

# 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 recipes straight out of a cookbook. Put your own spin on a recipe you've been making for years that is foolproof and everyone loves. Rule of thumb is to change three things and it's yours – i.e., change the flavors; add the berries; add a glaze, icing or topping; bake it in a different shape or make individual servings (one contest entry won second prize statewide for making a mousse, served in tiny 3" hollowed out pumpkins).

## 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's 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'll make.
- Directions should be simple to follow, but 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 isn't descriptive enough – how about *Grandma's Famous Raspberry Pound Cake*? Does it have an unusual ingredient like lavender oil? Then call it *Luscious Lavender Layer Cake*. Or combine the main ingredients in the name – *Lemon Ricotta Blueberry Torte, To Die For!*

## 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 for samples to be reheated in a microwave, if possible.

## Presentation is key:

Check out food photography in cookbooks and magazines. Most are garnished. In this case, berries would be totally appropriate, and mint, Camelia leaves, or marzipan or silk berries. 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.

## Now Get Crackin!