

INNS AND INNKEEPERS

The origin of the inn comes from the concept of hospitality and three separate commodities for travelers: food (cookhouses), drink (alehouses) and lodging (hostels). These were given for free and only to close friends and relatives. As more people began to travel to fairs, markets and tournaments, the inn developed to provide travelers with what they needed for a fee and, for the most part, regardless of their status. In some respects, inns are governed by the rules of hospitality and in some respect they make up their own rules. In example, by the rules of hospitality a person is not allowed into the home until invited and is not allowed to leave without permission from the host. At an inn you must "check in" and "check out" for this reason. Unlike hospitality, when you enter a pub or tavern, you are expected to treat all of the fellow "guests" as if they are a relative or friend whether you know them or not.

Another set of "rules" that govern the management of inns originates in the governing of households and religious restrictions. Some innkeepers expect these rules to be followed just as in any house. Others indulge the breaking of these rules for profits. An example of this is mealtimes. As will be explained below, there are only two "respectable" times for meals: dinner and supper. Some innkeepers will only serve those meals and nothing else. Others will serve breakfast and late night meals if paid extra.

INNS AS COOKHOUSES MEALTIMES

Even though the following mealtimes are recognized by church and society (not necessarily condoned), all mealtimes are at the favor of the lord of the manor. He specifies what meals are served and when (usually at a proper break time for the work being done).

Breakfast: This meal is served at dawn and usually consists of a hurried snack such as bread dipped in wine (a sop) or bread, cheese, cold meat and ale. Breakfast is considered a weakness and is only indulged for children, the sick and the elderly. Some justify breakfast by the saying, "This is no breakfast: but a morsel to drink with."

Dinner: The main meal of the day is only served during the forth watch after performing devotions to Peoni, feeding the livestock in the toft and working in the fields for several hours (for peasants) or an exercise period (for nobility). Some, wanting to awake late and have a meal as soon as they awake, hire a "wretched little priest" to say devotions as they're on their way to the kitchen.

Supper: After the work of the day is finished, supper is served with enough time to be eaten by sundown. Supper is eaten together with the whole household (those wanting to eat alone or with one or two others must be doing something sneaky or sinful). This is a time to speak of what has been done during the day and what is to be done on the morrow and the time when the hallmoot is held (village trial court).

Reresoper: The overindulgent have another meal after dark and before going to bed. This is considered disgraceful and wasteful by the devout of Peoni. Reresoper could be a small tidbit or a full meal and is usually accompanied by plentiful drink and frivolity. This is also the meal for impressing special guests and usually includes specially prepared dishes.

COOKS

Being messy, menial labor that serves the body and not the spirit, cooking is looked down on by most of society. Popular opinion believes that cooks are always drunk, smelly and the main tool of their profession is a large wooden spoon for beating off the people passing through the kitchen to nibble. As soon as a new knight attains his knighthood, he ritually gives his spurs to the master cook. This is to remind him that, if he breaks any of the rules of knighthood, he will be stripped of his knighthood in the most disgraceful manner possible: the cook will cut off his spurs with a kitchen knife.

The cook, on the other hand, knows his worth: he is the magician that can make life heaven or hell. (As it is said, "Peoni may send a man good meat, but Morgath sends an evil cook.") Occasionally, a king's cook, after many years of excellent service, is given a land grant the size of a knight's fee (fief) to retire on. This is called a kitchen serjeanty. In return, the cook is still asked to create a special dish from time to time but is otherwise allowed to do as he pleases.

Even lower in esteem are the kitchen help. A large well run kitchen needs plenty of unskilled people to prepare the vegetables, turn the spit, wash the dishes, chop wood, pound spices, churn butter and draw water. The most necessary of these jobs was cleaning. If a cook prepares even the best of meals with dirty tools and dirty work surfaces, all of the preparation is wasted. (Pots are scrubbed using ashes from the fire and a straw brush.)

MANNERS

The finer inns require the same etiquette that is used at court dinners. Some examples are: "When sharing a cup with your neighbor, do not drink with you mouth full so you don't soil the cup.", "You should not pick your teeth with your knife, blow on your food to cool it or wipe your mouth with the table cloth.", "Clean your spoon after use and don't leave it in the serving dish.", "Do not dip your fingers too deep into a shared dish nor break bread into it with sweaty hands." "Scratching your head at the table is unacceptable, as is belching and spitting." You may have passed yourself off as a nobleman and spent much ill-gotten loot and still get thrown out when your table manners show you to be the peasant you really are.

DIET

The main components of the common person's diet are bread, pottage and ale. To make pottage, you put a pot of water over the fire and then throughout the day you put in whatever food you have that looks good. Ale of this time has a higher nutritional value and lower alcohol

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content then in modern times and is usually consumed with every meal.

Bread is made from many different ingredients and is served according to social class. The most common types are as follows:

Cheat: Whole wheat bread with the coarse bran removed.

Clapbread: Bread made from oats.

Cocket: Lowest quality, white, wheat bread.

Havercakes: Bread made from barley.

Horse Bread: Made from peas, beans or any other type of grain that is at hand.

Manchets: Low quality, white, wheat bread served in hand sized loaves or rolls.

Maslin: Bread made from wheat and rye (darker loaves are sometimes made from rye only). This is the most common type of bread and is the staple of everyone's diet.

Pandemain: Finest quality, white, wheat bread made from flour that has been sifted two or three times and is only served to nobility.

Secundis Panis: Thardic black bread baked in a mushroom shaped loaf and covered in poppy seeds.

Tourte: Low quality, whole wheat bread which includes the husks. This was usually used for trenchers (plates) after it was four days old. After the meal, the used trenchers were given to the poor to eat.

Wastel: First quality, white, wheat bread made from well-sifted flour and served to lesser nobility and wealthy merchants.

INNS AS ALEHOUSES

ALE & BEER

Beer (called barley broth) is simply ale that has had some dried flowers of the hop plant boiled in it. The hop plant is related to the nettle and to cannabis. It adds a bitter taste to ale that many find appealing.

Making the Malt

The first step in making beer and ale is to chit the barley. This is done by keeping the barley wet and warm for about ten days until it germinates or chits. Then the barley chits are placed on a perforated plate over a fire and finally cracked in a mill. Many times the barley is cracked on the same mill used for grinding of grain.

Brewing the Beer or Ale

The malt – cracked, germinated barley – is placed in a container with water that is 150°. This sloppy porridge is called the mash. The mash is kept well wrapped, to keep in the heat, for about 12 hours and then the liquid (the spere or wort) is strained off. This is when the hops are added in a muslin bag to change the ale into beer. The spere is boiled for about an hour, the hops bag is removed and the spere is cooled rapidly. When it is cool enough, the yeast is added and allowed to ferment for several days.

Beer or Ale Storage

The finished result is stored in oak barrels that must be very clean. If they're not clean, the brew is ruined and undrinkable. The bad ale and beer at the worst of inns has either been served before it has completely fermented or it is stored in unclean barrels.

WINE AND CIDER

Grapes and apples both have on their skin the yeast that causes fermentation. Therefore if you squeeze the juice out of grapes and let it stand, you'll get wine and, if you squeeze the juice out of apples and let it stand, you'll get cider. Peasants and farmers throughout Hårn make wine and cider. The process is so easy and the result so delightful, it would be surprising if they didn't.

Wine

The traditional way to crush grapes to make wine is with the feet. This extracts the juice without breaking the pips (which would spoil the wine). The extracted juice (called must) is left in the vat to ferment, with the skins for red wine, without the skins for white wine.

Wine can be made from other types of berries and fruit but, for these, water and yeast must be added. The yeast is added on bread, which is thrown into the vat.

Cider

The first step is to crush apples in a round stone trough, called a chase, by rolling a large round stone over them. The stone is rolled around the chase, pulled by a blindfolded horse. The crushed apples are then wrapped in buckram strips to form flat round bags called cheeses. Several cheeses are stacked on a press and pressure is applied to extract the juice. The juice is stored in huge casks or tuns and left to ferment.

Some farmers add sugar or syrup to speed up the process (also some people don't like the extremely dry nature of raw cider, called scrumpy). During the time it is fermenting, the cider is called said to be hungry. In those times that a rat, cat or even the occasional farmer has fallen into one of these vats, nothing is found later when emptying the contents.

PUB GAMES

Even though cards are illegal (the nobility have determined that cards lead to gambling which is bad for the peasants), there are many other games that are played while relaxing with an afternoon drink. Many pubs have a special game for which the pub is notable (or even famous in some cases).

Conkers is played with either horse chestnuts or hazelnuts hung from a string. The players take turns, trying to hit the other player's conker with theirs.

Horseshoes players attempt to throw a horseshoe to land around a stake at the other end of the playing area (a distance of forty feet). The game continues until someone reaches forty points (a ringer is three points and the closest shoe gets one point).

Dominoes is a game that has just recently reached Hârn from distant Diramoa (brought back by mercenary soldiers). It is played by arranging wooden pieces so the dot patterns match. The winning player is the one with the least dots on their remaining pieces.

Shovelboard is played by sliding beer tankards across a nine-foot long, wet table without them going off the end. Scoring is three points for a tankard part way off the table and one point for the tankard closest to the end of the table.

Toad-In-The-Hole is played by shepherds trying to throw a rock into an uphill gopher hole. When played in a pub, the object is to throw a stone into a bucket placed on the table while remaining seated on a stool. Scoring is two points for a stone in the bucket and one point for a stone that remains on the table.

Nard (backgammon) is another recent import, this time from Beshakan. This complicated game involves moving bone counters around a board a distance specified by two dice. The first to get all of their counters around the board wins the game.

Draughts (checkers) is played by two opponents who maneuver wooden counters around the board, trying to capture all of the other player's counters. The winner is the first to capture all of the other player's counters.

Conger Cuddling is an odd game where the players stand on upturned wooden buckets and try to avoid being hit by a five-foot long, dead eel (or other large dead fish) swung at them on the end of a rope. One point is scored by the team swinging the "conger" for each person knocked off their bucket. Before the game, players agree on how many swings per turn and how many points to win the game.

Barrel Rolling is a contest between two teams trying to roll a full barrel over a specified distance (a mile for example). The winning team is awarded the contents of the barrel.

INNS AS HOSTELS

BAD (*)

The only available sleeping in the poorest quality inns is the tables, benches and floors in the common room and the fire is put out at night. The straw on the floor hasn't been changed in months and is filthy and full of vermin. The food consists of thin vegetable pottage, horse bread, moldy cheese and watered down beer, served on bread trenchers in small limited quantities. There is always a vacancy (the staff will just throw the latest victim...eh, guest out the back door). To have the staff consider giving better service, you must pay an extra 40% as a tip. If they can't give the extra service, they'll still cheerfully take your money. Lodging ranges from 2f to 1d a night with a meal for an extra 1f.

POOR (**)

As with the one star inn, the only available sleeping area is the tables, benches and floor in the common room.

However, here woven straw mats are provided and a fire will be maintained in the fireplace for an extra 1f. Food consists of a good vegetable pottage, havercakes or clapbread, seasonal fruit, and beer or ale, served on bread trenchers in limited portions. The staff will give extra service for a 25% tip and will return your money if they can't provide the service. Lodging ranges from 1d to 2d and the meal is an extra 2f.

AVERAGE (***)

Lodging at the average inn consists of a choice of the common room (as above) or shared private rooms with rope cots and straw mattresses. The private rooms accommodate four people so you can have one to yourself by paying four times as much. The straw in the common room is changed at least once a tenday and strewn with herbs so there are only a few vermin. Usual meals consist of meat pottage, maslin, seasonal fruit, eggs, and good beer, ale or wine, served on wooden trenchers in generous but limited portions. On holy days, a few selections of specially prepared dishes are provided such as broiled beef steaks with buttered vegetables, stuffed chicken with peas and onions, or boiled flounder and herb salad. The staff will provide extra services for a 15% tip. Lodging ranges from 2d to 4d and the meal is an extra 1d.

BETTER (****)

Lodging available includes the common room with straw mattresses, shared rooms with cloth mattresses or private rooms with down mattresses, each with blankets provided. The floors are cleaned frequently so vermin are seldom encountered. Food is the same as the holy day meals above only served on earthenware dishes in large portions. On holy days, the selections become slightly more elaborate such as mutton olives, grape-stuffed chicken, dressed swan or pike with galentyne sauce. Lodging ranges from 4d to 6d and the meal is an extra 2d.

SUPERB (*****)

Lodging here is shared rooms with rope cots and cloth mattresses (for the servants) and private suites with canopied beds and down mattresses (for nobility and their retainers). Blankets and comforters are provided and everything is kept very clean. If any vermin are found, the staff are thoroughly disgraced. Food is the same as a four star inn but in unlimited portions. The cooking staff prides themselves on their creations and will make special orders when notified in advance. Reservations and sufficient social status are usually required. The staff will provide extra services for as little as a 5% tip. Lodging starts at 5d and can be much higher. Meals are an extra 4d or more.

	CHANCE OF ROBBERY	CHANCE OF VACANCY	CHANCE OF PROSTITUTES
*	50%	100%	90%
**	40%	80%	85%
***	20%	70%	60%
****	10%	75%	40%
*****	5%	90%	25%