

Tips for winning a recipe contest:

Follow the rules:

If it says a minimum of 4 eggs, use four eggs *or more*. Egg farmers are sponsoring this contest, so don't skimp on the minimum. Read over the rules and make sure you're not doing something that the judges will disqualify you for. Remember, if two recipes are equally wonderful, judges may need to find something wrong with one, to get a winner.

Must it be an original recipe?

We're not looking for original recipes – we want one your mother or grandmother made that the family thought was terrific and brings you fond memories when you prepare it. You may have to 'redo' a very old recipe if pan sizes or ingredients are no longer available – make sure it can be easily duplicated.

Give us some of the recipe's history

Tell us your mother's name (or grandmother) and where she got the recipe if you know; when she served it; and the family's reaction each time it was served. If it came from a cookbook, tell us which one. And if you have put your own spin on it, tell us that as well. Include her picture if you want to.

What's the #1 thing we're looking for?

It must be delicious. Creativity is good. Unusual is good. Clever is good. But delicious is great!

The printed recipe:

- Use a computer and type it, if possible. If not available, make sure it is printed legibly.
- Keep all the ingredients on top, listed in order of use.
- Make sure all abbreviations are correctly written.
- If it's an unusual ingredient, * it and list where it can be purchased, at the bottom of recipe.
- Include baking temperature, time, pan size, and the number of servings it makes.
- Directions should be simple to follow but may include what food should look like at certain stages (sauté until golden, whip until stiff, bake until it tests done with a pick, etc.).
- Your name should be on the back of the recipe, along with legible contact information.

Come up with a catchy name:

Pound Cake is not descriptive enough – how about *Grandma Betty's Famous Raspberry Pound Cake*?

Bring it to the fair on time:

Find out what time judging will be. If your item needs to be judged cold, bring it in a cooler. If it needs to be served hot, bring it in a cooler, kept hot, with a hot brick inside, or ask ahead if a microwave is available to heat samples.

Presentation is key:

Check out food photography in cookbooks and magazines. Mom may not have garnished it, but you can – berries, mint, Camelia leaves, herbs, slivered almonds, etc. Powdered sugar looks great on baked items *and* covers imperfections. Visit the dollar store for a presentation platter that you don't mind leaving behind should you win. Coordinate serving pieces with the colors and size of your entry. Some fairs will allow placemats. Make mom proud!

Now Get Crackin!

