

# The King's Cook: Robert Smithe

## 28th January 1512

3 It was my great honour to cook for his Royal Highness  
13 Henry VIII this evening and his feast was the most lavish  
24 and expensive I have ever seen.

26 Spit-roasted boar was the king's main choice of meal. Only  
35 the richest people can afford to cook such an extravagant  
44 choice. King Henry knew this... so he ordered three!

53 Plates were piled high across the banquet table with  
63 grilled beavers' tails, whale meat and pieces of roasted  
66 peacock, decorated with colourful feathers and a golden  
72 beak.

79 For dessert, I prepared King Henry's favourite: spiced  
84 fruitcake with marzipan. Oh how he laughed and smiled  
89 as he tucked into his feast, washing it down with almost  
95 a gallon of our finest ale.



## Quick Questions



1. Which two adjectives does Robert use to describe King Henry's feast?

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2. Find and copy a phrase which shows that there was a lot of food at the banquet.

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3. Why do you think that King Henry VIII ordered three spit-roasted boars instead of one?

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4. How does King Henry's food compare to food we would eat today? Explain your answer.

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## Answers



1. Which two adjectives does Robert use to describe King Henry's feast?

**Accept: lavish and expensive.**



2. Find and copy a phrase which shows that there was a lot of food at the banquet.

**Accept: 'plates were piled high across the banquet table'**



3. Why do you think that King Henry VIII ordered three spit-roasted boars instead of one?

**Accept answers which discuss the fact that he knew that they were expensive and wanted to show off.**



4. How does King Henry's food compare to food we would eat today? Explain your answer.

**Accept any reasonable similarity or difference provided that it is explained properly, e.g. 'Henry ate different food that we do not eat today, e.g. he ate whale and we do not eat that now' or 'We still eat fruitcake with marzipan and so did King Henry'.**