# Moonstone



The Province of Malagentia is a local chapter of the Society for Creative Anachronism. The Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) is an inclusive community pursuing research and re-creation of pre-seventeenth century skills, arts, combat and culture. The lives of participants are enriched as we gain knowledge of history through activities, demonstrations, and events. Malagentia is a branch of the East Kingdom, located in Southern Maine. If you are new to the SCA or just want to learn more about this non-profit organization please contact the Chatelaine at chatelaine@malagentia.eastkingdom.org for more information or visit the newcomer's website at eastkingdom.org. Malagentia holds monthly business meetings on the first Thursday of the month at Doughboy's, 57 Bridge St, Westbrook, ME. Meetings start at 7:00; however many members arrive early to revel in the company of other like-minded people and have a bite to eat. Please be sure to check the calendar at malagentia.eastkingdom.org/main/calendar for more activities taking place in the province.

June 2020

he society has made an announcement that while they were leaving expired memberships open as if they were current memberships in an effort to help those in need, they will no longer be able to so. The corporation has reached a point financially that as of July 01, 2020, the society will resume following normal financial processes, which includes returning to standard membership terms.

If you know someone who can't afford to renew their membership and would like to help them out, please contact membership@sca.org and they can assist you in completing this. This can be done anonymously or they would be happy to send a notice with the membership card.

With the recent announcement from the Board of Directors regarding the financial state of the Society, a group of Tygers are banding together to help those in need as well as help secure the future of the community we love so much.

The purpose of this group is to help fund the memberships of those who cannot afford to do so due to financial strain from the pandemic. No questions regarding finances will be asked, and your information will remain private. We will only share the information with the membership office to ensure your renewal.

We will be prioritizing those who hold required offices of their local groups to avoid having undue stress on the branch.

By requesting assistance, you understand we cannot guarantee to fund the needed membership, but we will do our best. To request assistance for your membership, please complete this form: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/Tygerrecipient">https://tinyurl.com/Tygerrecipient</a>

If you are among those fortunate enough to be able to assist our community, please consider donating. Please complete this form: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/Tygerdonor">https://tinyurl.com/Tygerdonor</a>

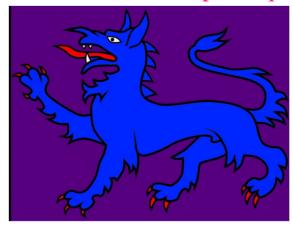
Donations can be sent via PayPal to tygerstogether@gmail.com

Thank you all for being an amazing community, and we will get through this together.

In Service to the Society,

Tygers Together

If you need financial assistance with your membership renewal, PLEASE reach out. We are here to help, no questions asked!



<sup>\*</sup>Illumination from the Passionary of Weissenau (Weißenauer Passionale); Fondation Bodmer, Coligny, Switzerland; Cod. Bodmer 127

June 2020

## Candied Violets

How medieval people may have candied violets and how we can too! Tudor people had a much more complicated view of eating healthily. It had to do with a complex system called the theory of humors. The four humors were blood, phlegm, (Gall) or black bile and (Cholar) or yellow bile. They believed that these four humors needed to be properly balanced to be happy and healthy, physically, mentally, and spiritually. It's a very complicated system but I won't dwell on it greatly today, there are candied violets to attend to! Another complicated system that medieval people dwelt greatly upon were gardens and the specific religious connotations and qualities that they attributed to flowers. In the Medieval Flower Book Celia Fisher brings us on a lovely journey from ancient Greece with a tale of an unfortunate nymph named Io, pursued by Zeus, to Shakespeare's mournful Oberon who thought of them as the 'little western flower once white now purple with loves wound.'2. At any rate, let's get to candying these pretty little flowers. I remember candying violets years ago so I tried what I remembered from a recipe in Queens Delight, an anonymous book about making perfumes, waters, and candying different things, including flowers. Sadly I had to re-order this lost book and it arrived too late to consult before my first attempts.

I remembered using glair to get the sugar to stick so making glair was the first step. You can consult my blog for pictures and more history about glair. Basically, whip egg whites until stiff peaks form, cover them and leave it in the fridge overnight. In the morning strain

away any solids that remain and the liquid that remains is glair!

First rinse your violets and pat them dry with paper towels. If you don't have casters sugar on hand you can easily make some with a spice or coffee grinder. First mill a sacrificial 1/4 cup of regular sugar and dispose of it. Then mill a whole cup of sugar to candy the violets and other edible flowers of your choice.



Using your finger or a small brush, paint the violet, front and back, with glair. Then smoosh the glare covered violet into your milled sugar. Strew more sugar onto the back of the flower too. Gently pick it up by a petal and try to shake off the extra sugar then dry it on papers. Wax or parchment paper should work just fine.



That is the step that I forgot, to my detriment. I just left them on racks from my dehydrator and many

#### By Adrienne d'Evreus

took it upon themselves to stick fast to the racks. With much cursing and fuming I did manage to free enough of them to adorn the intended birthday cake. The resulting cake was pretty epic and greatly fawned over.



My method to candy these violets is a modern adaptation of the recipes in A Queen's Delight called "To Candy Rosemary-Flowers In the Sun", "To Candy or clear Rockcandy Flowers" and "To Candy Spanish Flowers". In the first recipe the binder is Gum Arabic. I currently only have commercially prepared Gum Arabic which I'm certain is not food safe so I substituted glair. The second has egg white but is essentially a rock candy recipe and I wanted the flowers to be covered in caster's sugar rather than end up like rock candy. It is a fun recipe that teaches you how to tell when the candy will harden up. "Then bring it to a Candy height, that is, when you may draw it in small threads between your finger and thumb". Some day I'd like to try it, I love the description! In the description of "To Candy Spanish Flowers" It advises us to "Take the Blossoms of divers sorts of flowers:". I think violets should devinitely be included in "divers sorts of flowers", don't you?!

#### **Footnotes:**

"Emotions and Disease: The Balance of Passions." *U.S. National Library of Medicine*, National Institutes of Health, 3 Nov. 2011, www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/emotions/balance.html.

"The Medieval Flower Book." *The Medieval Flower Book*, by Celia Fisher, British Library, 2013, pp. 120–121.

Anonymous. "To Candy Rosemary Flowers in the Sun." A Queen's Delight: or, the Art of Preserving, Conserving and Candying, as Also a Right Knowledge of Making Perfumes and Distilling the Most Excellent Waters, Printed by E. Tyler and R. Holt for N. Brooke, 1671, pp. 41–43.

#### Bibliography

Anonymous. A Queen's Delight: or, the Art of Preserving, Conserving and Candying, as Also a Right Knowledge of Making Perfumes and Distilling the Most Excellent Waters, Printed by E. Tyler and R. Holt for N. Brooke, 1671.

"Emotions and Disease: The Balance of Passions." *U.S. National Library of Medicine*, National Institutes of Health, 3 Nov. 2011, www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/emotions/balance.html.

Fisher, Celia. The Medieval Flower Book. British Library, 2013.



F. 33r, strawberries and blue cinquefoil

#### So Sayeth the Chronicler

Since our last publication, so many things have changed. We have been asked to stay in our homes for our own, and others, safety. Our events have been postponed and many cherished events completely canceled. We haven't been able to see our dearest friends, near or far. During these uprecedented times our beloved East Kingdom has risen to the challenge and continues to thrive, including our own Province of Malagentia and Ridings of Giggleswick and Ravensbridge. Our populace has moved to holding online meetings and classes. Households continue to gather over chat and video platforms. Local craft nights are still occurring and offering much needed social interaction and semblances of normalcy over those same platforms. We've even held our province meetings over the ether the last few months after missing some months with uncertainty abound. I am heartened to see our Society, and our Province, come together and support each other through some of the toughest times I've seen since joining the society 15 years ago.

When I was reaching out to folx about submitting content for our newsletter, I was approached by one of our own with a bit of hesitation about submitting an essay about how these times have affected them personally. The following essay encapsulates the feelings of one of our members; however, when I read the essay for the first time, it resonated with me and put words to some of the thoughts and concerns I was personally experiencing and have been unable to adequately express. I hope it does the same for some of you and gives you a bit of comfort knowing you aren't alone. As so eloquently stated by another member of our populace "One Tyger, many stripes". I have witnessed so many of you step up with any number of offers of support, emotionally, financially and otherwise. You all have made me proud to be a member of this Society and Province. I wholeheartedly thank each and every one of you.

# Am Essay

For months now, the lands of the Known World have been beset by plague. As is right and appropriate, our leaders both in the real world and in the SCA have responded with measures meant to keep the populace safe and healthy.

We cannot underplay the seriousness of this situation. Lives have changed. Some of our friends have lost jobs. Others have died.

For all of us, it has led to a great disruption. In our SCA world, Regular gatherings, be they for fencing, fighting, archery, thrown weapons, scribal, A&S, the running of a province, etc., have been postponed, or in some cases, taken to the ether.

It's been part of how we've adapted – a complement, if you will, to the massive changes many of us have made in our daily lives. Some of those changes have been for the better, some for the worse.

Beyond the normal gatherings, our beloved events have been cancelled. Personally, I'm still somewhat amazed that the last SCA event I attended was the hare-brained (and immensely fun) winter camping event that Col. Woolfe and I cooked up, Otzi's Paradise.

I've missed Balfars, the Malagentian Outdoor Test Kitchen (sigh), Endewearde's Baronial Muster and Jehan's Fighting at the Fort and, most recently Roses/Panteria. We will all miss the jewel of Malagentia and, dare I suggest, of the East – the Great Northeastern War. Many will miss Pennsic.

But I've experienced an odd feeling while all this cancellation has been happening, and other friends in the SCA have mentioned something similar: a slight, slight sense of relief. Many of these events – particularly the ones I'd have been involved with in running – are a lot of work. In a very small way, I'm glad to get back a bit of time, to be free of obligation and to be able to just .... do what I want (within reason, given current restrictions).

### By Mat Wyck

It's made me consider the nature of obligation. It's something I find myself thinking about a lot these days. My personal philosophy is that I try to create circumstances where I can do the things I enjoy – for instance, fencing. I enjoy taking on roles that allow me to facilitate more fencing for everyone and, selfishly, for me.

That, to an extent, means taking on obligations, and willingly. But in my mind, they are well worth the slight burden – because I reap benefits, both in my providing opportunities for other, and for myself.

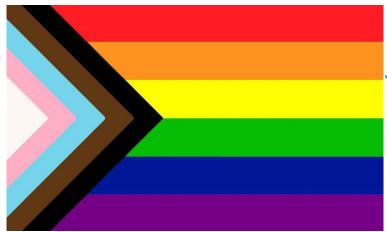
Nevertheless, they are still obligations. I have essentially made a promise to show up and help run practice every Thursday night. When I propose and promote an event like the Test Kitchen, I sort of have to execute on that.

If all of these events we are missing were still happening, but I couldn't attend due to personal circumstances, I would indeed be devastated. I'd be missing all my friends, all the fencing, the foresting, the food and, in oh-so-rare circumstances, a dram or two of whisky.

As it is, we're all in the same boat. There are no events, so no "fear of missing out." For me, and I know, for others, this forced "pause" allows us to take a breath, maybe focus on projects, have some introspection.

I'm anxious for things to be safe enough so things can restart. I miss practice, and my friends, and events. I do, indeed, miss my obligations. I have taken them on willingly, and with good reason. I'm trying to appreciate this time for what it allows – and when we return, I hope many of us have gained wisdom and insight into what they treasure about the Society, and why we take on the obligations we do.

June is Pride month in the mundane world and our Royals have chosen to celebrate it within the society as well. Per the announcement available on the East Kingdom website (eastkingdom.org):



"My Dearest East,

June is, in the mundane world, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning and Asexual (and many other terms, such as Aromantic, SGL, Two Spirit) Pride Month (LGBTQA+). June festivities abound to commemorate the 1969 Stonewall Riots, and to bring awareness of the need for equal opportunity, justice, and liberty for LGBTQ+ people. The Pride Flag, of

ten a rainbow, or versions of it, is used to symbolize the community.

Our Tyger has many stripes. Some of those stripes are rainbows. In the spirit of medieval festivals and celebrations, We would like to invite members of the East Kingdom to celebrate inclusivity, diversity, and opportunity for all tygers ~ great or small.

We intend to hold a virtual Pride Parade, via photos of those that wish to participate, to show the diversity, pride and equity of Our great lands. Be your stripe LGBTQA+, or of another group that also strives to be seen, honored, included, seen and/or heard, We want to see you! Please send your photos to Queen@eastkingdom.org subject line Tyger Pride.

We hope that this month's theme of inclusivity will be one that includes workshops, classes, salons, arts and other activities that show the East's commitment to all of her tygers.

Margarita Queen of the East

TRHs Alberic and Tindal Princes of Tir Mara

Tiberius Iulius Rufus Primus Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer"



F. 460v, forget-me-not and red berries

## Speedbump's Decaf Chai v2.0

I started making chai in 2008 because I was getting it frequently from Geo's Patisserie, but didn't like the cloying taste of the honey he used in his. The owner, George, said it was really easy to make, so I looked up a bunch of recipes online and started experimenting. It also let me make the chai using caffeine free tea since I am caffeine sensitive. I made about a dozen batches over a couple of months, making notes and slowly adjusting the recipe for my tastes. These slow changes helped me notice things like leaving out the fennel seed caused something to be missing even though I hate fennel, and the concentrate is off the first day. It really needs a day to rest after making it for best flavor. Once I started canning the concentrate so it wouldn't take up all my fridge space leading up to GNE, I learned that it is even better the longer you rest it with a month being ideal.

This recipe uses whole spices because the recipes I started with used whole spices. And since they hold up longer than ground spices, I can buy in bulk since I go through about 2 lbs of cardamom seed and 1.5 lbs of cinnamon a year. I started by counting the spices, but if you are doing large batches, you will have a much easier time to use weight.

Although you use cheap black tea, it is important to use a tea that does not go bitter since we will overbrew it. If you are using a tea that you have not used before, brew a test cup for 30 minutes. If the tea is not bitter, it will work for the recipe. I know that the decaf versions of Lipton, Tetley, Hannaford and Target black tea work. Lipton and Tetley also make family sized iced tea blends that work well.

Besides the spices and the tea, there is also a sweetener. Honey is traditional, but when I started I actually used 1/3 white sugar and 2/3 artificial sweetener. By the time I started making chai for the SCA I was using all white sugar. When I started making 15 gallons of concentrate each year for Great Northeastern War, I realized that I was serving 22.5 pounds of sugar to friends, one of whom had just been diagnosed with diabetes. Over the last 5 years, I have slowly pulled down the sugar levels without anyone noticing. So you can choose to use my original 1-1/2 cups per batch or my current 1-1/3 cups.

#### Ingredients:

1/2 gallon + 1/2 cup water
60 pods green cardamon pods (or 4 teaspoons of whole seeds, or 15g seeds)
2 sticks of cinnamon (10g chips)
10 fennel seeds (.075g)
15 peppercorns (.8g) -I use mixed because it was what I had on hand when I started
5 cloves (.4g)
½ whole nutmeg (1.2g)
20 bags, or 6 family sized bags of cheap black decaftea (Lipton, Tetley, Hannaford brand, Target brand)

#### Hardware:

1-1/3 cups white sugar

Morter and Pestle or spice grinder
Grater or microplane
Large pot (gallon minimum)
2<sup>nd</sup> container (pot or pitcher) that can hold at least ½ gallon
Colander

#### Directions:

- 1) In a large pot, start the water to boil
- 2) Grate the nutmeg on the microplane or the small grater on a box grater. If you have a spice grinder, use that to process the spices. If you have a coffee grinder that you want to use as a spice grinder, do not process cinnamon because the harder spices can break the plastic parts. A course grind will work, but grind them as fine as you like. If using a mortar and pestle, crush the remaining spices in batches. You will want to cover the mortar while working the cinnamon because it will try and escape. The cinnamon only needs to get down to maybe ½ inch pieces. You do not need to de-hull the cardamom pods, just skim them out at the end.
- 3) Unwrap the tea bags if necessary. You can just toss them in, but I tie them together with butcher's twine so that I can pull them easily at the end.
- 4) Once the water comes to a boil, turn off the burner, toss in the spices and put in the tea bags and stir with the bags to wet all the spices. If you tie together the spices, tie the string to the handle of the pot to keep it from falling in.

#### Speedbumps Chai v2.0 continued

5) Cover and let sit for at least 4 hours and up to 24hrs. I do recommend that you try to keep the temperature over 140 deg F. If doing a small batch I will turn the burner back on every hour or two to bring back up the temperature. If doing a large batch, then it cools down a lot slower. When reheating the pot may overflow if you boil it with the spices and teabags, but you can identify when it is close because when you take off the lid, the surface is covered in foam. If you know when you are going to finish, try to time it so the pot is under 140 degrees when finishing so you don't burn yourself.

#### To Finish:

- 6) Pull the tea bags and put them in a colander over the pot. Give them a gentle squeeze to get back some of the fluid, but not so hard that you risk rupturing the bag. Compost the tea bags. If you used whole pod cardamom, skim them from the surface of the pot and compost.
- 7) Let the pot sit undisturbed for 10 minutes to let the spices settle to the bottom. Get out another clean pot, or a pitcher. Smoothly pick up the pot and slowly, pour the tea into the empty pot. Watch the center of the stream over the lip of the pot and watch for a darker stripe to come up the center. Slow down to keep the stripe of sludge away from the lip of the pot. Try to get as much liquid as possible without the heavier sludge. The first pour you almost always have some get past you. You can also stop and let it

rest for 10 minutes if it got stirred up by too jarring of a start or stop.

8) Once you have all that is worth getting out, let the new container settle for 10 minutes and clean out the original pot. Decant the liquid back into the original pot and try to get as much as you can without the sludge. Stir in the sugar while bringing the tea back to a boil. Make sure the sugar is fully dissolved. Turn off the heat once it comes to a boil. Pour into a clean covered pitcher or glass mason jars and refrigerate. Let sit for a day before using.

Will store about 3 weeks in the fridge. If you know how to can, you may boiling-water can this to let it store without refrigeration. Use ½" of headspace and 20 minutes of processing. I have regularly stored it for 4 months, and had a jar that was 8 months old and if anything, it improved with sitting.

Serve by mixing about 1 part concentrate with 1 to 2 parts milk-like product either over ice or heated.

I think the reason that people think mine is so good, is that I can pull off the 24 hour steep while mostly keeping it hot because 5 gallons takes about 6-8 hours to cool from boiling to 140 deg. A single batch will be cold in the morning unless you leave on a burner overnight (which I will not do) or leave it on a trivet on the wood stove, which is what I do during the winter.



# Special thanks to Mistress Camille DesJardins for the lovely marginalia included in this edition of the Moonstone.

#### **About the Border Motifs:**

Borders taken and adapted slightly from the Breviary of Isabella of Castille. Painted on Bristol Board with Hobein gouache

### Medieval Culinary Spices v. February 2020

#### Lady Aelfwyn Marie von Augsburg AKA Heidi Nilsen

Spices were used for several reasons in our Medieval period. First would be for flavor. This is the same reason they are used in our foods today. Some people have argued that the Medieval "tastes" ran to stronger flavorings than our "modern palate" appreciates. There are a couple of problems with this argument. First, there is no actual evidence that the palate of medieval people was any different than that of modern people. Second, many modern palates prefer very strong, spicy tastes. Just ask anyone that enjoys very hot (such as TexMex) flavors. A second use for medieval spices was for conspicuous consumption. People then also liked to show off what they could afford. Spices were an expensive nonessential commodity. Their lavish use showed that you could afford such expenses. This use became a point of issue for those that felt lesser status people were using spice use to show off over their betters. This lead to sumptuary laws being made to regulate who was allowed to use certain types and levels of spice. Thirdly, spices were used for health issues. Medieval people lived by a theory of " bodily humors". These were hot/ cold/wet/dry and keeping them in balance was a way to stay healthy and avoid disease. Eating was one way to help balance these humors. Spices were mostly considered hot and sometimes dry. It was believed that consuming spices could fix cold and wet health problems. The Physician Arnau de Villanova

(1240-1311) wrote that people should balance the 4 humors of the body by consuming spices "proper to winter" as zesty sauces of ginger, clove, cinnamon, and pepper. That these would help balance the humid properties of roast meats.

The desire for spices helped drive a global economy and even encouraged world exploration (see Paul Freedman's "Spices; How the Search for Flavors Influenced Our World" from Yale Global Online). Marco Polo (~1298) wrote about the foreign use of spices and about ones he saw growing in Java, the China Sea area and the Malabar Coast of India. Prior to Marco Polo's writing about black pepper harvests, people believed that the common spice black pepper grew on trees with very poisonous snakes living in those trees. To harvest the pepper, the trees were set on fire to drive away the snakes but that also caused the pepper corns to have a black and shriveled skin from the burning. Peppercorns were so expensive that they were sometimes used as currency. They could be used to pay a tenant's rent. Columbus on his second voyage brought along physician Diego Chanca who helped discover red peppers and allspice berries.

Spices are sometimes delineated from herbs as being derived from the flowers, fruits or bark of plants of tropical origin. While herbs are derived from the leaves or seeds. These distinctions do not hold well over the large range of what we

will consider "spices" for this discussion.

During the medieval period those who sold spices were often called "spicers', "apothecaries", or "pepperers". Today some good sources for the spices needed to recreate medieval recipes are:

The Pepperers Guild--found selling at various SCA events such as Birka and Pennsic.

Auntie Arwen-- online at Auntie Arwenspices.com, also selling at various SCA events like Birka and Pennsic. She carries individual spices and herbs as well as many period and modern blends.

Penzey's--online at Penseys.com.

Some useful tools to have in the kitchen when you plan to use your spices are a food grater, a mortar

and pestle and a spice grinder (small electric coffee grinder NOT used to grind your coffee).

Some of the spices called for in our medieval recipes are:

Anise; has a licorice flavor, is the seed generally found in Elizabethan comfits covered with many layers of sugar.

Caraway; sometimes called "Persian Cumin" was first used in Roman cookery.

Cardamom; originally from India, available in green, white and black, in the ginger family, we use the fruit of the plant.

Cinnamon; originally from Indone

#### Spices continued

sia, from the inner bark of the tree. the curled sheets are called "quills", it is used in Cameline Sauce, most medieval French recipes mixed cinnamon and ginger.

Cinnamon Flower; dried cassia flower buds.

Clove; originally from Indonesia, flower buds dried in the sun, often used in sweets and as a breath freshener, antiseptic properties, sometimes called "nails".

Coriander; originally from Greece, relative of the parsley family.

Cubeb; originally from Java, called "tailed pepper" or "Java Pepper", also used in Cameline sauce.

Cumin; originally from Iran, we use the dried seed, member of the parsley family, extensively used in Apicius, medieval folklore said cumin kept lovers from wandering and brought a happy life to the bride and groom who carried the seed throughout their wedding ceremony.

Galangal; used at the Corbic monastery by the 9th century, we use the rhizome.

Ginger; originally from China and India, we use the rhizome, medieval cooks used 3 kinds (common, white and Meccan), eases digestion, found in 1/4 of all medieval French and English recipes.

Grains of Paradise; originally from Africa, in the ginger family.

Long Pepper; originally from India, less hot than black pepper, used in spiced wine, found in Viander de Taillevant, and Menagier de Paris.

Mastic; a tree resin, found in Viandier de Taillevant.

Mustard: we use the seeds, black and brown.

Nard or Spikenard; used in hippocras, in the valerian family, we use the root, found in Menagier de Paris and Forme of Cury.

Nutmeg and Mace; originally from Indonesia, nutmeg is the seed inside the shell and mace is the fibrous envelope over the seed. Mace is stronger in taste.

Pepper (black); originally from India, green is unripe, black is unripe and dried in the sun, red is ripe, white is the inner seed of the ripe version.

Saffron; the dried stigmas of the crocus, used mostly for color and dye, can bloom in water.

Saunders: red sandalwood, used for red color, DO NOT USE YEL-LOW SANDALWOOD it is unsafe for human consumption, bloom in water for a rusty red color or in vinegar for a brighter red.

Sugar; considered a spice in medieval cooking, the whiter the sugar, the more expensive it was, often used in recipes for the sick.

Sumac; found in Liber de Coquina, has an acidic lemony flavor, sprinkle on humus for authentic color and taste.

Tumeric; from a root related to ginger, used for color.

Poudre Douce; a blend of sweet or warm spices that usually included pepper corns, cinnamon, ginger, sugar, nutmeg and clove. Like

#### Province of Malagentia

modern curries, the actual blend used varied by individual preference.

Poudre Forte; a bland of strong spices usually used with meats or in savory dishes that often included pepper corns, cinnamon, ginger, bay leaf, grains of paradise, and cloves. Like it's cousin blend, poudre douce, actual ingredients varied by individual choice.

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- 1. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Medieval cuisine
- 2. fridayvalentine.com/rafaella/ medieval spices (and herb list)
- 3. ima.princeton.edu/2017/01/03/ winter-spices-in-the-middle-ages/
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- 8. silkroaddiary.com
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# Officers

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