

Up Next: Eat Your Greens

April 22nd, 6pm

Do you sometimes feel in a rut when it comes to cooking and eating vegetables? The Project Foodie team is here to help with delicious and



nutritious ideas for one of our favorite types of vegetables. Learn new ways to enjoy your greens with fresh recipes featuring green goodness from hearty kale to spring lettuces.

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Civil War Cooking

February 11, 2013

PROJECT FOODIE



mixing things up in the kitchen with GPL



If you have any questions about this program or any of the recipes, please see Anna Roberts or Sara O'Sha (your librarians for tonight's adventure).

Thank you for coming!



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Cooking During the Civil War

Cooking was much different in Civil War times than it is today. The country was transitioning from eating mostly what one grew or raised themselves to commercially available food, but overall what the average person ate was rather simple. Meat, bread, and potatoes were the backbone of the American diet. Eating fruits and vegetables was dependent on what grew in your area and the season. This means if you lived in the north, during the winter months your diet consisted of little, if any fresh produce beyond potatoes and apples. Spices were also less diverse with little more than salt, pepper, cayenne, cinnamon, and ginger being commonly used.

Cooking techniques were quite different too. Although the stove was invented, most Americans still cooked over a fireplace or fire pit and recipes of the time are written for this style of cooking. Baking powder and commercially produced yeast were new inventions, and most recipes did not use them. Instead long periods of hand beating were called for in recipes like cakes.

A couple of the recipes, called 'receipts' in the 1860s, you find here are directly from the Civil War era cookbooks so you might notice some strange things. Aside from steps like straining off the weevils from your corn chowder, Civil War recipes commonly have measures in weight instead of volume like we are used to. Most of the time measurements and instructions are less detailed than what contemporary cooks have grown accustomed to in our recipes.

Thank you for joining us on this culinary journey into American history. We hope you leave with a better understanding of Civil War food and cooking.

Additional selected recipes from *Civil War Recipes: Receipts from the Pages of Godey's Lady's Book*

Curry Soup

Season two quarts of strong veal broth with onions, a bunch of parsley, salt and pepper; strain it, and have ready a chicken, cut in joints and skinned; put in the broth with a tablespoon of curry powder; boil the chicken till quite tender. A little before serving add the juice of a lemon and a teacupful of boiling cream. Always boil the cream before putting it in the soup or gravy.

Potato Puffs

Take a cold roast meat, either beef, mutton, or veal and ham, clear it from the gristle, chop small, and season with pepper, salt, and cut pickles. Boil and mash some potatoes, and make them into a paste with one or two eggs, roll it out with a dust of flour, cut it round with a saucer, put some of your seasoned meat on one-half, and fold it over like a puff, prick or nick it neatly round, and fry it a light brown. This is an excellent method of cooking up cold meat.

Plum Pudding

Fine flour, half a pound; bread-crumbs, quarter of a pound; suet, three quarters of a pound; eggs (yolk and white), four; mixed dried fruit, one pound and a half; mixed liquid, a third a pint.... The average time for ingredients weighing four pounds is about four hours.

Pork and Beans

from A Taste for War by William C. Davis

“The bean ration was an important factor in the sustenance of the Army, and no edible, I think, was so thoroughly appreciated.”

- John D. Billings,
soldier in 10th Massachusetts Volunteer Artillery Battery,
from his memoir Hard Tack and Coffee

Beans were part of the rations, but they were usually only received by soldiers when they were at an encampment. They would be added to soups or stews, or used to make pork and beans.

Soak two pounds of salt or pickled pork overnight in water. Also soak 2 quarts of dried beans overnight. Drain both, put the pork in a pot of cold water, and boil until the meat is tender, skimming off any fat that rises to the surface. Bring the beans to a boil in another pot of water, and cook until they start to split and are soft. Remove and drain the beans, put the pork on the bottom of a baking pan, and cover it with beans. Add a little of the cooking water from the pork, cover the pan, and bake in a 375 degree oven until the top is browned.



Hardtack Corn Chowder

from www.us-civilwar.com

Hardtack, perhaps the most well known Civil War food, was a staple for troops, especially those in Union Army. It was a cracker-like biscuit made in bakeries in various cities that was packed into wooden boxes and shipped out to the troops. By the time it reached them it was stale, and often infested with bugs or mold.

What you need:

6 pieces hardtack (recipes follows)
1 cup milk
1/4 lb. salt pork
1 large onion, peeled and sliced or chopped
4 large potatoes, sliced or diced
2 cups water
2 cups corn, kernels sliced off cob (about 2 ears)
1 1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. paprika if available

What you do:

1. Soak hardtack in milk. (Skim off weevils and other objectionable matter. You may want to start this the night before, depending on age of hardtack.)
2. When they are softened, cut salt pork into cubes and brown over medium fire. Add onion and cook until soft. Add potatoes and water and cook until potatoes are soft, or at least tender.
3. Stir in hardtack and milk, then add remaining ingredients. Stir and cook to almost boiling, and serve at once.

Hardtack

What you need:

- 5 Cups Flour (unbleached)
- 1 Tablespoon Baking Powder
- 1 Tablespoon Salt
- 1-1 1/4 cups Water

What you do:

1. Preheat oven to 450.
2. In a bowl, combine all the ingredients to form a stiff, but not dry dough. The dough should be pliable, but not stick a lot to your hands.
3. Take this mound of dough, and flatten it out onto a greased cookie sheet (the ones with a small lip around the edge...like a real shallow pan...), and roll the dough into a flat sheet approximately 1/2 inch thick.
4. Using a breadknife, divide the dough into 3x3 squares. Taking a 10-penny nail, put a 3x3 matrix of holes into the surface of the dough, all the way through, at even intervals.
5. Bake in the oven for approximately 20 minutes, until lightly browned. Take out and let cool.

Do this the day before your go on the field, and you will have enough tack to fill your haversack. It will be somewhat soft on Saturday morning, but, by Sunday, you should soak it in your coffee before eating, else you will have a hard time chewing.

Indian Bread

from *Confederate Receipt Book: Over 100 Recipes Adapted to Our Times*, 1963, available at docsouth.unc.edu

While Union soldiers ate a lot of hardtack, those fighting for the Confederacy were more likely to get cornmeal, or Indian meal, as part of their rations. White cornmeal was more frequently used in the south, but yellow was favored in the north. Like hardtack, it was used to thicken stews, but also was frequently cooked in a skillet to make what we think of as cornbread.

This is the recipe given in the Civil War era receipt book. While it calls for buttermilk, most cornbread made in the field would have just used cornmeal, water, and bacon grease due to the shortages of dairy products.

INDIAN BREAD.--

One quart of butter milk, one quart of corn meal, one quart of coarse flour, one cup of molasses, add a little soda and salt.

Adaptions I made:

I used two tsp. of baking powder

I preheated my oven to 400 with the skillet in it then buttered it before adding the batter. Bake for about 20 minutes or until it is starting to brown around the edges.

Cream Sauce

also adapted from “Miss Leslie’s Complete Cookery”

What you’ll need:

- 1 pint heavy whipping cream
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp almond extract

What you’ll do:

1. Pour heavy whipping cream into a small pot and warm slowly over medium heat, whisking occasionally as it warms.
2. When cream begins to boil, whisk in powdered sugar, nutmeg, and almond extract.
3. Remove from heat. Strain the sauce through a mesh strainer or sieve into a serving dish.
4. Serve warm sauce over hot slices of Apple Bread Pudding. This is not a thick sauce, and it will need to be stirred from time to time to keep a skin from forming on the surface. Best if served immediately.



Gingerbread

from Itaicivilwar.blogspot.com

Gingerbread was a favorite comfort food during the Civil War. It was given to wounded soldiers in hospitals because it was easy to digest and considered to be nutritious. Gingerbread was often included in care packages sent to the soldiers by their families along with toiletries and socks. This is a recipe used by a twelve year old girl named Josephine Peffer who won a blue ribbon for her gingerbread in the 1860 Wisconsin State Fair.

What you need:

- 1/4 lb. butter, softened
- 2 cups flour
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 1 cup molasses
- 1 tbsp. ground ginger
- 1 tsp. baking powder

What you do:

1. Preheat the oven to 350. Butter a 9-inch square pan and dust it lightly with flour. Beat the ¼ lb. of butter until it is smooth and creamy. Add the eggs and beat well. Add the buttermilk and molasses, and blend.
2. In a separate bowl, mix together the flour, ginger, and baking powder. Add the flour mixture to the butter mixture and mix well. Pour the batter into the pan and bake for 35 minutes. Stick a toothpick into the center of the gingerbread. If it comes out clean, the gingerbread is done. Cool in the pan, and then cut into 9 pieces.

Apple Pudding

from thehistorykitchen.com

Apples were a very common dessert ingredient in the north during the Civil War era, especially in the cold winter months when other fruit would be out of season. This recipe is from "Miss Leslie's Complete Cookery," a popular cookbook from the period. First published in 1837, it was in its 60th edition in 1860. Puddings like this were commonly served with a sauce.

Pare, core, and slice thin, a dozen or more fine juicy pippins, or bell-flowers, strewing among them some bits of the yellow rind of a large lemon that has been pared very thin, and squeezing over them the juice of the lemon. Or substitute a tea-spoonful of essence of lemon. Cover the bottom of a large deep dish with a thick layer of the sliced apples. Strew it thickly with brown sugar, then scatter on a few very small bits of the best fresh butter.

Next strew over it a thin layer of grated bread-crumbs.

Afterwards another thick layer of apple, followed by sugar, butter, and bread-crumbs as before. Continue this till you get the dish full, finishing with a thin layer of crumbs. Put the dish into a moderate oven, and bake the pudding well, ascertaining that the apples are thoroughly done and as soft as marmalade. Send it to table either hot or cold, and eat it with cream-sauce, or with butter, sugar, and nutmeg, stirred to a cream. This pudding is in some places called by the homely names of Brown Betty, or Pan Dowdy. It will require far less baking, if the apples are previously stewed soft, and afterwards mixed with the sugar and lemon.

Then put it into the dish, in layers, interspersed (as above) with bits of butter, and layers of grated crumbs. It will be much improved by the addition of a grated nutmeg, mixed with the apples.

Here's an adaptation of the recipe for today's cook, also from thehistorykitchen.com:

What you'll need:

- 12 small baking apples
- 1 large lemon, juiced
- 1 tsp lemon zest
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, plus more for greasing the dish
- 1 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup bread crumbs

What you do:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Peel and core the apples, then slice them very thin. Place the slices in a large mixing bowl. Pour lemon juice and lemon zest over the apples along with the nutmeg. Toss the apples with a spatula till evenly coated by the lemon juice, zest, and nutmeg.
2. Chop the unsalted butter into several very small chunks.
3. Grease a 9x13 baking dish with unsalted butter. Create a single thick layer of apple slices on the bottom of the dish, covering the entire surface with apples.
4. Sprinkle a generous layer of brown sugar on top of the apples. Dot a few bits of butter across the top of the sugar. Sprinkle a thin layer of bread crumbs on top of the butter. Repeat this process of layering-- apple slices, brown sugar, butter, and bread crumbs-- until the dish is full. Finish the dish with a thin layer of bread crumbs.
5. Bake the pudding uncovered for 50-60 minutes until the edges brown, the pudding is cooked through, and the apples are soft. Serve warm topped with cream sauce, if desired. Cream sauce recipe is on following page.