

# A PARTY AT THE CAPULETS'



Romeo and his friends arrive at the Capulets' celebration wearing masks. "Masking" at upper-class feasts and dances was common in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In the following eyewitness account from the book *Life*, Englishman George Cavendish describes masked nobles entering a ballroom.

With masks and mummeries in so gorgeous a sort, and costly manner, that it was a heaven to behold...I have seen the king suddenly come in thither in a mask, with a dozen of other maskers, all in garments like shepherds, made of fine cloth of gold and fine crimson [dark red] satin paned [sections], and caps of the same, with visors [face masks] of good proportion of

visnomy; their hairs, and beards, either of fine gold wire, or else of silver, and some being of black silk; having sixteen torch bearers, besides their drums, and other persons attending upon them, with visors, and clothed all in satin, of the same colours.

*The following foods were typical at an upper-class party.*

Fruits & Vegetables	Meats	Drinks
fruit soups	beef	ale
lemons	ducklings	milk
melons	fish	wine
oranges	geese	<b>Sweets/</b>
raisins	mutton (sheep)	<b>Starches</b>
salads	peacock	bread
spinach	pigeons	jam and jelly
strawberries	pork	marchpane
	rabbits	pastry
	swan	pudding
	veal (calves)	rice
	venison (deer)	



An upper-class family's feast is prepared in a 16th-century kitchen.

**Roasted Peacock** Take a peacock, break its neck, and cut its throat, and flay it, skin and feathers together, with the head still attached to the skin of the neck, and keep the skin and the feathers whole together. Draw the bird like a hen, and keep the bone to the neck whole, and roast it. And set the bone of the neck above the spit, as the bird was wont to sit when it was alive, and bend the legs to the body. And when it is roasted enough, take it off and let it cool, and then wind the skin with the feathers and the tail about the body, and serve as if the bird were still alive; or else pluck it clean and roast it and serve it as you do a hen.