

St Nicholas Priory



A day in the life of  
a Tudor cook

Dear friend,

I am one of the cooks here at the Priory and my nickname is 'Cookie'. I live in servant's quarters at the Priory and work in the kitchen, where I cook the meals for the Hurst family and their staff. It's an awful lot of hard work and I have a very busy daily routine.

I wake up when the sun rises in the morning and get ready for a long day at work. My clothes are quite simple, but it is important that I look neat when I'm working. I tuck my hair under a 'coif' - a light cap that keeps the hair out of my face and helps me look respectable - and wear a simple apron to protect my durable (but itchy!) wool dress.

At 6 o'clock, I feed the chicken and bake the bread for the day. There are lots of jobs to be done before the family wake up and break their fast, so the kitchen is very busy!

At 10 o'clock, the Hurst family have their breakfast - normally bread, ale and fresh eggs from the chicken (who lives in the kitchen!). Us servants might be able to wolf down a bowl of porridge, but we quickly have to get back to work.

My afternoon is spent cooking again and the kitchen can become so hot and smoky with the fires going! Dinner is served at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and we serve lots of meat, stews, pies, and puddings.

Mr. Hurst's favourite meal is roasted boar but sometimes we will even serve up venison, pheasant or peacock if we have guests! The Hurst family are wealthy, so they can afford more exotic ingredients, sugar and spices. After the dishes are all scrubbed, us servants fill our bellies with hot pottage, which is made from stock, onions, oats, herbs and whatever vegetables or leftovers are lying around the kitchen.

Even after dinner is finished, I have to wait until the Hurst family have gone to bed before I can finish work. It can be very tiring work and I even have to work on the weekends! For all this hard work, I get paid 3 shillings a month, which would only be about £450 a year in your modern money!

Yours sincerely,

*Cookie*

# Activities

**Do you think Cookie is higher status or lower status? Why?**

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**Why do you think Cookie's clothes have to be so durable?**

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**How is Cookie's kitchen different from yours at home?  
Is there anything missing, compared to a modern kitchen?**

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**Look at the objects around the kitchen. What materials are they made from? Are they the same materials used in a modern kitchen?**

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**Write a letter back to Cookie, comparing how your lives are the same and how they are different. Do you have any questions for him about life as a household servant in the Tudor period?**