A virtual afternoon tea at Skaill House

Prepared by Phyllis Brown and Liz Ashworth

Orkney Science Festival invites you to join our ‘virtual’ afternoon tea, reminiscent of splendid teas at Skaill House where tables were laid with crisp white linen tablecloths and fine china, and a tempting array of sweet and savoury treats made it difficult to know what to try first. Create your own special afternoon tea event by setting the scene with a few simple preparations. We have provided a choice of typical Orkney recipes and list of ingredients and suppliers so you can prepare in advance, then relax as you join in on the day. Why not invite family and friends and dress up for the occasion?
Shop online for key ingredients

Orkney butter
Jams and chutneys
Orkney cheeses
Smoked fish – Hot and cold smoked salmon, smoked mackerel, smoked mussels
Orkney oatcakes

Check out the delicious produce available with the [Peedle Orkney Fodlies Guide](#) available for download.

Order bere meal direct from the [Barony Mill](#) (the miller) or Sue Tavack will be pleased to help you. You can telephone the mill on 01856 721439 or email enquiries@baronymill.com.

You can pick your own hamper from a selection of Orkney produce at [Jollys of Orkney](#) (Tel. 01856 872417).

Bake and freeze

There is a selection of Orkney baking recipes to choose from so you can bake and freeze in advance to save time on the day.

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**Set the scene**

Collect an old-fashioned china tea set. You can buy these in many charity shops. Find a pretty tablecloth. Choose fancy napkins. A cake stand would be good if you can find one; if not choose some pretty plates.

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**The day before**

Look out everything you need.
Tablecloth, china cups, saucers, tea plates, napkins, butter and jam dishes, milk jug tea knives and teaspoons.
Teapots and coffee jugs
Maybe a small vase of flowers for the table.

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**On the day**

Lay the table. Assemble the platter, set out home-bakes, butter and jam. Teapots and coffee jugs primed to fill as required. Then sit back, relax and enjoy your own taste of Orkney.
Orkney canapés

Stockan’s Cocktail Oatcakes are an ideal crisp base on which to serve a ‘needit’ (small) taste of delicious fresh Orkney produce. You can order a supply online from Stockan’s.

Here are a few ideas to whet your appetite.

**Orkney hot smoked salmon**
Served with Orkney Isles Preserves chilli jam and natural yoghurt.

**Phyllis’s home-made smoked Orkney mackerel pâté**
An easy recipe which makes 6 to 8 canapés.
Into a bowl add 1 dessert spoon of Philadelphia cheese and natural yoghurt. Add half a fillet of skinned Orkney smoked mackerel and mix with fork to blend, season with fresh lemon juice and plenty black pepper. Spread on cocktail oatcakes and top with a thin slice of fresh lemon.

**Orkney smoked salmon slices**
Served on cream cheese with Sanday luxury plum chutney. Spread the cocktail oatcake with cream cheese, add a few chives, top with slices of smoked salmon and a spoon of chutney.

**Roast Orkney beef with rhubarb and orange chutney**
Cut a round of Rendall’s wholesome bread, butter both sides and bake in a moderate oven till crisp. Top with horseradish sauce sprinkled with a little finely chopped onion, add a thin slice of roast beef and a spoon of rhubarb and orange chutney. Use a toothpick or cocktail stick to secure this tasty morsel.

**It is easy to assemble this tasty morsel feel free to experiment and make your own.**

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Orkney beremeal scones

Makes 12 scones

**INGREDIENTS**
- 175g (6oz) self raising flour
- 60g (2oz) beremeal
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 15g (½ oz) sugar
- 30g (1oz) melted butter
- 1 egg – beaten
- Milk to mix

Heat the oven to 220C (200C fan) 425F, Gas 7. Oil two baking trays. Sift the dry ingredients into a bowl, mix the melted butter with the egg and pour into the bowl. Mix into the dry ingredients with sufficient milk to make a soft pliable dough. Turn onto a board dusted with beremeal, dust with beremeal and pat out gently using the palm of your hand to 2.5cm (1in) thick. Cut into rounds with a 5cm (2in) diameter cutter and lay well spaced on to the prepared trays. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes till risen and golden. Cool on a wire tray and enjoy freshly baked with Orkney butter and Orkney rhubarb and ginger jam!

Dropped scones

Makes 10 to 12 dropped scones

**INGREDIENTS**
- 115g (4oz) self raising flour
- 1 level teaspoon baking powder
- 1 large egg
- 30g (1oz) runny honey or golden syrup
- Milk to mix
- 15g (½ oz) melted butter

Put a girdle or thick bottomed frying pan onto medium heat. Sift the dry ingredients into a bowl, add the egg and honey and beat to a soft, thick dropping batter with the milk. A balloon whisk is ideal for this. Stir in the melted butter. Test the heat of the girdle with a sprinkling of flour. If it turns golden the temperature is correct, if it burns it is too hot. Oil the heated surface and drop on tablespoons of batter to cook till bubbles rise and burst on the surface. Flip over with the flat blade of a palette knife or fish slice, gently tapping the cooked side as you do to release any trapped air and ensure an even bake underneath. Cool on a wire rack wrapped in a clean tea towel. The scones freeze well for up to 6 weeks. A gluten free version can be made by replacing the flour and baking powder with suitable substitutes.
**Fatty cutties**

A biscuit baked on a girdle.

Makes 18 to 20 biscuits

**INGREDIENTS**
- 115g (4oz) softened butter
- 60g (2oz) caster sugar
- 175g (6oz) plain flour sifted with a pinch of bicarbonate of soda
- 60g (2oz) currants

Cream the butter and caster sugar till light. Add the flour and currants and mix to a soft clean dough. Turn on a girdle or put a thick bottomed frying pan to heat on the stove on low to medium heat. Turn the dough onto a floured board and knead lightly. Form into an oblong and cut into 3 pieces. Taking each piece in turn, shake a little flour over the top and roll out thinly with a well floured rolling pin to form an even strip 10cm (4in) wide. Cut across the strip into fingers about 3.25cm (1.3in) wide. Repeat with the other two dough pieces. Test the temperature of the girdle or frying pan with a shake of flour. If it turns pale golden the temperature is correct. Fatty cutties burn easily so it is important to check the temperature - I burned my first batch!! Bake for 3 or 4 minutes on each side till pale golden and crisp turning once with a palette knife or fish slice. Cool on a wire tray and store in an airtight tin.

**Hazelnut biscuits with cream crowdie**

Makes 24 biscuits

**INGREDIENTS**
- 115g (4oz) butter
- 60g (2oz) caster sugar
- 115g (4oz) plain flour
- 60g (2oz) rice flour
- 45g (1½ oz) chopped hazelnuts
- Caster sugar to dust

Heat the oven to 160°C (140°C fan) 325F, Gas 3. Oil two baking trays. Cream the butter and sugar till light then stir in the dry ingredients to make a stiff pliable dough. Roll out 5mm (¼ in) thickness and cut into rounds approx 5cm (2in) diameter. Place on the trays and bake for 15 to 20 minutes till pale golden and crisp. Cool a little on the tray and dust with caster sugar while warm. Cool completely on a wire rack and store in an airtight container for up to two weeks. Serve with cream crowdie topped with a fresh strawberry or raspberry if you have any.

**Cream Crowdie**

300mls (½ pt) double cream
- Small teaspoon vanilla essence or rum essence
- 1 teaspoon of sugar or more if liked to taste
- 45g (1½ oz) lightly toasted oatmeal

Beat some double cream stiffly, sweeten and flavour with rum or vanilla (or not at all) and stir in some lightly toasted oatmeal, which gives an agreeable nutty flavour. The mixture should be not at all thick. (F. Marian McNeill, The Scots Kitchen, 1929)

Sprinkle the oatmeal evenly on a baking tray and toast lightly under a medium grill or in the oven. Keep turning the oatmeal to make sure it is evenly toasted then allow to cool completely before adding to the cream. Oatmeal burns easily, toasting does not take long so keep an eye on it!!

Whisk the cream till softly stiff, stir in the vanilla essence and sugar to taste. Stir in the oatmeal to make a smooth creamy consistency - you may not require all the oats because they will swell in the cream and thicken it as they do so. Chill for 10 to 30 minutes then serve on the biscuits. This mixture keeps well in the fridge for up to 3 days. If it becomes too thick beat in a little cream or milk to slacken the texture a little.

**Orkney broonie**

The first recipe ever collected by Orcadian writer F. Marian McNeill (The Scots Kitchen, 1929). A rich oatmeal gingerbread.

**INGREDIENTS**
- 350g (12oz) plain flour
- 1 level teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon mixed spice
- 115g (4oz) oatmeal
- 115g (4oz) soft brown sugar
- 115g (4oz) butter
- 85g (3oz) golden syrup
- 85g (3oz) black treacle
- 1 egg – beaten
- Milk and hot water to mix
Moorish Orkney apple cake

This recipe is based on a traditional Spanish/Moorish recipe and uses a ‘fail me never’ ‘Orcadian’ sponge base. You can also use plums, pears, peaches or mango for the topping – or a mixture of fruits, what ever you like. Remember to add the lemon juice, vanilla and cinnamon.

Drizzle with water ice made with fresh lemon or orange juice to finish the cake.

Makes a cake 30cm (12in) x 18cm (7in)

INGREDIENTS
- 2 sharp tasting eating apples – Braeburn or Cox are good – peeled cored and sliced
- Vanilla essence
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Juice of a fresh lemon

TOPI NG:
- 175g (6oz) butter
- 115g (4oz) caster sugar
- 60g (2oz) light soft brown sugar
- 175g (6oz) sifted self raising flour or use plain flour with 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 3 large eggs – beaten
- Water ice to finish made with fresh lemon or orange juice

Heat the oven to 180C (160C fan), 350F, Gas 4. Oil and line the tin. Prepare the topping by mixing the sliced fruit with vanilla, lemon juice and cinnamon. Cream the butter and sugar till very light a fluffy and pale in colour. Beat in the eggs and then fold in the sifted flour. Pour into the prepared tin and spread evenly. Top with the sliced fruit and bake for 25 to 30 minutes till risen and springy to touch and the point of a skewer inserted in the middle comes out cleanly. Cool in the tin and ice when just warm. Enjoy freshly baked.

Blueberry muffins

Makes 12 muffins

INGREDIENTS
- 175g (6oz) self raising flour
- 75g (2½ oz) caster sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 eggs beaten
- 60g (2oz) melted butter
- 175ml (6 fl oz) milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla essence
- 125g (4½ oz) fresh blueberries
- Icing or caster sugar

Heat the oven to 200C (180C fan) 400F, Gas 6. Put 12 muffin cases into a muffin tray if you have one or onto a baking tray. Sift the flour, sugar and baking powder into a bowl. Beat the eggs with the melted butter, milk and vanilla essence and pour into the dry ingredients. Stir together till combined but not smooth. Fold in the berries till evenly mixed. Spoon the mixture into the cases leaving room for the muffins to rise. Bake 20 minutes till risen and firm. Cool on a wire rack. Dust with sugar while warm and enjoy freshly baked.

Cook’s tip
You can use fresh fruits like raspberries or brambles instead of blueberries. Try adding grated lemon or orange rind instead of vanilla essence. Frozen berries work well too although the mixture will be softer and they will take a few more minutes