

Feastocrat 101 Guide

Contents

Chapter 1: Menu Planning

- Recipe Sources
- Ingredient Cost and Availability
- Complexity of Recipes
- How Well Will it Hold Up?
- Variety in:
 - Color
 - Texture
 - Cooking Method
 - Presentation
 - Ingredients
 - Special Diets and Allergies
- Filling in Between the Recipes
- Not Everything Was Written Down
- Country of Origin
- Traditional Ethnic Foods

Chapter 2: Sheer Volume

- Do the Math
 - Multiply the Recipe
 - ✓ Adjusting Seasonings
 - ✓ Fluid
 - ✓ Capacity of Equipment
 - Calculate a Serving Per Person
 - ✓ MEATS, FISH & EGGS
 - ✓ GRAINS, BREAD & PASTA
 - ✓ VEGETABLES
 - ✓ DESSERTS
- We've Got Big Bowls (Soups & Stews)
- Salt, Seasoning and the Modern palate
- Cooking Time
- Pots, Pans & Serving Pieces
- The Right Tool

Chapter 3: Other Things to Consider

- Dayboard
- Medieval Desserts
- Beverages
- Special Circumstances
 - Outdoor Cooking
 - The Chafing Dish Feast

Chapter 4: Staying in Budget

- How Much Per Person
- Is The Shortcut Worth It?
- Unexpected Attendance (Up or Down)
- Serving Style
- Shopping
- If an Event is Cancelled
- Getting Your Money

Chapter 5: Getting (or Staying) Organized

- Planning Ahead
 - Can this Dish be Prepared in Advance?
 - Can this Dish Travel?
 - To Experiment or not to Experiment?
- Kitchen Help
- Timing
- What Can Go Wrong and What to do When it Does
 - Your Cooking Emergency Kit
- Feast Gear & Transportation
 - The Basics
 - How Will it Travel?
 - Miscellaneous Items You'll Need

Feastocrat 101

Chapter 1: Menu Planning

You've volunteered to feastocrat an event. What on earth are you going to feed all those people? For the average feast, you will probably want to select recipes for one or two meat entrees, one vegetarian entrée which can double as a side dish for meat-eaters, at least one starch and one vegetable, a beverage and a dessert. If you will be serving in multiple removes, you will probably need more than that. This section will address the process of figuring out what and how much.

Recipe Sources

Generally, recipes for a feast can be obtained from one of three places: cookbooks, the internet or other feastocrats. It's really a matter of how you like to do things. If you like everything well-documented, get a good book or use a quality website. On every subject, there's good and bad information on the internet. Using a site that cites its sources is a good idea. There are many Medieval cookbooks on the market. Often, you will find the same recipe in different books from the same source, with minor variations as each cookbook author personalized it while translating it to modern language and specifying amounts.

Ingredient Cost and Availability

When planning a feast, one has to be realistic about the price and availability of ingredients and their accoutrements. A whole roast pig looks awesome, but it sets us back almost \$500 by the time we've paid for the pig and charcoal and rented the roaster and generator – and a pig alone does not constitute a feast! Goose is period and traditional for Christmas, but it's expensive, hard to find and yields very little meat. Short ribs and spare ribs are costly and provide very little meat. Strawberries might be rather expensive in the winter, but are local, plentiful and delicious in June. Lamb is most available and reasonably priced around Easter.

This doesn't mean that we should never cook with expensive ingredients, but that we need to consider how much of it we'll need and how well it will be accepted by the populace. Recipes that stretch the value of pricey ingredients with cheaper ones are a good way to showcase them. Alternately, they can be served as a smaller course, rather than a main course. Money spent on strawberries out of season is more likely to prove well-spent (based on how much is eaten) than money spent on exotic fish or seafood.

You will find that often Medieval recipes call for ingredients that are hard to find. If possible, make the effort to find them as they will make the dish that much more authentic. If you can't, whether due to availability or cost, try to make an appropriate substitution of another item which existed in period. For example – you might not be able to find a specific red colorant used for food in period (or might not want to use it due to toxicity). You could replace it with red food coloring, but beet juice or a red fruit juice would give a more natural looking color to the dish.

I have included a list of foods that are period vs. non-period. It was compiled by Chris O'Connor-Perrino and published in the November 2003 edition of *The White Hart*. It's the best list I've seen and I refer to it frequently.

Complexity of Recipes

The complexity of the recipes you select will play a large role in how tired you are by the time the feast is served and whether or not the feast is on time. Some recipes, both medieval and modern, require many steps in preparation. If some of them can be done in advance, it's a good candidate for a feast. If they all need to be done close to serving time, you will need a really good kitchen staff if you're going to have the feast ready in a timely manner. Other foods to be wary of including are those that need a lot of individual handling (rolling, stuffing, coating, decorating, etc.) or need to be cooked at the last minute, like fried foods. If you'd like to include some of these recipes in your feast, try to balance them with other simpler recipes so you and your kitchen staff don't become overwhelmed. Of course, the pendulum can swing the other way and things can be too simple – a whole roast chicken and a pot of soup might be delicious but it doesn't have that "feast" feel to it.

Creating a good balance between complex and simple recipes will also enhance the eating experience for the populace. For example, if all of the dishes served are covered in sauce, there is nothing to act as a blank canvas against which to view them, not to mention that the sauces will all run together on the individual's plate and they won't really be able to tell what's what. Too many heavily seasoned foods will overwhelm the palate and ultimately all start to taste alike.

A simple grain dish works well with a heavily sauced entrée, and vegetables often benefit from simple preparation.

How Well Will it Hold Up?

Unless you are a master of timing or you have a really great kitchen support staff, most of your dishes will not be served the second they are ready. They will either have to sit around a bit or even be reheated. They might also get jostled in transit or due to rough handling. Consider what effect this will have on the product being served. Very large cakes and subtleties are almost guaranteed to break. Make sure you use a base that is strong enough to support the weight without buckling. Tarts don't suffer from sitting around a bit, but saucy dishes should be hot. Soups and stews are the ultimate foods for taking abuse. Roasted pork and chicken can be drowned in sauce and take all kinds of abuse, but roast beef will get overcooked if you do almost anything to it. If you can't finish and carve it very close to serving time, you might be better off serving it cold or skipping it altogether. This aspect is something to consider for any feast but is particularly important if you have to prepare a feast outdoors or in a venue with no kitchen.

Variety

In order to provide a feast that is nutritious and pleasing to both the eye and the palate, it is necessary to vary cooking methods and ingredients with a wide range of colors and textures. Imagine going to a restaurant and being served boiled chicken, boiled parsnips and mashed potatoes. I bet your mouth is watering.

Color

Imagine what the foods you'll be preparing are going to look like when they are served. Sometimes, it turns out to be a surprise, but you can generally guess the color based on the main ingredients and seasonings or sauces. Try to incorporate a variety of colors to make it appetizing and visually interesting. A range of natural colors generally makes it more nutritious as well. There are period foods in all kinds of colors, especially if you include the fruits. If things just don't work out with color, at least garnish with color. It can make the difference between the food you make being heartily eaten or sniffed at and left behind.

Texture

Most of the recipes for savory foods that still exist from the Middle Ages fall into one of several categories: Roasts, Pies (or tarts), Stews, Soups, Purees and Sauces. Try to avoid serving too many from the same category. Of course, if you are serving in multiple removes, you have a bit more leeway as they will not be sitting right next to each other. However, even a grand feast with five removes will not benefit from the serving of cheese tarts, spinach tarts, pork pies and a sweet cheese pie for dessert. Too

many purees look unappealing and will make the populace think you got your culinary training in a nursing home. If you're serving two roasted meats in sauce, make one a smooth sauce and the other a chunky sauce for visual and textural appeal, and so people can tell the dishes apart before it's in their mouth.

Remember that foods on a dayboard can generally be seen clearly, but foods served at the evening feast are often served by candlelight which makes it harder to discern the differences between dishes.

Cooking Method

This is very closely related to the two previous sections on variety in color and texture, but it still bears mentioning. Period cooking methods include roasting, baking, boiling, steaming, stewing, poaching, sautéing, deep frying and probably some others I haven't thought of. Steamed or poached foods (and raw foods) will generally maintain a brighter color than those that are roasted, stewed or fried. Choosing a variety of cooking methods makes it easier to vary the color and texture and allows you to better utilize your kitchen resources. Of course, the available resources have to be taken into consideration in planning. If you have lots of ovens and only four burners, you'll be making a lot more baked and roasted selections. The opposite can also happen, where you have eight burners and two small ovens with only one shelf in each of them.

Presentation

Given the Medieval preoccupation with subtleties and all things grand, if you have the time, help, budget and feastgear, you might wish to present foods in a novel way. Foods made of ground meat or dough can easily be shaped into many small or one large fantastical form, like animals, flowers or trees. Meatloaf becomes a centerpiece! Unique serving pieces can also add to the appeal.

Ingredients

Variety makes food interesting. If you make a stuffed mushroom as an appetizer, a pot of mushroom soup, sautéed mushrooms as a side dish and chicken-mushroom stew, all your dishes will be an unappetizing shade of brown, people will either think that mushrooms must have been really cheap this week or that you got stuck with a whole case and had to use

them. By the time they get to the chicken dish, they'll be sick and tired of mushrooms. If you somehow get stuck doing this, use your sense of humor and make mushroom shaped (but not flavored) pastries or cookies for dessert!

Special Diets and Allergies

There are a number of people in our kingdom who are on special diets or suffer from food allergies and intolerances. We generally try to provide at least some meatless side dishes including one that is substantial enough to serve as a vegetarian main course.

Different feastocrats have different approaches to dealing with food allergies and intolerances. Some will just label things and let the eater beware. Some will make the entire meal safe for those present and some will just leave the offending ingredient out of one portion. It's up to you how you'll handle it, but it is in everyone's best interests to at least label things with hidden ingredients so no one gets sick. For example, someone who is allergic to oranges will not even try to eat the fennel and blood orange salad, but they might accidentally ingest a cookie made with finely grated orange rind if it's not labeled. It's best to be safe. I am currently aware of allergies/intolerances in our populace to oranges, nuts, fish & shellfish, pork, gluten (wheat, rye, barley) and possibly, peas..

Filling in Between the Recipes

Now that you've scoured the sources for recipes and considered price, availability, variety and resources, you may find that you have recipes for two main dishes, a tart and a dessert, or something like that. You're just not finding the sides that will complement your main courses. What now?

Not Everything Was Written Down

Probably the most important thing to remember when planning a feast to keep from losing your mind, exerting way more effort than is necessary or presenting a feast that is overly contrived is that NOT EVERYTHING WAS WRITTEN DOWN. The vast majority of recipes that have been preserved in writing from the Middle Ages come to us from roughly half a dozen sources. For the most part, they were notes written by the master of the house to see to it that the servants served proper food or notes written by the cook of a noble house. When you consider how many noble houses from which we have no recipes and the number of people who would have been employed as cooks who were not capable of writing, it becomes obvious that these few sources cannot possibly contain the whole art of

Medieval cooking. I would imagine that some other houses may have had written notes, but they were lost to the ravages of time.

Another consideration is that paper was expensive and it would not have been wasted on minor things – like boiling vegetables or grains. Even today, you can look through a few hundred cookbooks and not find a recipe for hard boiled eggs, plain grilled steak or boiled potatoes – but we do eat them!

If there is something you think would complement the rest of your feast nicely, and the ingredients and cooking methods existed in Europe or the Holy Land at the time, it's a pretty safe guess that someone ate it that way. Just don't enter it in a contest.

Country of Origin

For our purposes, Medieval food is considered anything that would have been used (in the form it would have been used then) in Europe or the Middle East. Foods from the new world and most of Asia (particularly the Orient) would be unlikely to have been served in a Crusader Kingdom. Spices could travel around the world without going bad, but that doesn't mean that Bok Choy would have been available.

Traditional Ethnic Foods

Some traditional ethnic foods have remained basically unchanged for centuries and make a credible addition to a Medieval feast. Middle Eastern foods and many Mediterranean foods (excluding the relatively recent addition of tomatoes and "modern" vegetables) have changed very little.

Chapter 2: Sheer Volume

For many aspiring feastocrats, the most daunting thing about preparing a feast is the sheer volume of food that needs to be prepared. By following the pointers in this section, you should be able to make the task manageable.

Do the Math

First, you need to figure out what your *servicing size* will be. When following a recipe, it will generally say "feeds 6" or whatever. That can be used as a general guideline, but within the framework of the feasts we prepare, you have to

ask yourself whether it's going to be a dayboard dish, a main course, an appetizer or one of several main courses. Remember that not everyone will eat equal amounts of every dish. Some will feast on one and ignore the others and some will graze evenly. This is why you need to gauge the potential popularity of a dish and make more of the popular stuff. Fortunately, sometimes the popular stuff is also the cheap stuff. For example – more people will eat chicken than octopus.

Dayboard dishes can be a little on the light side in terms of serving sizes, as people tend to pick from a variety of foods all day rather than heap their plate and sit down to eat. Appetizer dishes can also be served in small portions for the same reason.

A single main course needs to be substantial – at least the serving size specified in the recipe – but we rarely do feasts with just one main course. If there will be several main courses, each one should consist of servings a bit smaller than what the math would tell you. For example if the recipe allows 4 oz. of meat per person and you're making three main courses, you might want to allow 2 or 3 oz. per person, rather than the full 4 oz. serving. It also depends on the size of pieces for serving and how popular you expect the food to be. What I mean by serving size pieces is as follows: chicken on the bone or individual tarts or roll-ups are limited by the size of the pieces – you need at least one piece per person because no one is going to take a 2 oz. portion off a drumstick. Things that are served by the slice or scoop can be more exact, like rice, veggies, thinly sliced roasts etc.

There are two basic ways to cook for a large number of people as described below.

Multiply the Recipe

This is the way most of us have learned to cook for a larger group. If you usually make meatballs that serve 6 to 8 people and you're having 15 people for a family party, you just multiply all the ingredients by 3 and proceed as usual. When you're cooking for 40, 60, or 120, it gets a bit trickier. If sticking strictly to a recipe is your cooking security blanket, you might want to use this method with a few provisos:

Adjusting Seasonings - In most cases, you can't just multiply the seasonings or it will taste over-seasoned. Depending on how many times you're multiplying the recipe, start with an amount that's between half and three quarters of what the math tell you to use, then adjust to taste. If it's something that can't be adjusted later, like a pie, you're just going to

have to use your best judgment. It's probably better to under-season than over-season in these cases. At least no one will think the cap fell off the shaker while you were cooking.

Fluid – In recipes that depend upon chemical reactions – like cakes and batters, the fluid ratio has to be exact. Cooking grains, like rice and couscous can use a bit less than the multiplied amount, but it's not too big a difference. In most other recipes (soups, stews, boiled or baked veggies, etc.) the fluid serves another purpose – to keep it moist or prevent it sticking to the pan. In those cases, if you multiply the fluid in the recipe, you'll probably end up with soup whether or not that was what you were trying to make. Try to discern the purpose of the fluid in the recipe in deciding whether to multiply the fluids. If you just want to cover the bottom of the pan, just cover the bottom of the pan. Remember, you can always add fluids during cooking. It's a lot harder to get rid of them.

Capacity of Equipment – When looking to multiply a recipe, consider the capacity of your equipment. Can your stand mixer beat that many eggs? Can your blender or food processor handle a batch of that size? Do you have a big enough frying pan? The answers to these questions just might lead you to the other option that allows you to stick strictly to a recipe – make two or more smaller batches instead of trying to make one big one. It might take a bit longer, but will probably come out so much better in the end.

Calculate a Serving Per Person

This is the method that I generally use. I calculate how much of the food or the main food in the dish is necessary per person, multiply by the number of people expected, then roughly translate the rest of the recipe to match the amount of the main ingredient I've calculated. These are the rough guidelines I use to calculate servings for different foods. They assume there will be more than one entrée plus side dishes:

MEATS, FISH & EGGS

Chicken on the bone –whole – I've never served this at a feast, but if it was going to be cut through the bones to serve, I'd say one average sized chicken per 8 people. If it is going to be carved off the bones, I'd say about 6 people for each chicken, since there is more waste this way. However, if you're carving it in advance, you can pick the bones pretty clean.

Chicken parts with bone - Cut each half breast in 2 or 3 pieces, plus thighs, drumsticks and wings. Backs just take up space and no one eats them – set them aside for soup. Assume one piece per person.

Other bony meats - Chops are very hard to do for large groups because they tend to either be very large or very pricey. If your heart is set on doing it, expect to have at least one per person, regardless of cost.

Bone-in roasts – You can assume that at least 1/3 of the weight is waste, then calculate accordingly. These roasts are notoriously hard to carve both attractively and economically (you either lose a lot of meat or get ugly chunks and shreds).

Ribs – Ribs are a very pricey option, as you need about a pound per person, but can be fun if you catch a good sale.

Boneless roasts – This holds true for any variety of roast. Expect about 20% shrinkage – more if you overcook it. Then allow about 4 oz. per person.

Boneless chicken thighs and other cutlets - This includes boneless chicken breasts and thighs (thighs are generally cheaper and juicier) and other cutlets. These can either be counted as at least one good sized piece per person, or 4 oz. depending on how you'll prepare it.

Boneless stew meat - The amount of stew meat can be as little as 2 oz. per person if there are lots of other things in the stew. If not, you can stick with the standard 4 oz. serving.

Fish – depending on where this fits into the feast and the type of fish. Remember that we have several people with fish allergies and a lot of others who don't bother eating it. If you're going to incorporate it into a dish, like a casserole or stuffing or fish balls, you can get away this 2-3 oz. per person. If you're serving whole fillets, you'll need a modest sized fillet per person or you can get away with about 4 oz on average if you're going to cut it into chunks.

Eggs – most frequently served hard boiled on the dayboard or in a quiche, tart or frittata. For a dayboard, go for less than half as many eggs as people. Very few enjoy peeling their own eggs. In quiches and tarts,

calculate by the slice (8-10 per average sized pie depending on how rich it is and what else is being served). In frittatas, one egg per two people is safe if served as a side dish.

GRAINS, BREAD & PASTA

These are generally cheap and filling. It pays to be generous with these. It's no great loss if you made too much.

Bread – If it's going to be served at both the dayboard and the feast, I generally buy about an average sized loaf for every four people. Getting them pre-sliced looks less authentic, but saves labor and serves more people. A loaf of challah or rye sliced thin, serves a lot more people than a loaf of Italian Bread. I count a bag of pita bread as a loaf in my calculations. Rustic breads tend to look more period.

Rice (White or Brown) – They generally can be cooked according to package directions, more or less. Use the serving size on the package and do the math. Keep the fluid on the lighter side than the result of your math. You can always add fluid during cooking if it's not done and it's getting too dry, but no one likes overcooked, soupy rice. By the way – brown rice holds up better to the rigors of cooking in large batches than white rice. It's a bit more expensive and takes longer to cook, but better for you as well.

Couscous, Barley, Millet, etc. – Follow package recommended serving sizes and tips for rice.

Pasta – recommended serving sizes may assume it's being served as an entrée rather than a side dish. For our purposes, you can generally assume 6-8 people per pound of pasta, depending on the shape and whether anything else is going to be mixed in, affecting volume. People serve themselves pasta by volume, not weight. A couple of things to consider when making pasta... the water only needs to cover the pasta, with enough room for stirring and for things to not stick together. If the directions say to use six quarts for one pound, you do not need 18 quarts for three pounds. Use your judgment. Also, you may have a really big soup kettle you can use to boil pasta, but if you don't have a really big colander you're better off cooking it in several smaller pots or you'll end up pouring your pasta down the drain.

VEGETABLES

In general, people other than the vegetarians and health nuts don't tend to eat a lot of the vegetables. Depending on price and complexity of preparation, you can get away with a large variation in serving size on veggies. Look at a typical restaurant plate – a big slab of meat, two cups of mashed potatoes and three string beans. And people keep going back, so it must work.

Salad – This is the only vegetable that generally disappears. Be sure to use period ingredients. This is really hard to tell how much to make. I imagine a handful of lettuce in my mind's eye and how many I'm getting out of the package. Then I go with a generous topping of other period ingredients to make it interesting. There must be a more scientific method, but it's lost on me. If you're using bagged pre-cut romaine from a club store, two of the very big bags will generally do the trick. Or two of the really big bags of mixed baby lettuce or one of each for interest and variety. If you're using non-bagged lettuce, it's your best guess. Fortunately, lettuce is relatively cheap, so it's safer to overbuy.

Root vegetables – tend to be very dense, so people don't eat too much of it (unless there's not enough other food or it's really fantastic). You can generally assume about a pound for every 6 people, unless you're dealing with a recipe that serves them in large pieces, then you have to calculate per piece (one to four pieces per person depending on the size of the pieces).

Leafy vegetables (to be cooked) – Cooking leafy vegetables tends to result in dramatic shrinkage – how much depends on the relative toughness of the leaves. An 8 quart pot stuffed full to the brim of spinach will be about a half inch deep when it's cooked. Spinach shrinks most. Tough greens like turnip tops don't shrink as badly, especially if you don't overcook them and swiss chard falls somewhere in the middle. The weight per serving should probably be a bit more than for root vegetables. The tricky thing is that leafy greens don't weigh much, so the raw volume looks overwhelming. Expect to have to clean and cook the equivalent of a lawn bag full of spinach in order to get decent sized servings for a feast. Personally, I don't serve spinach as a stand-alone vegetable for this very reason.

DESSERTS

You can get away with serving light on the desserts. A lot of people don't eat them, either because they're stuffed, watching their weight or sugar intake or they've already left by the time it's served.

Fresh fruits – Calculate by the piece for larger fruits. Probably less than half of the people will eat it. Apples, pears and whole oranges barely go. Sliced larger oranges and Clementines disappear. Smaller fruits that take less effort to eat, like grapes or strawberries are more likely to be consumed. People will eat at least 3 strawberries each and 5 lbs. of grapes disappear at an average feast of 60 people.

Cookies, and bite sized goodies– Plan on *at least* two per person.

Pies – Expect to get 8 to 10 slices per pie.

Cakes – While modern cakes are not period, they often end up served at feasts. Depending on the size you'll get 8 to 12 slices from a round cake. A single layer half sheet cake can serve as many as 30 people.

Puddings – figure on a half cup per person. Lots of people won't bother eating it because they don't have a clean bowl or it looks funny.

Subtleties – If you have the time, help and budget, this can also be the opportunity to make an incredibly gorgeous subtlety. Most doughs, marzipan and some candies lend themselves to making fantastical shapes, so your creativity is your only limit.

We've Got Big Bowls (Soups & Stews)

If you are going to be serving a food that is liquid enough to be eaten from a bowl, like a soup or stew consider the following:

- Not everyone eats it (too much trouble, didn't bring a bowl)
- Those who do tend to have bowls with a much larger capacity than your average home soup bowl. I can serve a cup of soup (which is a decent serving as a starter) in my soup bowls at home and it looks like a serving. The same amount looks like dregs in someone's 3 cup capacity wooden bowl.

So, be generous with these things even if you can only afford to add more water and seasoning! But more veggies are relatively inexpensive and stretch it nicely.

Salt, Seasoning and the Modern Palate

In the middle ages, the liberal use of spices was a sign of great wealth and many of the recipes in existence today were from wealthy households. The modern palate tends to favor more lightly seasoned foods. So, if the recipe seems a bit heavy-handed, you might want to consider starting out with a bit less and adding if you think the modern palate can tolerate it. Also, remember that in multiplying a recipe, you often need to use less spice than the math would indicate.

Salt – a basic of cooking and an area of contention. People tend to get rather hot under the collar about the use of salt. There are those who believe that it is a major contributing factor to various health problems and those who routinely salt every surface of their food before even tasting it. I have found that in cooking for large numbers of people, both at medieval and mundane events, a middle ground is the safest course. I know that it's easier for people who like salt to add it than it is for those who don't to subtract it, but not everyone carries salt to a feast, not everyone would bother to add it (they'll just leave it and say the food was tasteless), and adding it on top of a cooked dish doesn't taste the same.

Cooking Time

Cooking a large volume of food will affect cooking times in different ways for different foods. A large volume of water and other ingredients cooked on top of the range will take longer to come to a boil and slightly longer to cook thereafter, but not too much. Grains take slightly longer to cook. When baking foods that are in discreet pieces, like meatballs, sausages, chicken parts, or chunks of root vegetables, how closely they are crowded in the pan impacts the cooking time. The more crowded they are, the longer it will take for the heat to penetrate all the way to the center of each piece. When cooking chicken parts, you'll probably want to cook the white meat and dark meat in separate pans for two reasons; so people can easily find the pieces they prefer and because the cooking times are not the same and you don't want to dry out the breast meat. When baking foods in one piece, the larger the roast, the longer the cooking time. Long skinny roasts, like eye round of beef and pork loins aren't impacted quite as much by volume unless you put them side by side in the pan. Meat thermometers are an excellent idea! When making cakes, pies, tarts, etc. many small ones will cook in about the usual time (maybe slightly longer if the oven is crowded) but one or two large ones will have a significantly longer cooking time. If you opt to make larger sizes, make sure that at

least one dimension is small enough for the heat to penetrate to the center before the outside is incinerated. For example, if you're going to try to make a cake in a full steam table pan, don't pour the batter too deep so the heat can penetrate from top to bottom. Don't use a pan that's large in all dimensions, or the center will never set. Did you ever wonder why there's a hole in the middle of a bundt pan? Plan to do a lot of poking, skewering, etc. to test for doneness.

Pots, Pans & Serving Pieces

For the most part, you might assume that if you use the kingdom feast gear, you will find everything you need there, but it can't hurt to have an idea of just what you'll need to make sure you collect it all. You might also end up using some of your own stuff. Make sure everything will be large enough, especially if you're not used to cooking for large groups.

The Right Tool

Cooks, carpenters and many others share the old adage – the right tool for the right job. When you are cooking for a large number of people is not the time to test this wisdom. If you try to lift a 10 lb. roast with a wimpy fork, it will bend and the roast will fall, spattering hot juices all over you. If you normally cook for one and use a paring knife for everything, and you try it for volume, not only will it take you forever and your pieces won't be uniform, but you will have blisters, strains and probably cuts all over your hands. As previously mentioned, you need a really large colander to strain the contents of a really large pot. And don't forget to have very long handled utensils (preferably wooden spoons) for stirring large, deep pots.

Chapter 3: Other Things to Consider

Dayboard

Most of what has been said about the feast is applicable to the dayboard as well. There are a few other things you might wish to consider:

Will there be a feast? - If you are preparing a dayboard for an event which will also include an evening feast, you will probably want to conserve most of your budget and energy for the feast while still providing enough food to keep people happily munching throughout the day. Feel free to keep

the portion sizes smaller and use lots of “no-cook basics” like bread & honey-butter, fresh and/or dried fruit, pickles, olives, raw vegetables and hummus, ham, salami or cured sausage and nuts. There are also quite a few “cook in advance” items which are great for a dayboard, like whole roasted chickens, carved and served cold, thin-sliced roast beef, also served cold, quiches, tarts, frittatas and turnovers, salads of cooked vegetables and/or grains and good old hard-boiled eggs.

If there will be no evening feast, people will expect more out of the dayboard and you will be free to put more effort into it, so you might want to consider larger portions or more complicated recipes.

Weather – If it is going to be hot, try to avoid foods that will either melt or spoil quickly and make sure there is plenty of water or other beverages. If it’s going to be cold, you might want to consider serving a hot beverage, like mulled cider and something warming like a soup or stew.

Medieval Desserts

Desserts are the category which seems to cause the most difficulty in cooking for medieval events, mostly because people’s concept of what constitutes dessert has changed a lot in the last 500 years or so. The biggest difference is that baking powder and baking soda did not exist in the Middle Ages. Therefore, almost every cake and quick bread that we now make was not possible at the time. Any confection that was made of flour in period was either unleavened or leavened by the action of yeast, the air trapped in beaten eggs or puffed by frying the dough. In period, desserts were more likely to be a pudding or custard, small cakelets, fresh or dried fruit, marzipan, candy or cheese.

Beverages

Not all modern day medieval feasts include beverages, but it is a nice touch at any time, and can go a long way toward contributing to the comfort and enjoyment of the guests in extremes of weather. If there are going to be outdoor activities on a cold day, hot mulled cider will be the most popular item on the menu. At most other times, but particularly when it’s hot, a cool beverage will be greatly appreciated. Some suggestions are weak lemonade, mint tea or water with fruit cut up in it. It doesn’t have to be fancy, expensive or overly sweet. Just make sure your ingredients existed in period.

Special Circumstances

Most of the pointers I’ve shared up until now are for the standard feast prepared in the venue’s kitchen and served in an indoor dining hall. There are times when things just don’t go that way, but that doesn’t mean that feeding the masses will be impossible. A combination of cold foods and the alternate cooking or heating methods mentioned below will provide for an interesting feast. Don’t forget the salad! Remember that there will be no refrigeration, and if it’s outdoors, no temperature control at all, so make sure you have adequate cooler space to keep food at safe temperatures until you’re ready to cook or serve it. In particularly hot weather, you may even wish to pre-freeze some of the food or ingredients to make sure they don’t get too warm while they’re waiting.

Outdoor Cooking

Some events are held entirely outdoors. If it is a dayboard-only event, it is relatively simple. Use lots of the no-cook or cook-ahead ideas to keep life simple. If the weather is cold, a beverage cooler can be used to keep a beverage or soup hot without having to resort to actually cooking on premises.

If a feast has to be prepared, or you want to serve a more complicated dayboard and the rules of the venue allow cooking and fire, you can use a gas or charcoal barbecue, camp stove, firepit with a cooking grill or the more authentic tripod and cauldron over an open ground fire to supplement your coolers and chafing dishes.

The Chafing Dish Feast

On occasion, there will be an event in an indoor venue with no (or woefully inadequate) kitchen facilities or outdoors with a prohibition on open fires. That is when your options for serving are either cold or chafing dish. Sometimes you’ll get lucky and have a place to plug in an electric warming tray or slow cooker.

A really important consideration in putting together a chafing dish feast is how well the food will stand up to the prolonged heating in the chafing dish. Foods that make poor candidates for a chafing dish feast are generally foods that don’t reheat well, like grilled steaks and chops, roast beef and anything that needs to maintain its crispness, like fried foods or pastry-wrapped items. Anything that loses its appeal when overcooked is not a good candidate, like some vegetables, which change color as well.

Good candidates include grains and pasta, root vegetables, cooked leafy greens and meats in sauces or gravies. Chicken, on or off the bone and pork tenderloin with a sauce are both economical and lend themselves very nicely to this kind of presentation.

Chapter 4: Staying in Budget

How Much Per Person?

In MSR, most events will allow somewhere between \$5 and \$8 per person for both the dayboard and an evening feast. Our event proposals are based on an expected number of people and a budget for food, venue and miscellaneous items. Dividing the food budget by the expected number of people from the proposal will give you the per person budget amount. As reservations come in, try to stay within the per person amount times the number of people expected. Note that not everyone makes a reservation, so you'll want to plan for at least 10, if not 20 more people depending on how many reservations you have. With 80 reservations, you don't need to plan for many more. With 30, unless you know of a reason why no one is coming to the event, you might want to plan for more people without reservations.

Is The Shortcut Worth It?

When preparing a feast, there are some work saving shortcuts that cost a bit more and might or might not be worth it. My experience has been that buying frozen peas, spinach and asparagus pieces for use in a mixed cooked dish, like a quiche is actually preferable to buying fresh. Pre-cut and washed lettuce, in club-sized bags is worth it. In single salad bags, it's not. Buying pre-made pastry, like pie crusts and puff pastry is generally worth it, whereas pizza dough is easy and cheap to make from scratch. Buying chicken already cut up is a huge time saver if you can find it for a good price. You might find that a roast beef is cheaper than stewing beef and it's really not difficult to cut boneless meat into cubes. Some dessert components (like cookies) might be purchased ready-made and supplemented with freshly made fruit sauce and cream. The shortcuts you use will probably be determined by how much time and kitchen help you have vs. how tight your budget is.

Unexpected Attendance (Up or Down)

I generally start my shopping on the Wednesday prior to the event, although I will sometimes purchase non-perishables even before then if they are either hard to find or the price couldn't be beat. By that time, I hope to have a decent handle on how many people will be attending the event, but sometimes the

reservations pour in on Thursday and Friday or weather causes a lot of last-minute cancellations. If the numbers change before you start shopping, just use the per person amount to plan and shop. Don't worry about the total number on the event proposal. If the numbers change after you start shopping and you have the ability to buy more of the same, you can do that. If you can't you might want to have an easy to make "just in case" recipe up your sleeve that you can add if you think your feast is going to turn out light. Add a frittata, more vegetables or another grain dish. They are generally inexpensive, easy to make and satisfying. You might need to call in a favor and have someone else who's coming to the event run out and get the ingredients for your extra dish to save you time.

Serving Style

Our feasts can generally be served one of three ways:

- Buffet style
- Family style with platters at each table
- At table from carts

How you serve will be determined by the formality of the event, how much help and serving gear you have and your budget. The most expensive way to serve is family style with platters on each table. You will need to increase the amount of food you prepare by 10 to 25% and the leftovers are less likely to be used. You also need to have enough platters so every table can get every dish at the same time. The other two methods don't impact your budget, but serving from a cart requires manpower. A buffet can be manned but usually is not.

Shopping

Where, when and how you shop is going to be largely dependent on how much time you have, your mode of transportation, whether you belong to any shopping clubs and how strict your budget is. I have found that the shopping clubs don't always have the best prices. The exceptions that come to mind are the disposable aluminum pans, salami, cheese and butter and some meats. Even when the prices are better, you have to buy such large sizes that sometimes the savings is lost in the unused products. This is especially true for grains, oils and spices. If you watch the sales brochures for your neighborhood supermarkets you may do better there. You'll almost certainly do better in the large privately owned produce/butcher combo stores like Pat's Farm in East Meadow, Sal's Fruit Tree in

Copaigue and Giunta's Meat Market in several locations around Long Island. Large specialty grocers like Uncle Giuseppe's and Iavarone Brothers often run specials that are very competitive. Trader Joe's has very competitive prices on the products they carry. Remember to keep and label all your receipts so you can be reimbursed!

If an Event is Cancelled

If an event is cancelled before you start shopping, there's no issue. If you've only bought your non-perishables when it's cancelled you can put them aside for the next event. If you've already done all your shopping you may have to get creative – put whatever you can use into your personal grocery stream and adjust the receipts accordingly or freeze what you can for a future event. See if other members might have some freezer space available. When all else fails, ask Bob what to do with the stuff!

Getting Your Money

Whether you receive an advance for the amount specified on the event proposal form is determined by whether you request one on that form. Some people like to get the advance, so they know when they run out of that money, their budget is done. Others would rather shop for what they need and worry about it later. Some do both.

Either way, you must keep all receipts and label them with your name and what they were for (in general, ie. "feast for Yule"). After the event, use an Event Reconciliation Form (downloadable from our Yahoo group home page). List each receipt, total it up, deduct your advance, if you got one and what's left will indicate whether MSR owes you money, it came out of the event proceeds or what. Submit your paperwork in a timely manner if you'd like to get a timely check and maintain your credibility. If you have receipts that include both personal and MSR items, delete and subtract the personal items and submit the receipts according to the usual procedure.

Chapter 5: Getting (or Staying) Organized

The difference between throwing a haphazard feast on the tables two hours late, then going back to a messy kitchen to collapse and having a coordinated feast out on time from a relatively neat kitchen, still feeling like a human being is largely a matter of how organized you are.

Planning Ahead

Once you have determined what your menu will be you can begin your planning. In the ideal situation, every feast would be prepared in a kitchen fully stocked with pots and pans with at least four ovens, 8 industrial sized burners and multiple sinks with lots of counter space and a full staff of helpers who are pleasant to work with and know their way around the kitchen. And everything would be in good working order. Everything would come out perfect and on time and the kitchen would be neat and orderly. Now it's time to wake up from the feastocrat's dream and face reality.

Make lists of all the ingredients needed for all your recipes. Sort them by which store you will buy them in, so you might end up with a list for the shopping club, one for the produce store and another for any specialty items that can only be gotten in a particular ethnic shop. If you have plenty of time, you might also want to separate your lists according to what is non-perishable, semi-perishable and perishable, so you can spread out your shopping over a week or so, which will limit how much you have to carry at any given time. When you shop for perishables might have to be determined by how much refrigerator space you have.

Review your recipes and break them down into steps. Are there any shortcuts that would be feasible, like buying frozen vegetable instead of fresh? Collate the steps from the different recipes into lists based on how far in advance things can be done. For example, you can bake cookies two days in advance and store them in a tin (or maybe even two weeks in advance and freeze them), but you can't really peel and chop apples till very close to the time you're going to use them. Whether or not you actually do things in advance will depend largely upon how much time and storage space you have, but you will appreciate these lists even if you have to do everything on the day of the event. If you have and use these lists, you won't be in the unfortunate position of finding out ten minutes before the feast is supposed to be served that the eggplant was supposed to be charred, peeled and drained for four hours.

If you don't expect to have a lot of help in the kitchen and if possible, do some of the tedious or messy tasks in advance, like cleaning/peeling/cutting vegetables. It's a lot easier to carry a bag of torn, washed and dried lettuce and just dump it in a bowl when you get there than to carry three grocery bags of red leaf lettuce and first have to start cutting and washing it while everything else is going on in the kitchen. You might also want to do any pre-cooking, as in the eggplant example in the previous paragraph, especially if it requires draining, mashing, chopping, scraping or whatever in addition to pre-cooking.

What you don't want to do in advance is partially cook meats. You can pre-cook them for a multi-stage recipe. You can cook them till they're just done and reheat them later, but you can't leave them in a partially cooked state because it's an invitation for the hardiest bacteria and other organisms to grow and multiply. And you can partially cook vegetables to finish later.

If you have the help or the time, clean up as you go. There's nothing more depressing than going back to the kitchen after serving a feast to find a slippery floor littered with food, bags and garbage all over the counters and a four foot high pile of greasy pots, pans and utensils just waiting for your exhausted attention.

Even if you don't have the help or the time, clean up (hands, knives, cutting boards, counters, etc.) immediately after handling raw meats to prevent food poisoning.

The last hour or so before the feast is served gets hectic even in the most organized kitchen. During that time the meats have to be finished and carved, gravies and sauces have to be made, pasta has to be boiled, the salad has to be dressed and countless other last minute tasks need to be done before you can even contemplate plating and serving the food. If you don't have detailed lists, there is a good chance that something will either be burned, not ready on time, or overlooked altogether.

Can this Dish Be Prepared in Advance?

When considering what can be done in advance, the first question is whether advance preparation will degrade the quality of the finished dish. In some cases, it's very clear that it will, like steaks, dough products that need to be crisp or anything else that is adversely affected by overcooking or re-heating. For many dishes, however, having time for the flavors to blend will actually improve them. That's where the next question comes into play.

Can This Dish Travel?

The answer to this will vary depending on what equipment you have, your vehicle and whether there will be others transporting with you. Things to think about:

- Will this pot of soup slosh out all over my car?
- Is there enough space to carry ten tarts without having to stack them? Can I pack them securely enough so they won't skid around the car and crumble?
- Can I transport this subtlety without it sitting in someone's lap?

To Experiment or not to Experiment?

Most of us had no experience with Medieval cooking prior to serving as feastocrat for our first event. Whether or not you need to experiment with specific recipes prior to preparing them for a feast is a personal decision based upon your overall cooking experience, your experience with similar recipes, how tricky the recipe is and your level of confidence. For example, if you are an experienced cook mundanely, you will have no problem with a medieval stew or roast, or even making a sauce. However, if you have no previous experience with making a meringue and you've found a recipe that calls for it, you might wish to try your hand at it before you carry a stand mixer and 200 egg whites to an event.

You might also find it useful to benefit from other people's experience. Help a more experienced feastocrat in the kitchen. Do whatever chores they ask of you, but watch what they're doing as well, so you can see what goes into a dish both in terms of time and ingredients. Talk to an experienced feastocrat about a dish you're considering making. They might have already tried it and worked out all the kinks.

Whether or not you decide to experiment in advance, don't expect to like every dish you make. There is a big difference in the medieval palate and the modern palate and even bigger differences between individuals. You may find a particular dish (perhaps a brined or pickled fish dish) absolutely revolting and put it out first to get it out of your nose's range then go out with the next dish to find it's gone already.

If it's totally unfamiliar, fussy or has to be visually perfect, it's worth experimenting in advance. Otherwise, probably not.

Kitchen Help

No matter how good you are, how organized you are, how much of a control freak you are and how much you've done in advance, you will really need at least some kitchen help. How much you can expect from your kitchen help will depend on how comfortable they are in the kitchen and how comfortably you work together. If someone really gets on your nerves, you'll want to have anyone but them in the kitchen to save you from accidentally cutting off your fingers or intentionally cutting off theirs.

Even if you have completely unskilled labor, they can help with:

- Unloading the car
- Cutting cheese and prepared meats
- Slicing bread
- Arranging fruit
- Cutting/peeling/washing veggies
- Preparing/replenishing beverages
- Assembling salads
- Washing dishes
- Cleaning as you go
- Plating food
- Serving food
- Reloading the car

They will also keep you from having conversations with the stuffed goose out of total boredom.

Timing

One of the hardest things to do when serving multiple dishes is to get everything out at its proper serving temperature at the same time. I keep going back to the same question – would this reheat well? Any dishes that would can either be kept warm in an oven or on chafing dishes in the kitchen until the fussy last minute dishes, like roast beef or fritters are ready. Try to set things up so that only one or two dishes will require your attention at the last minute. You'll have enough other things going on to keep you very busy without having several dishes to finish at the end.

What Can Go Wrong and What to do When it Does

You left some food behind - Determine how critical it is and how difficult or costly it would be to replace or retrieve. If it's a secondary dessert, forget it and plan a party to use it up at a later date. If it's the meat for the main course, it's more important, but what you do will still depend on the other factors. Are you close enough to run home or send someone for it? Can it be bought again at a local store or was it too expensive or too far along in the process to be replaced? Can you make something else instead? Let's say you had thinly sliced venison cutlets from a friend who hunts and you're now in another state. You might want to send someone out to buy an eye round of beef and get busy with a knife when they get back, rather than spending the time, gas and tolls to retrieve it.

You left some equipment behind – Again, how critical, expensive and irreplaceable is it? You might call someone who hasn't arrived yet and ask them to make a detour to get it or a replacement, send someone out or do without it. Sometimes there is equipment in the kitchen we can borrow if we clean it nicely and put it back where it was.

Something burns – Depending on how badly burnt it is and how soon you notice, you might be able to save it.

If it is something cooking on top of the stove in a pot - and you notice that it's burning and sticking, DON'T scrape the bottom and stir the burnt part into the rest of the food. The best thing you can do is turn off the heat and carefully transfer the part that is not burnt into a clean pot without disturbing the burnt pot, even if it means you have to sacrifice a bit more food. Then you can continue cooking the unburned part if necessary and either scrape the dirty pot or set it to soak. You might need to add seasoning or other ingredients to cover the hint of smoky flavor or increase the volume to make up for the lost ingredients.

If it's something in a frying pan – hopefully you have quite a few batches, so you can throw out the burnt ones, pour off the oil, clean the pan and start with clean oil and you won't have lost too much. If it was something like caramelized onions, you may be able to treat it the same way as something burning in a pot, above.

If it's something in the oven - if it's not burnt through and through or close to it, you might be able to scrape or cut away the burnt parts of the actual food. Try not to disturb whatever is burnt onto the pan. Again, you'll want to put the rescued portion in a clean pan or container. Depending on what it is, you might even want to rinse it before starting over. If it had a sauce and the ingredients are available, you might want to make a fresh sauce to cover your tracks. If it didn't have a sauce, you might want to consider making one.

Something isn't cooking on time – If you're almost ready to serve the feast and one dish just isn't ready, you have a few options. First, determine if the failure to cook is due to equipment failure. If the oven or burner just isn't working, or you ran out of propane when cooking outdoors you're going to have to be creative and find an alternate source of heat. If everything's working, you just have to figure out a way to cheat time.

Depending on what you're cooking, it might just be a matter of boosting the heat and watching it more carefully to make sure you don't burn it. If it's a

roast or a whole bird, you might cut it into smaller segments so it will cook faster. If things are really desperate, you might have to switch heat sources and use the broiler or the stove top or combine any of these options, depending on how much time you have and how important the final appearance will be. Something cooking on top of the stove might go faster if it was in two pots.

It doesn't turn out like you planned – if this is a textural or appearance failure, but it is thoroughly cooked or otherwise safe to eat, consider what you can do to improve it. If the middle of an otherwise cooked and yummy cake looks like a big crater, fill it with whipped cream and fresh or canned fruit and make believe you intended it to be that way. If a cake you'll be frosting or icing breaks, glue it back together with the frosting. If something that's supposed to thicken doesn't, heat it up and add some corn starch. It's not period, but it might save your feast. If something that's not supposed to thicken does, add water or other fluids and heat or blend. If your sauce separates, whisk it and re-thicken it. If your stew is too runny, call it soup. If your rice is overcooked, it just might become porridge (or rice pudding).

The most important thing you can do is not freak out!

Your Cooking Emergency Kit

There is a very strong temptation, when faced with the sheer volume of stuff you'll have to transport to try to make do with the bare minimums. It's not impossible to do so, but your chances of being able to rescue something that has gone wrong if you have extra equipment and ingredients with you. You might wish to carry more than you need of the following equipment and ingredients:

- Pots and pans (in case you need to transfer or divide)
- Salt, pepper and other spices
- Garam Masala (an Indian spice mix, not necessarily Medieval, but close enough and very fragrant and flavorful)
- Sugar
- Oil
- Vinegar
- Corn Starch and/or flour
- Onions & Garlic
- Bacon (can mask any taste and almost everyone likes it)
- An extra bag or two of grain (if all else fails and you need to feed them SOMETHING)

Any extra ingredients left from preparing the dishes in the feast (can be used to replace or replenish things that didn't work out or can be a garnish)

Parsley, Mint, Lettuce, Salad Ingredients or fruit (fresh, dried or canned) – any of these can be a garnish, line a dish, add color or change a taste

A Medieval cookbook – if you need to hunt for last minute ideas

A bottle of wine – to rescue a dish or the feastocrat

Feast Gear & Transportation

The Basics

Pots – you will need LARGE pots – 16 quarts at minimum, and you will probably need several, depending on what you're making. These are especially useful for soups, stews, boiling veggies and cooking grains. You can't make good rice if you don't have a big enough pot with a tight fitting lid. Smaller pots may be necessary for sauces and gravies. You may need large frying pans if you're going to do any pan-frying or sautéing. Think it through before you leave home. It's no fun to cook without enough pots and improvising can get dangerous.

Pans – disposable aluminum pans are your friend! The full steam table size are very useful for the volume we prepare for feasts. The half-size are useful, but not as much. What they sell as lasagna pans (a bit more shallow) are good for making rectangular tarts & frittatas or anything that needs to be shallow. They're useless for anything else. The best part is that you don't have to wash them when you're done. A couple of things to note: If what you're cooking in them is very liquid or very heavy, make sure you support the bottom of the tray. Disposable pans also don't make good cookie sheets. Everything burns.

Serving – If you're serving buffet style, you will need several very large bowls and platters made of "period passable" materials (definitely not plastic). You will also need some smaller plates and bowls to serve high table. You might end up serving some stuff straight out of the pots or pans because it would be a burn hazard to transport them from the kitchen any other way.

If you're serving family style at each table, you will need a serving bowl or platter of medium size for each dish for each table.

If you're serving from the kitchen, you can serve right out of the pots.

Don't forget serving utensils! While it might be period, it would offend most people's sensibilities if everyone stuck their hands in the serving platters.

Knives and Cutting Boards – Have the right kinds of sharp knives and enough cutting boards to avoid cross-contamination between raw meats and other foods. If you use plastic cutting boards at home, it's OK to bring them along. As long as you're not serving from them.

Coolers – How many coolers you'll need will be determined by how much perishable food you have, how much refrigeration is available on site, the weather and how long it will be before you start cooking. Expect to use at least one or two decent sized coolers.

Beverage Containers – Whether it's a large pot, a bunch of pitchers or a plastic beverage cooler, if you're going to serve a beverage, you need to have something to put it in.

Electrical Appliances – whether or not you'll need to carry any appliances will depend on what recipes you're making and how much you've done in advance. Some feastocrats like to carry a blender, stand-mixer or food processor for just in case they need them. Mine weigh a ton and were expensive so I prefer to leave them home if at all possible. Small appliances that I DO like to carry are an immersion or stick blender and a slow cooker (in winter). The slow cooker is great for keeping mulled cider or soup at serving temperature safely. The stick blender is great for beating large quantities of eggs, mixing batters, liquefying ingredients, blending sauces and lots of other things. They cost less than \$20, weigh nothing and have a million uses.

Miscellaneous – Long spoons to stir the large pots, strong serving forks, ladles, timers if you use them, meat thermometers, vegetable peeler, whisks, garlic press, rubber spatulas and a tea ball for the spices if you're making mulled cider.

How Will it Travel?

If your vehicle is going to be packed to the roof, it's probably not a good idea to bring your grandmother's crystal cake plate to serve the subtlety to high table. If you're bringing anything breakable, make sure it's packed in a way that it will arrive at the event and return home in the same condition in which you packed it. You might know what's in that bag, but the well-meaning people who help you unload your car won't and they might drop it, or the bag might break or it might roll out of your car when you open the hatch. Better to think it through in advance than be really angry and disappointed later.

Miscellaneous Items You'll Need

Even though it is not part of your feast, you will want to have the following so you can clean up and package the leftovers:

Dish soap & sponge

Ziploc bags in quart and gallon size (not the kind with the plastic slide, because they leak)

Foil, plastic wrap

Plastic food containers

Empty shopping bags

Now all you need is a bigger car.