



MUSEO DELLA ROCCA
MALATESTIANA DI
MONTEFIORE
CONCA

DRINK IF YOU CAN

For a man of the Middle Ages, wine was not just a pleasure but also constituted an allegorical comparison between the tastes of the table and the sins of gluttony. Wine was present on every table from those of the poorest to those of the nobility, where it was abundant. It was often diluted with water or cooked must and was offered flavoured with the addition of spices and fruit including honey, ginger, cloves, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and other flavours. The importance of this drink became even greater because together with bread, it represented the food par excellence of a good Christian. Wine symbolises Christ's blood while the bread symbolises his body. Finally, wine was thought to have multiple properties to prevent various types of illness, to aid digestion, strengthen the body's warmth and mood, to clear the mind, rest the brain and dispel sadness.

Beer and ale were other very popular drinks on mediaeval tables. Beer was consumed daily by all social classes. Extracted from all fermented cereals since antiquity, it was not until the end of the first millennium that it began to be flavoured with hops.

Cider was equally popular and could be made from pears and cherries, but most of all apples. Originating in Spain, probably from Biscay, cider spread first to Normandy and then throughout France and England from the 13th century onwards. Another popular drink throughout Europe was mead, a mixture of honey and water. Also very popular was Hippocras, a mixture of wine, honey and spices such as cinnamon, ginger, cardamom, cloves and nutmeg, which made this drink distinctly aromatic. The use of so many spices was not by chance, but was used to mask the flavour of old wine.

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