recreate dishes which are almost identical to those described in early recipe books and menus. To do so is not only a fascinating gustatory experience, but it helps to reveal that, just as in art, architecture and music, there are tastes which clearly define their period and culture.

In the following pages all the recipes are given in modernized rather than original forms. The reason for this is that they were usually written as aides-mémoire by cooks who assumed that their reader had a great deal of prior knowledge and experience. Oven temperatures and cooking times were rarely given, for example, while quantities, even if provided, were frequently suited to serving a large household, not a modern family meal or dinner party. The original recipes also assumed ready access to large roasting-hearths, wood-fired 'beehive' ovens and built-in boilers, for which we now have to substitute modern domestic ovens and hobs. To accommodate these changes the modernized recipes give their reduced quantities in both imperial and metric measures. Spoon measures all represent their level, rather than heaped volumes, while medium-sized eggs have been used throughout. The temperatures given in centigrade, fahrenheit and gas marks are those for standard ovens, and should therefore be reduced accordingly when using one which is fan-assisted.

The recipes have been selected to demonstrate the characteristic dishes of the period using foodstuffs which are currently available and acceptable. This explains the absence of swan, suckling pig, brains, chitterlings and the like. However, no allowance has been made for modern alternatives to saturated fats, readers being left to substitute low-fat or vegetarian versions of ingredients as they choose. It is important to use raw materials of good quality, organic fruit, vegetables, meats, eggs and dairy produce usually giving better and probably more authentic results.

The period covered by this book is one of the most interesting in English food history. Its recipes are well worth reviving today, not just because they represent a virtually unknown aspect of the country's cultural history, but because they are really excellent, interesting and satisfying in their own right.

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The same elements which had instigated this change in our diet, also brought profound changes to the ways in which all polite households organized themselves. Throughout the medieval period the status of every family was confirmed by the size of its almost entirely male domestic staff, and by its close relationships, both with superior families from whom it received patronage, and inferior families to whom it provided patronage. The centuries-old feudal system had used this principle to control the whole of society, from monarch down to peasant. By accepting young boys and girls of the immediately lower rank into their households, and bringing them up as a blend of adoptees and domestic servants, each tier of family had established life-long, multi-generational relationships of great strength. Often extended into the arrangement of marriages and part- or full-time domestic employment, this system had produced an extremely well-established and cohesive medieval society. Everybody knew their place, and accepted its responsibilities, including those of hospitality and providing support for poorer neighbours and tenants.

There had always been some flexibility, allowing families to rise and fall according to their means, but this was hardly able to cope with the influx of the numerous newly wealthy entrepreneurial class. Unlike the established families, they inherited neither responsibilities for, nor relationships with, those who lived on their newly acquired estates. Most did not wish to provide employment for extensive numbers of serving men and retainers as these were now seen more as a drain on financial resources than as a source of status and influence. Why support hangers-on, when the costs of their wages and keep could be enjoyed in the form of fine clothes, fashionable luxuries, and high living in London? As food prices rose, the old established families began to see what their new rivals were doing, and decided to follow their lead. The practice of keeping 'secret house' in a lodge by the country house while annual accounts and refurbishments were completed was now replaced by longer periods of absence in London or one of the lesser provincial capitals. By the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the effects of these changes was being felt throughout the country, many writers lamenting the passing of the old hospitable ways of life. To Thomas Haywood:[7]

> in good hospitality, there can be nothing found that's ill, he that's a good house-keeper keeps a good table, a good table is never without good stooles, good stooles never without good guests, good guests never without good cheere, good cheere cannot be without good digestion, good digestion keeps men in good health, and therefore all good people, that bear good minds as you love goodnesses, be sure to keepe good meat and drinke in your houses and so you shall be called good men, and nothing can come on't but good, I warrant you.

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Robert Herrick's *Panegyric to Sir Lewis Pemberton* also rejoiced in his subject's hospitality:[8]

… To the worn Threshold, Porch, Hall, Parlour, Kitchin,
The fat-fed smoking Temple, which in
The wholesome savour of thy mighty Chines
Invites to supper him who dines,
Where laden spits, warp't with large Ribbs of Beefe,
Not represent, but give reliefe
To the lanke Stranger, and sowre Swain;
Where both may feed, and come again.
For no black-bearded Vigil from thy doore
Beats with a button'd-staffe the poore;
But from thy warm-loving-hatching gates each may
Take friendly morsels, and there stay
To Sun his thin-clad members, if he likes,
For there no Porter keep'st who strikes.
No commer to thy Roofe his *Guest-vite* wants;
Or staying there is scourg'd with taunts
Of some rough Groom, who, (quirkt with Corns) says, Sir,
Y'ave dipt too long i'th' Vinegar;
And with our Broth and bread, and bits, Sir, fried,
Y'ave fared well, pray make an end;
Two days y'ave larded here; a third, yee know,
Makes guests and fish smell strong; pray go
You to some other chimney, and there take
Essay of other goblets, make
Merry at another's hearth …

Similarly an early seventeenth-century poem *The Old and the New Courtier* epitomizes the different approaches to housekeeping and hospitality practised by country gentlemen of Elizabeth's and James' reigns respectively. Now the old weapon-hung hall, the setting for bountiful entertainment, was rebuilt for the display of paintings and a shove-ha'penny board which never bore food. The fifty-two blue-capped and livery-badged household serving men were now dispersed, their places taken by a new gentleman-usher, two waiters to carry up the food, and a waiting gentle*woman* who kept her fellow servants on short rations. Where six cooks had been kept busy, there was now just a French cook 'to devise kickshaws and toys', the buttery hatch now dispensing its ales and beers not every day, but only once every five or six days:[9]

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Similar volumes were to appear throughout the seventeenth century, still addressing the same lady-cooks, and providing them with a range of recipes clearly intended for the dining parlour and banquet-house rather than the hall. Some were also 'Plentifully furnished with precious and approved secrets in Phisicke and Chirurgery, for the health and pleasure of Mankinde.'[15]

Although beyond the scope of this book, the role of ladies in preserving the health of the nation throughout this period cannot be over-stated. The Dissolution had effectively destroyed the country's medieval health service, particularly by the closure of major monastic hospitals. Since they had nowhere else to go, and still expected the protection of their landlords, the bulk of the community now turned to literate, educated ladies to provide the same level of care. Many major houses had prepared their own medicines before the Dissolution, the Earls of Northumberland having 28 different 'waters' in their stillroom in 1512, for example, while Sir William Webster, the chaplain, was distilling strawberry and other waters for the Willoughbys of Wollaton Hall, Nottingham, in 1524. In the 1540s some former monks became peripatetic distillers of medicinal waters, travelling from one country house to another from violet-time in spring through to late autumn.[16] Using such potions, either made up from instructions in printed recipe books, or recorded in their own hand-written volumes, the ladies regularly dosed their family, friends and local communities. They also practised quite serious surgical procedures. The entries in Lady Margaret Hoby's diaries give a clear indication of the levels of medical care she had to provide.[17]

> 30/1/1600: 'I dressed a poore boies legge that came to me … after I dressed the hand of one of our servants that was verie sore Cutt';
> 12/7/1600: 'I made readie a pugatione for my Cosine Isons woman';
> 18/9/1600: 'gave a poore woman of Caton a salve for hir arm';
> 26/8/1601: [a couple from Silpho brought their new-born baby to her, as it had no anus] 'earnestly intreated to Cutt the place to see if any passhage could be made, but although I Cutt deepe and seerched there was none to be found.'

While such ladies were expanding their own roles in the management of their households, moving into previously male-dominated activities, a similar change was taking place in the lower ranks. As well-bred serving men departed from gentry houses, along with all-male kitchen staffs, their places were now gradually being taken by women. New words now entered the English language to identify their new roles. The first recorded 'Woman-coke' appeared in 1530, the 'Kitchenmaid' in 1550, the 'Kitchen-wench' in 1590, the female 'Housekeeper' in 1607 and 'Scullion-wench' in 1602.[18]

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As we have seen, the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw enormous changes in the recipes we used to cook our food, in the staffing of our households, and the growing roles of women in domestic management. Another change was just as important, that of newly available foodstuffs. England's medieval gardeners had produced a useful range of culinary vegetables and herbs but had not kept up with their Continental contemporaries. Market gardening had made great advances in Holland and Flanders, Catherine of Aragon bringing in Flemish gardeners to raise her salads, while Catherine Parr regularly sent to Flanders for her salad-stuffs. The growing demand for fresh vegetables led to the establishment of market gardens in England, particularly to serve the London markets. Writing in 1651, Robert Child told how old men in Surrey remembered 'the first gardeners that came into these parts & plant cabages, collerflours and to sowe turneps, carrots and parsnips, and to sow Raithe peaze, all of which time were great varieties, we having few or non in England but what came from Holland and Flanders.'[19] The results of these developments, coupled with those promoted by the ladies and professional gardeners of private households, made a wide range of vegetables, herbs and fruits available for kitchen use. The following lists include all those which Robert May required to complete the recipes in his *Accomplisht Cook* of 1660:

VEGETABLES	HERBS	FRUITS
Artichokes, Globe,	Alexanders	Apples
Artichokes, Jerusalem (fr. c.1620)	Balm	Apples, Codlings
Asparagus	Bloodwort	Apples, Pippins
Beans, French & Garden	Borage	Apricots
Beetroot	Burnet	Barberries
Cabbages, White Cabbages	Camomile	Cherries
Cauliflowers	Chervil	Damsons
Carrots	Corn-Salad	Gooseberries
Chives	Garlic, Wild Garlic	Grapes
Coleworts, Red Coleworts	Marigold Flowers	Lemons
Cucumbers	Marjoram	Medlars
Endive, White Endive	Mint	Melons
Gourds	Parsley	Oranges
Lettuce, Cabbage Lettuce	Pennyroyal	Pears
Melons, Musk Melons	Purslane	Plums
Mushrooms, Champignons	Rosemary	Quinces
Onions	Sage, Red Sage	Raspberries
Parsnips	Samphire	Strawberries

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COOKING AND DINING IN
TUDOR AND EARLY STUART ENGLAND

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Frontispiece. Henry VIII's hall-place kitchen, Hampton Court Palace, 1531.

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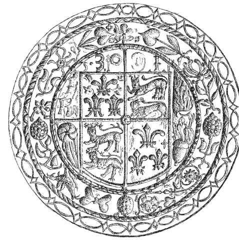
Cooking and Dining in Tudor and Early Stuart England



Peter Brears

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Acknowledgements

Although I had previously published works on Tudor and Stuart cookery, my major study commenced 25 years ago, when the Historic Royal Palaces Agency asked me to put Henry VIII's magnificent kitchens at Hampton Court Palace back into practical use, just as in the 1530s. Over the following years, living in the Palace and working as a Tudor master cook for weeks at a time, provided me with a unique body of practical experience, giving real insights into the masses of surviving evidence from the period. For this I offer my most grateful thanks to all the staff of Historic Royal Palaces who assisted in the project, and especially to Marc Meltonville and 'the lads in the Kitchen', whose enthusiasm, tireless energy, skill and friendship made the whole challenging slog so successful, popular and, for me in particular, highly informative.

Anyone who undertakes a detailed study of this period has to rely heavily on the published works of generations of historians, past and present. Although there has been no personal communication between us, I would like to record my enormous debt of gratitude to Dr David Starkey, Dr Simon Thurley, Dr Marc Girouard and the late Dr Joan Thirsk for the vast wealth of great scholarship that they have made available through their many books and articles. I also wish to thank Dr Alan Borg, the late Dr Ian Goodall, Mr John Malden and Mr John Allen for their helpful information, and particularly Dr Chris Woolgar for the use of his transcription of the second Northumberland Household Book. As always, the librarians and archivists of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society have been constantly helpful.

Some of the descriptions and drawings of buildings, fixtures and fittings given in the following pages are a by-product of my professional work for the National Trust, English Heritage and the owners of great country houses. However, I also wish to thank the many museum curators, home-owners and others, too numerous to mention individually, for the ready access they have given me to their collections and properties.

As is now usual, I must thank Mrs Susan Houghton for her great assistance in bringing this book to its eventual completion, and to Mr Tom Jaine, for all his care in its design and publication, as well as to Catheryn Kilgarriff, the publisher.

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Peter Brears
Leeds,
December, 2014.

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A Note on the Recipes

Anyone who has taken an intelligent interest in food history as presented in period dramas and cooked by celebrity chefs on television and other London-based media already knows that Tudor food was particularly obnoxious. Not only were its ingredients made up of unmentionable animal parts, but they were rotten and cooked in squalor. To add to the mess, table manners were non-existent, even Henry VIII ravaging his food like a wild beast before throwing the remains about his chamber. Seeing actors and presenters recreating such scenes is thoroughly nauseating, especially to those who know that they lack all historical knowledge and integrity. They are nothing more than figments of the imagination of those who seek celebrity and lucre. The real tragedy is that their antics have successfully buried one certain truth: the food culture of upper-class Tudor and Stuart England was of top international status, exemplary in its preparation, presentation and consumption.

At the start of this period, cooking and dining still followed long-established medieval practices, but over the next century and a half the cooks and their employers enjoyed a unique burst of energetic experimental research and developments. Freed from medieval conventions, provided with new foodstuffs, and not yet confined by the classical European cuisine of later centuries, they explored every aspect of technique, flavour, texture, shape, colour and scent. Their results have to be experienced to be fully appreciated. This can produce interesting reactions, however, since it makes us question that comfortable relationship between our mouths and our minds which we have inherited along with many other aspects of our culture. We know that apples are sweet, and onions are savoury, and we like both in their respective roles, but what if we cook them together to obtain a perfect mid-flavour? Is it pleasant – certainly! – but how can we define it? Is it a sweet or a savoury? Where would we place it on the menu? The only reason why bacon should not be cooked with cream, rosewater, orange zest and sugar is the indoctrination of our palates, but such conditioning did not apply in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It is very important to appreciate this basic fact in order to approach the recipes in this book with the open mind they deserve and require. Their products can be both interesting and challenging, but rarely dull.

All food is essentially sensory, being experienced through a combination of its taste, texture, temperature, aroma and appearance. Each of these is subject to considerable variation according to the characteristics of the raw ingredients, the techniques used to prepare and cook them, and the skill of the cook. It can

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Introduction

The period 1500–1660 was one of unprecedented change. Henry Jenkins of Bolton-on-Swale in Yorkshire experienced them all. Born around 1501 (although there are no parish registers to prove it), he had carried arrows for the battle of Flodden as a youth in 1513, and then lived on through to his eventual death, aged 169, in 1670. He grew up in a stable England, one that enjoyed a rich, unified culture, its religion, social structure and government all firmly, apparently immovably, fixed by centuries of custom and practice. He then saw everything change beyond belief. Monasteries closed, churches were stripped, the Pope was declared Antichrist, war swept the land laying waste to castles, mansions and many smaller houses, and a king was killed as a republic replaced a monarchy. There were years of poverty and plague on an unremembered scale, and even the very landscape changed as sheep farming destroyed villages, and new mansions arose, built by new men with new ideas. His lifetime spanned all these immense changes, as England was transformed from a completely medieval society to one embracing every aspect of early modern life.

As far as his own food was concerned, much remained relatively stable. Locally grown wheat, barley, rye and oats continued to provide bread, cakes, porridge and ale, and local herds the fresh and salt beef, bacon, milk and cheese, as in past and future centuries. But although not a wealthy man, he would also have probably enjoyed a number of dishes virtually unknown in his youth. These might have included fruit cakes, boiled cereal puddings, pastries, pickles and sugary gingerbreads and preserves. He would have seen changes in his tableware too, as turned ash-wood cups and wooden trenchers were replaced by new pottery versions, lead-glazed to give their attractive, glossy and non-porous finishes. As for his table manners, they would have continued in the old medieval style, rumours of effeminate fork-flourishing posers probably causing much raising of eyebrows and shaking of heads.

Had he ever entered any of the noble and gentry houses of the region, such as nearby Kiplin Hall, built around 1625 by Lord Baltimore, founder of Maryland, he would have discovered that a completely new style of cooking had been introduced from the mid-sixteenth century. Quite amazingly, it had rapidly destroyed the centuries-old recipes, culinary practices and vocabulary of high-quality medieval cookery. Even though the connection at first appears remote, this change may be positively attributed to the dissolution of all monasteries and chantries in the late 1530s. Within a few years their lands had been sold to great magnates, and successively on to others down the social scale. These new owners

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rapidly concentrated their entrepreneurial skills on exploiting the potential of their estates, either by expanding previous monastic enterprises, or opening up new mines, metal and glass works and other ventures, or by agricultural activities. Instead of being asked to support the Church and its vast entourage of clergy, the large revenues generated by these lands now went directly into the pockets of their owners. Some were re-invested in further money-making schemes, but this still left a very substantial surplus available for pleasure and show.

Across the country, new or re-built houses sprang up throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, their kitchens, halls and parlours all filled with the best new equipment, furniture, textiles and tableware. Regional centres, such as York, Chester, Bristol and Norwich, now began to supply a whole range of luxury goods and services, everything which the aspiring new families needed to confirm their place in society. Each city developed its own 'season', usually associated with sittings of the courts, which drew in every affluent family from the surrounding countryside. Some set up temporary home in rented rooms, while others established their own town-houses for use mainly at these annual gatherings. While husbands conducted their legal and financial business, wives busied themselves with socializing and shopping, organizing dinners, visiting fashionable houses and events, and buying clothes, foods and tableware. The boys might also be given fencing lessons and, along with the girls, tuition in other social skills such as music and dancing. All these activities were highly enjoyable, making the old country routines seem dull in comparison. As a result, the wealthy began to spend an increasing amount of time either at their provincial centre or, if at all possible, in London itself.

Here the expenses were high, but the potential for political, social and commercial advancement was unparalleled. The country's finest range of craftsmen and shops were concentrated here, offering every conceivable variety of luxury goods and services. It was also the seat of the Court, the focus of the nation's prestige and fashion. All this activity drew in people from all over England, mainly internal migration boosting the population of the capital from around 5,000 to 20,000 in the latter half of the sixteenth century. The authorities repeatedly ordered families to return to their country estates, where their roles as administrators, justices of the peace and leaders of local society were being neglected, but with little effect. The social life of the capital was far too attractive, especially for the new generation of wealthy wives who, apparently unlike their medieval noble predecessors, enjoyed cooking luxurious meals both for their families and for their dinner guests.

In this fashionable world, novelty was everything. If searching for printed sources for recipes up to the 1570s, there were only two to choose from. Richard

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Pynson's *Boke of Cokery* of 1500 was virtually identical to *A Noble Boke Off Cookry ffor a Prynce Houssolde*, a manuscript of around 1470 probably transcribed from an earlier source. The other was the anonymous *A Proper Newe Booke of Cokerye* published by Richard Lant in 1546. Both were essentially medieval in character, the only decidedly modern recipes in the latter being for short pastry tarts, and for 'a Cover Tarte After the Frenche Fashyon'. If new recipes were required, neither of these books would be of much use, and so had to be discovered elsewhere, particularly from overseas. Up to the mid-sixteenth century England still held lands in France, Henry VIII's military and political expeditions there bringing knowledge of that country's developing cookery to many of his court. His own Yeoman Cook for the King's Mouth in the 1540s was Pero le Doulce, otherwise Pero the Frenchman, while as early as 1526 'Giggots' of mutton had appeared in his diet, evidence of a growing French influence.[1]

Other countries also exerted an influence on English cooks. The Portuguese, for example, contributed various recipes from the 1550s, these including sweet dumplings, called Fystes and balls of light pastry called Farts.[2] A number of other sweetmeat recipes probably originated from Portugal, since it was a major source of the highly prized, thick, sweet quince paste called *marmelado*. Spain certainly provided recipes for more conserved quinces, and for its *olla podridas* (i.e. 'rotten pots'). These had first been experienced by ambassadors to the Spanish court, Lord Herbert of Cherbury seeing their mixed stewed meats built up in tall cones, each topped by a sparrow. By the early seventeenth century instructions for English versions were appearing here in print.[3] There were also a few recipes adopted from Italy, Germany, Holland, and even Turkey.[4] All of these introductions, when combined with numerous home-produced developments, ensured that England's long tradition of medieval dishes went into a rapid decline from the mid-sixteenth century, becoming virtually extinct in polite households by around 1600.

It now appears surprising to discover that some quintessentially English everyday foods, those which sustained the nation up to the mid-twentieth century, were purely French in origin. These included all stews or casseroles made with chopped meats and vegetables. Robert May first published these in 1660 as 'stews of Beef, in the French Fashion', along with 'hashes' reincarnating the remains of the Sunday roast, but actually true French *hachis*.[5] This period also saw the introduction of all our modern forms of pastry, our fruit loaves, fruit cakes, sweet boiled puddings, milk puddings, and even our scrambled eggs on toast.[6] It was this country's major period of culinary revolution, one which largely established what we were to eat, and how we were to cook, over the next three to four hundred years.

> With an old fashion, when Christmas was come,
> To call in all his neighbours with a bagpipe or a drum,
> And good cheer enough to furnish out every old room,
> And beer and ale would make a cat speak, and a wise man dumb.
> *Like an old Courtier of the Queen's*
> *And the Queen's old Courtier*
> With a new fashion when Christmas was drawing on,
> Upon a new journey they must all to London be gone,
> And leave none to keep house in the country, but their new man John,
> Who relieves all his neighbours with a great thump on the back with a cold
> stone.
> *Like a new Courtier of the King's*
> *And the King's new Courtier.*

This decay in hospitality was described in far greater detail in a book by 'I.M.' entitled *A Health to the Gentlemanly Profession of Servingmen: or, The Servingman's Comfort* of 1598. He starts by celebrating their qualities as chosen men of some status, often second sons of good breeding, displaying the wit, discretion and policy necessary for taking charge of their master's business affairs and worldly goods. They were strong, nimble and active, making ideal companions in fights, the hunting field and sports, as well as in undertaking all his domestic administration and table-service. They also dispensed his hospitality to visitors and to the poor, whenever he was absent from home. In return they received their keep, livery-clothing, a wage, an old-age pension and, most importantly, their master's protection and respect. Now, however, they were seen as expensive burdens, not worth their former remuneration, rewards or companionable status. Even the food and drink they received was reduced in both quality and quantity:[10]

> Where are the great Chines of staulled Beefe: the great blacke Jackes of doble Beere: the long Haull tables fully furnished with good victuals: and multitude of good fellowes assembling to … men of worth: In a worde, they are all banyshed with the spirit of the Butterie, they are as rare in this age, as common in former tymes … Now for [the three-year old fat] Beefe, Mutton, Veale, Pigge, Goose and Capon, which was the substaunce of their provision in those dayes … so that there was good cheere with plentie for them that sate, good reversions [i.e. left-overs] for them that wayted, and great reliefe for the poore amongst those full platters. Now these bountifull and substantiall dyshes are changed into cates of lesse cost … Goose-giblets [Pigs-trotters, etc.] to satisfie and content them that are served, yet not what shall answere the hungrie appetites of the attendaunts … small are the broken meates that remayne to relieve the poore.

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These changes took place gradually, as individual households decided either to reduce the number of their serving men to a minimum or, especially in noble houses, to continue the maintenance of large numbers to reflect their status. The general trend still remained constant, with gentlemanly serving men being replaced by fewer low-status servants who provided only basic domestic services, but none of the former companionship and loyalty to their employers.

The departure of numerous higher-status, trustworthy manservants left a considerable vacuum in many lesser noble and gentry houses. Their masters still required someone to maintain overall control of their domestic affairs, and the obvious people to do this were their constantly available, financially dependant, yet totally unwaged companions – their wives. Royal and noble wives had usually been provided with their own, separate households, leaving the main household in the sole charge of ranks of serving men who reported directly to their masters. Henry Percy 9th Earl of Northumberland, certainly believed that this was still the best policy:[11]

> The great discomodite of all I will beginne with, that is [that your wife] will have the commande of all your servants … [Keep] that power in your selfe.
>
> The things that great mens wyfes ought to endevor, and are most proper for them in house affairs, is, to bring upp their children well … to tender their helthes and education, and to obey their husbands. [Also] to see that their women … kepe the linnen sweete; to have care that when great personages shall visitt, to sit at an ende of a table, and carve handsomly.
>
> The kitching, buttry, or pantry, are not places proper for them: a dary is tolerable; for soe may yow have perhaps a dische of butter, a soft cheese, or some clouted crème, once in a sommer. Poultry and fed fowle I have sene their huswifry stretche to, in overlooking their darymaydes; for the commendation of a fatt pulletts legge of my Ladyes owen carving, to a good pallate is a great vertue in a belly-god's estimation.

If a wife were to be given control of the household accounts, he thought that she would cut the essentials in order to spend on her own vanities: 'the beefe-potts would be translated into wardropps, and multitudes of servants into a few privat baudes, ether to their passions or their persons, [e.g.] Jewells.' However, such misogynist opinions were anathema to many of the Earl's contemporaries. Thomas Fuller celebrated the benefits of wifely care in *The Good Wife* of 1652;[12]

> She keeps home … if she have not her husband's company … For the house is the woman's centre. In her husband's absence, she is wife and deputy-husband … At his return he finds all things so well … The heaviest work of her servants

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> she maketh lightly by orderly and seasonably enjoining it. Wherefor her service is counted a preferment, and her teaching better than wages.

Ladies' diaries of the period confirm their expanding role as capable domestic managers, both instructing their servants in all household matters, and leading them by practical example. Around 1600 Lady Margaret Hoby recorded her days spent in supervising the sowing of wheat, measuring corn in the granary, catching trout or crayfish, gathering apples, pulling hemp, potting honey, preserving, and candlemaking.[13] These and a whole series of other tasks were of paramount importance in this age of domestic self-sufficiency.

Despite the Earl of Northumberland's reservations, many well-to-do ladies were excellent practical cooks, more than capable of running their kitchens and producing excellent food. Instead of competing with their established household cooks, who prepared all the ordinary, everyday meals, they concentrated on a limited number of high-quality dishes for their own dinner tables, along with the more delicate baking of cakes, pastries and biscuits and expensive sugar confectionery for banquets of sweetmeats. In order to replicate such cookery, especially when enjoyed at dinners taken away from home, they collected recipes, and carefully transcribed them into their own manuscript recipe books. Some of these are of exceptional size and quality, far exceeding any of the man-authored printed recipe books of Elizabethan or Jacobean date. Their instructions for marketing, noting how to determine the desirable qualities of most foodstuffs, show that they had a deep understanding of raw materials and knew how to obtain the best value for their money. Their many recipes, often neatly indexed, might be attributed to a particular source, such as a lady donor, or its locality; for this is the period in which Banbury Cakes, Shrewsbury Cakes, Oxfordshire Cakes and the like make their first appearance.

Other recipes were transcribed from printed cookery books, that of the late-Elizabethan Mrs Beale including a number from *The Good Huswifes Handmaide for the Kitchin*, first published in 1588, for example.[14] Recognizing the growing culinary interests of wealthy, fashionable ladies, the London publishers now began to issue titles deliberately designed to serve this new, expanding market. They included:

M.R.	*The Widdowes Treasure*, 1584
?	*The Good Huswife's Jewell* [in 2 parts], 1585
?	*The Good Hous-Wives Treasurie*, 1588
A.W.	*A Book of Cookrye*, 1591
Sir Hugh Plat	*Delights for Ladies*, 1600

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Peas, Crucifix Peas
Pumpions [Pumpkins]
Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes
Skirrets
Spinach
Turnips
Watercress

Savory
Scurvy-grass
Sorrel
Succory
Tansy
Thyme

Wardens

Of these, the most important relatively recent introductions were citrus fruits and potatoes. Oranges and lemons had been great rarities in fifteenth-century England but, now imported in much larger quantities from the Iberian peninsular, they provided a welcome and versatile alternative to vinegar in contributing a sharp flavour to a variety of dishes. When combined with sugar, they also produced a number of excellent banquet sweetmeats, while their raw juice made a piquant sauce for capon and other meats. As for potatoes, two separate plants had been introduced here during the later sixteenth century. The Sweet – Spanish – or, to Gerard the herbalist, common-potato *Ipomoea batatos* had been imported from Central America into Spain in the 1550s, whence it was carried into England, where it soon acquired a popular reputation as an aphrodisiac as well as a nutritive vegetable. By 1595 it was reported that these sweet 'Potato Roots are now so common among us, that even husbandmen buy them to please his wife. They nourish mightily, … engendering much flesh, blood, and seed, but without increasing wind and lust.'[20] They must have been imported in quantity since they could not flourish in this climate except as specially tended garden plants. John Goodyer made a special note of those he saw growing at his brother-in-law's house at Sheet, Hampshire, in 1637. The Virginian potato *Solanum tuberosum* was certainly being grown in England by the 1590s, but its role as one of Britain's staple foods was not to be realized for a further two hundred years. It is interesting to find baked potatoes appearing on dinner and supper menus from October to December, 1605. Since sweet potatoes were not seen in season during these months, they must have been Virginian, but potatoes remained a comparative rarity on English tables throughout this period.[21]

The range of farmed and game animal foods changed very little between 1500 and 1660, the only significant introduction being the turkey, which probably arrived here from Mexico and Central America in the 1520s. Archbishop Cranmer listed it as a great bird for the table in 1541, while in 1550 William Strickland of Boynton was granted a turkey as his heraldic crest, its colouring being described as white feathers, red crest and wattles, and black legs.[22] Over the following years the turkey effectively replaced the peacock as a main item of poultry. Herons, bitterns, swans, cygnets and most wild birds were still eaten, as were

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seagulls. The latter were caught in the winter months and fattened in the poultry-yards to rid them of their distinctive fishiness. In 1590 these cost the enormous sum of 5s. each when bought for the Lords of the Star Chamber.[23]

A wide variety of fish and shellfish were also eaten:

SEA FISH	SHELLFISH	FRESHWATER FISH
Bass	Cockles	Bream
Conger eel	Crabs	Carp
Flounder	Crayfish	Eel
Gurnard	Lobsters	Perch
Halibut	Mussels	Pike
Herring	Oysters	Salmon
Lamprey	Prawns	Tench
Ling	Scallops	Trout
Mackerel	Shrimps	
Pilchard		
Plaice		
Rocket [Red Gurnard]	AMPHIBIANS	
Salmon	Frogs	
Smelt	INVERTEBRATES	
Sole	Snails	
Sprat	REPTILES	
Sturgeon	Tortoise	
Turbot		
Weever		

Most of these had a long history of culinary use here, but frogs' legs, snails and tortoises were never popular, their appearance in Robert May's repertoire being a direct result of his five years in France.[24]

Having set the scene, the following chapters each consider a different aspect of Tudor and Jacobean domestic economy, cookery and table service. It continues the story of English food, as commenced in my *Cooking and Dining in Medieval England* of 2008, and follows its general arrangement and approach. Having explored the planning and control of the whole household, which took place in the Counting House, it goes on to follow each successive step through to the service of meals. At every stage it draws on the widest range of archival, archaeological and architectural sources to present as complete an account as is currently feasible. Food history is primarily a multi-disciplinary subject, none of its contributory studies being sufficient within themselves to present an

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accurate and balanced account of the culinary past. It is also an essentially practical subject, no amount of scholarship compensating for a lack of kitchen experience. Fortunately I have been able to spend years in operational historic kitchens, being the first person to run Henry VIII's kitchens at Hampton Court Palace since 1737, for example. Only by using such buildings for their original purposes, living in them for weeks at a time, commissioning their practical equipment and using it to produce meals, has it been possible to fully appreciate the true integrity of all the extremely diverse sources of relevant information.

Similarly, it is imperative that anyone working in food history should avoid treating recipes merely as texts for archival studies. To appreciate what they actually mean, they must be experienced with all the senses, since the flavours, textures, shapes, colours and scents and techniques they reveal tell us much about the characteristic tastes of previous ages. The interpretation of the accounts, inventories and household regulations surviving in record offices is also improved by a working knowledge of cookery, catering and personnel management. The maintenance of adequate supplies, cleanliness and discipline has always been essential to the operation of every culinary organization. Henry VIII and his officers were well aware both of this fact, and of their responsibility for establishing the court's management procedures as a precedent which all others should follow.[25] The survival of their household regulations or ordinances provides an excellent starting point from which to explore the complex practices required to sustain one of the largest courts in Europe.

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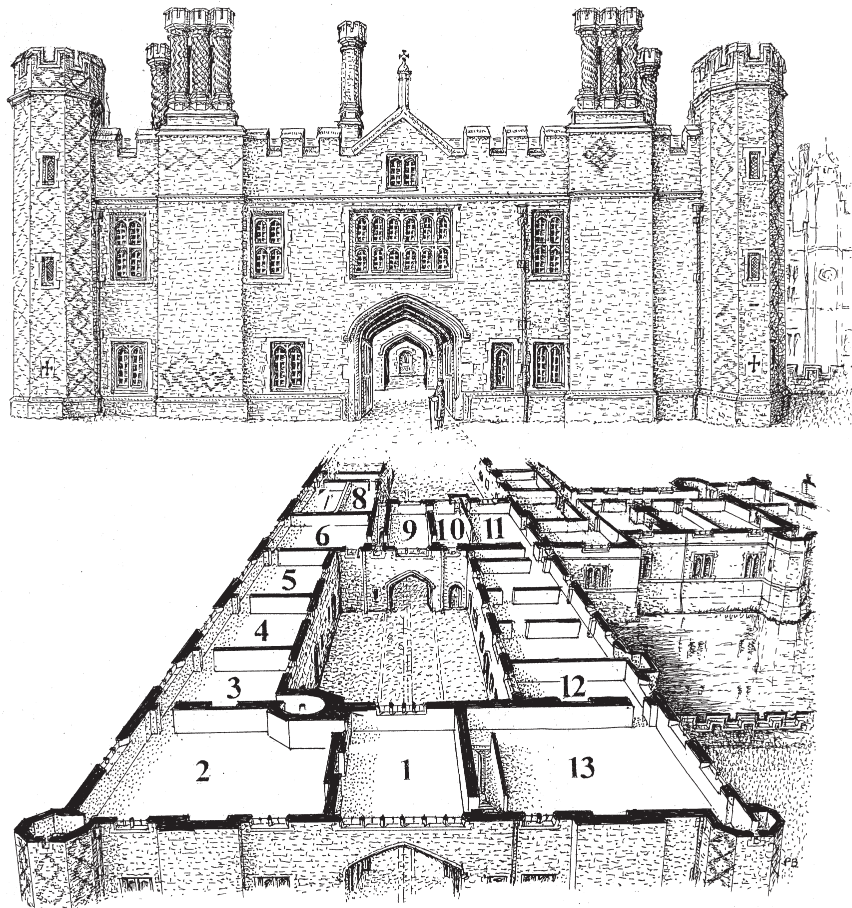

Figure 1. The back gate & counting house, Hampton Court Palace. The administrative staff of the royal household had their offices on the first floor, so that they might literally oversee everyone and everything entering and leaving the service wing. (1) Counting House (The Greencloth); (2–5) Comptroller's Lodgings; (6) Scullery Office; (7–8) Pastry Office; (9) Clerk of the Kitchen's Office; (10–11) Clerks Comptroller; (12–13) Cofferer's Office.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Counting House

Throughout history food has always been a hard-won and relatively expensive commodity. Essential for supporting human life, its constant supply was only maintained by efficient means of production, acquisition and storage. In rural society as a whole, from labourer to lord, it was still possible to live on carefully rationed home-grown produce, with a surplus to spare to pay for rents, other essentials and, if fortunate, some luxuries too. For many others, however, especially if living in towns and cities, the bulk of their food had to be purchased from shops, markets or merchants. This meant that in either case an efficient means of financial control was absolutely essential, both for the continuity of supplies, and for regulating the size and content of meals year after year. Failure to do this could lead only to poverty, illness, starvation and eventual death.

By the early sixteenth century, the principles of managing domestic finances were already well developed. They were succinctly set down by Dr Andrew Boorde in his *Compendyous Regyment or Dyetary of Helth* of 1542:[1]

> Who soever he be that wyll kepe an howse, he must ordre the expenses of his howse according to the rest of his [income, or] shal fal to poverte … as it is dayly sene by experyence of many men; wherefore they [who] eschewe such prodygalyte and inconvenyence, must devyde his [income] into 3 equal porcyons or partes. The first part must serve to provyde for meate and drynke, & all other necessary thynges for the sustencyon of the howseholde. The second porcyon [must be] for apparell, servants' wages and alms. The 3rd porcyon must be reserved for urgent causes in tyme of nede, as in sycknesse, reparacyon of howses [etc.]

Francis Bacon also believed in this method of financial planning:[2]

> Riches are for spending, and spending for honour and good actions – therefore extraordinary expence must be limited by the worth of the occasion. Ordinary expence ought to be limited by a man's estate … and not subject to deceit and abuse of servants … his ordinary expences ought to be but half of his receipts, and if he thinks to wax rich, but to the third part. He … need both choose

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