

## **Judging Baked Items**

### **Cakes**

Cakes can be divided into two categories: shortened and unshortened. Foam, chiffon, sponge, and angel cakes are in the latter class because they contain little or no added fat. Characteristically, unshortened cakes contain a large proportion of eggs or egg whites, are leavened by steam and air and are baked in ungreased tube pans. Unshortened cakes are extremely light and fluffy with good volume and an open, even texture. In comparison, shortened cakes, or butter cakes as they were once called, are leavened by baking powder and/or soda and acid, as well as steam and air. They may contain a relatively large proportion of solid shortening or oil and are baked in almost any size and shape. Liquids, spices, flavoring and other ingredients are varied to produce a wide assortment of shortened cakes. Typically, these cakes are somewhat heavier than foam cakes, yet well aerated with a moist, tender crumb and fine, even grain.

#### Characteristics of standard product

##### **Appearance**

Rounded top, free of cracks. Uniform, characteristic color throughout crust and crumb. Thin crust. High volume

##### **Texture**

Soft, velvety crumb. Even grain. Small, thin-walled air cells. Free of tunnels. Moist, smooth mouthfeel. Not sticky. Light — but not crumbly

##### **Tenderness**

Handles easily, yet breaks apart without difficulty. Seems to “melt in the mouth,” offers no resistance when bitten

### **Foam or Unshortened Cakes**

#### Characteristics of standard product.

##### **Appearance**

Thin, golden brown crust. Uniform crumb color. Rough, slightly cracked top crust. Symmetrical. Optimum volume

##### **Texture**

Light in weight in proportion to size. Well aerated. Finer, even, oval-shaped cells with thin cell walls. Sugary, slightly sticky crust

### **Tenderness**

Moist. Soft crust and crumb. Delicate crumb that is easily broken apart

## **Cookies**

There are five main types of baked cookies — rolled, dropped, refrigerator, pressed, and bar or sheet cookies. Rolled cookies are made from a rather stiff dough that is rolled on a lightly floured board to the desired thickness and cut out into various shapes. Dropped cookies are made from a soft dough that is dropped from a spoon or dipper onto a cookie sheet. They may or may not be flattened. Refrigerator cookies are made from a comparatively rich dough that has been thoroughly chilled, then cookies are shaped into balls or sliced from a roll. Pressed cookies are made from a rich, stiff dough extruded through a decorative die. Bar cookies may be cake-like or compact and chewy. A stiff or thick batter is baked in a shallow pan and cut into bars or squares when cool. Cookie dough should be easy to handle but as soft as possible. The addition of too much flour causes dry, flinty, cracked cookies that have little appeal. Prepared and baked with care, all types of cookies can meet high standards. No-bake cookies can be made from ready to-eat cereals, oatmeal, chow mein noodles, nuts, raisins, or coconut, and held together with a cooked syrup. These cookies are generally made by younger, beginning skill members. They may melt or become sticky or oily, depending on the recipe and the weather.

### Characteristics of standard product

#### **Appearance**

Uniform shape. Even contour. Uniform color. Ingredients evenly mixed

#### **Texture**

Characteristic of type — soft or crisp.

#### **Tenderness**

Breaks apart easily when chewed. Not crumbly or hard

## **Pie Pastry and Fillings**

Pastry is a simple food system composed of fat, flour, salt, and water. But, often a quality product is not easily achieved. The key to success lies in the technique used to mix and roll the dough. Ingredients must be handled delicately, not mixed too much or too little, if a high quality pastry is to be prepared.

Characteristics of standard product:

**Crust**

**Appearance**

Rough, blistered surface with no large air bubbles. Golden brown edges. Center of bottom and top crusts are light in color. Not shrunken. Attractively shaped edges. Uniform thickness

**Texture**

Layers are evident when pastry is broken. Crisp and flaky. Not mealy

**Tenderness**

Cuts easily with a fork but holds shape when lifted; not so tender that it falls apart

**Fruit Fillings**

**Consistency**

Tender. Softly holds shape

**Appearance**

Filling retained in pie.

**Biscuits**

There are two basic types of biscuits — rolled and dropped. Both are leavened by baking powder and contain similar ingredients but differ in the proportion of liquid and method of preparation. As a result, the appearance and texture of the two are dissimilar.

Characteristics of standard product:

**Rolled Biscuits**

**Appearance**

Cylindrical. Pale, golden brown top crust. Even height. Creamy white crumb with no brown or yellow flecks. Evenly contoured. Straight sides and flat, fairly smooth top. Uniform size. Free of excess flour

**Texture**

Small, uniform gas holes. Relatively thin cell walls. Crumb peels off in sheets, flakes or layers

## **Tenderness**

Crisp yet tender outer crust. Crust and crumb offer little resistance to bite. Light and moist

## **Dropped Biscuits**

### **Appearance**

Pale, golden brown top crust. White crumb. Slightly pebbled surface. Straight or gently sloped sides

### **Texture**

Less uniform, larger gas holes than kneaded biscuits. Slightly thicker cell walls

### **Tenderness**

Crisp, tender outer crust. Crust and crumb offer little resistance to bite

## **Loaf Breads**

Fruit or nut loaf breads are fast and easy to make. The ingredients, method of mixing, and baking technique are similar to those used for muffins. Some quick bread recipes are made by the cake method. Interesting variations are made by adding nuts, fruits, cereals, and other flours. Quick breads are not always baked in loaf pans. For example, corn bread and Irish soda bread are baked in shallow pans, spoon breads in casserole dishes or layer cake pans, Sally Lunn bread in a tube pan, and Boston brown bread may be baked in loaves or steamed in covered cans or special molds. Cracks in the crust are typical of quick breads and do not necessarily indicate an unsatisfactory product. Products should not be scored down because of cracked tops.

### **Characteristics of standard product:**

#### **Appearance**

Even contour, no "lip" at upper edge of loaf. Rounded top. May have a center crack. Evenly browned top and bottom crust. Uniform crumb, color. Well-distributed nuts and fruit

#### **Texture**

Relatively fine crumb. Uniform grain. Free of large tunnels. Moist. Not mealy or crumbly

#### **Tenderness**

Crisp, tender crust. Firm but delicate crumb

## **Muffins**

Muffins come in many varieties. Each has its own special characteristics. Plain muffins, sweet muffins, cereal muffins, and fruit or nut muffins differ in appearance, texture and flavor. When setting standards for muffins the type should be considered. For instance, a bran muffin differs from a plain muffin, yet general standards for quality can be applied.

Characteristics of standard product:

### **Appearance**

Rough, pebbled surface. Golden brown top crust. Even contour, slightly rounded top — no peaks.

### **Texture**

Fairly large gas holes uniformly distributed. Free of long, slender tunnels. Medium thick cell walls

### **Tenderness**

Little resistance when bitten and chewed

## **Yeast Breads**

Standards of quality are easily established for dinner rolls and plain loaves of bread because there is little variety in the ingredients used and the physical characteristics of the product. The formula is usually relatively lean (contains little or no fat or eggs) compared to a sweet dough. Sweet rolls and coffee cake are made from a rich, soft dough that contains more eggs, fat, and sugar than the dough used for loaves of bread. The process of making speciality yeast products and a loaf of bread are similar. Adequate development of gluten either by kneading or beating is essential for a satisfactory product. When a no-knead or batter bread is made, the thin batter is mixed quickly and thoroughly without kneading. The batter is left in the mixing bowl for rising or placed directly in the baking pans. Characteristically, batter breads have a more open grain, lacy appearance and uneven surface than kneaded breads. A great variety of breads is possible by adding nuts, fruit, raisins, spices, herbs, and seeds; by substituting speciality flours for part of the flour; by shaping the dough in different ways; and by using various toppings and garnishes. Rolls from plain bread dough can be baked quickly in an oven at 425 °F. However, rich doughs are baked at lower temperatures, 350° F to 375° F, to prevent excessive browning of the crust.

Characteristics of standard product:

### **Appearance**

Golden brown crust. Good volume with even height. Well shaped. Symmetrical Smooth, unbroken top surface. Loaf should have a shredded border (break and shred) along one side. Characteristic crumb color, uniform throughout. Free of flour streaks

### **Texture**

Even, moderately fine grain. Slightly elongated cells. Porous, honeycomb-like texture. Free of large air pockets. Light for weight. Thin, even, crisp, tender crust. Free of flour "line"

### **Tenderness**

Moist, silky crumb with a tender but elastic