

***If you only have 30 minutes ...***

Explain why the *Ni'matnāma* is more than a cookbook and analyze how its recipes and ideas continue to influence modern cooking, using textual evidence.

**Text Mining (12 minutes)**

**Task1: Sultan Ghiyath Shah, the creator of the *Ni'matnāma* cookbook**

Complete the paragraph below using the **Cloze Word Bank**:

Sultan Ghiyath Shah, who ascended the \_\_\_\_\_ in 1469, famously vowed to “open the door of peace and rest, and pleasure and enjoyment, according to contemporary chronicler Nizam al-Din Ahmed. The sultan cultivated a \_\_\_\_\_ filled with poets, musicians, painters and chefs, many of them \_\_\_\_\_, while his son Nasir handled \_\_\_\_\_. This atmosphere of creativity produced the *Ni'matnāma*, a manuscript that elevated everyday \_\_\_\_\_ into a courtly art.

Today, the sole surviving copy [of the *Ni'matnāma*] rests in the British \_\_\_\_\_. Written in a bold, ornamental blend of \_\_\_\_\_ and Urdu script, it contains 50 jewel-toned miniature \_\_\_\_\_ showing Ghiyath Shah sampling dishes, supervising kitchens or observing preparations. According to Claire Chambers, professor of world literature at the University of York, such \_\_\_\_\_ made culinary knowledge accessible even to those who couldn't read. “Visually rich \_\_\_\_\_ made culinary knowledge more portable to a largely \_\_\_\_\_ audience,” she explains. The illustrations also preserve details of \_\_\_\_\_ tools, serving rituals and table arrangements—details absent from most medieval recipe texts.<sup>1</sup>

Cloze Word Bank				
Cooking	Court	Governance	Imagery	Kitchen
Gullah	Library	Manuscripts	Museum	Nonliterate
Paintings	Persian	Throne	Women	

## Task 2: More than a cookbook

Find a phrase from the article describing how the *Ni'matnāma* functions as more than a collection of recipes:<sup>2</sup>

## Text Analysis (12 minutes)

Use evidence from the article to answer each question. Write in complete sentences.

Article Themes	Guiding Questions	Text Evidence (from reading)
<b>The enduring appeal of the <i>Ni'matnāma</i><sup>3</sup></b>	How have the recipes in the <i>Ni'matnāma</i> been preserved for cooks today?	

<b>The <i>Ni'matnāma</i> as more than a cookbook<sup>4</sup></b>	Besides recipes, what other information does the <i>Ni'matnāma</i> provide for people of the Malwa Sultanate?	
<b>The <i>Ni'matnāma</i> serves as a culinary guide for today's cooks<sup>5</sup></b>	What connections do historians find between this rice and African American agricultural history?	

### Synthesis (6 minutes)

What do you think is the most significant reason the recipes of the *Ni'matnāma* are so popular today? Explain your reasoning using examples from both historical and modern evidence.<sup>6</sup>

### Common Core Standard(s) Met:

**CCRA.R.1** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

**CCRA.R.2** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

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1 Sultan Ghiyath Shah, who ascended the **throne** in 1469, famously vowed to “open the door of peace and rest, and pleasure and enjoyment, according to contemporary chronicler Nizam al-Din Ahmed. The sultan cultivated a **court** filled with poets,

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musicians, painters and chefs, many of them **women**, while his son Nasir handled **governance**. This atmosphere of creativity produced the *Ni'matnāma*, a manuscript that elevated everyday **cooking** into a courtly art.

Today, the sole surviving copy [of the *Ni'matnāma*] rests in the British **Library**. Written in a bold, ornamental blend of **Persian** and Urdu script, it contains 50 jewel-toned miniature **paintings** showing Ghiyath Shah sampling dishes, supervising kitchens or observing preparations. According to Claire Chambers, professor of world literature at the University of York, such **imagery** made culinary knowledge accessible even to those who couldn't read. "Visually rich **manuscripts** made culinary knowledge more portable to a largely **nonliterate** audience," she explains. The illustrations also preserve details of **kitchen** tools, serving rituals and table arrangements—details absent from most medieval recipe texts.

2 Answers may vary:

- "This atmosphere of creativity produced the *Ni'matnāma*, a manuscript that elevated everyday cooking into a courtly art."
- "According to Claire Chambers, professor of world literature at the University of York, such imagery made culinary knowledge accessible even to those who couldn't read."
- "The *Ni'matnāma*'s range goes well beyond cooking, offering instructions for making soups, sherbets, perfumes and aphrodisiacs."
- "By commissioning a cookbook complete with illustrations, Ghiyath Shah and his son set a precedent for later Mughal and Deccan courts, laying the foundation for a broader tradition of princely cookbooks."

3 Text evidence: Even without precise written instructions, the recipes survived through memory and practice. Their echoes can still be tasted in Old Delhi's bustling streets.

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4 Text evidence: The *Ni‘matnāma*’s range goes well beyond cooking, offering instructions for making medicines, sherbets, perfumes and aphrodisiacs.

5 Text evidence: For historians and chefs alike, the *Ni‘matnāma* serves as both culinary guide and cultural map, preserving trade routes, ingredients and regional techniques. “Recipes are living documents,” Chambers reflects, connecting past and present

6 Possible answers may include:

- People like the taste of the food because its traditional recipes are similar to recipes today.
- The recipes contain ingredients and cooking methods easily adapted by street-stall cooks and very accessible to the public.
- The *Ni‘matnāma* recipes provide a bridge connecting the past to the present.