

US Colonies Foodways

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SUMMARY

Colonial America (1492-1763), Revolutionary Era (1764-1789), The New Nation (Federal era) (1790-1828):

Despite the political split that occurred between the U.S. and Great Britain with the U.S. gaining its independence in 1783, Americans remained linked to their British culinary heritage for the next 100 odd years. Largely refusing to eat the novel foods of the New World (except in times of starvation), Anglo-American colonists strived to cultivate the foods of their homeland, at times choosing foods that more closely resembled these foods when the original foodstuff was unobtainable.

At the heart of every early New England colonist's diet was the familiar drink of the homeland -- beer. After all, beer made the trek across the great Atlantic on the Mayflower itself. As soon as the colonists arrived, they began to plant their barely, which by 1640 supplied enough grain to open New England's first licensed, commercial breweries. Other alcoholic beverages of choice among colonists included the fermented honey drink mead, a British tradition, and wine, which due to an inability to produce palatable wine in the New World had to be imported, making wine into a drink enjoyed mainly by the wealthy, upper class.

In the beginning, fermented drinks (which happened to contain alcohol) were the appropriate choice beverage for the general population, no matter the age (from children to adults) since fresh, pure water was unavailable making the practice of drinking water “risky.” However, as pure water became more widely available, people began to frown upon tippling, leading to an increased popularity of such hot beverages as tea and coffee. Coffee eventually became the staple hot beverage after the British imposed the infamous ‘tea tax,’ turning tea into an unpatriotic drink.

As mentioned, the Europeans who set sail to the New World brought with them their staple grains that formed the ‘staff of life’ including wheat, oats, rye, and barley. Much to the colonists’ dismay, their beloved wheat did not grow well in the new soil and climate of the New World. Facing starvation, farmers turned to the novel grain referred to as ‘corn,’ introduced to them by the Native Americans. Determined to succeed in growing their prized wheat, colonists continued to experiment with different soils and climates, eventually finding the proper combination in the Middle Atlantic States in areas such as today’s New York, especially along the Hudson Valley. This area was largely composed of Dutch immigrants, the area originally known as “New Netherland,” who were known for their love of baked goods. Planting wheat, barley, rye, and buckwheat, the Dutch were soon producing enough grain to supply some of New England and the Southern Colonies. The cultivation of European grains was so successful in this area that by the late 1700s, it had become known as the “Granary of the Revolution.”

Outside of the Dutch “New Netherland” granary, wheat remained rather expensive until the 1820s and 1830s. Indeed, the prized wheat from the Middle Atlantic region was reserved for the masters’ tables in places such as Virginia tobacco plantations, leaving only cornbread for the slaves to eat. Such wheaten luxuries as the “Beaten Biscuit” were prepared for the master and his family, requiring the hard work of slaves who had to literally beat the dough until it formed into a light and fluffy biscuit. The little amount of wheat English settlers were able to cultivate was reserved for finer baking such as the occasional cake or pastry crust. Most of the fine cakes were found in the more prosperous households, that is until the Erie Canal opened in 1825, decreasing the price of wheat in the Eastern markets so that it became more affordable for people of every class.

Another European grain, rye, was not as esteemed as wheat, but served as an important source of flour used in savory pies, porridges, and breads such as the famous “Rye’n Injun” made from rye flour and cornmeal, and the Boston Brown Bread containing roughly equal quantities of cornmeal, wheat, and rye flour. Rye adapted to the New England soil and climate better than wheat and was especially important in the New England Colony when wheat began to suffer from rust after 1660. Rye was particularly liked by German settlers who had established food-ways centered on rye. Rye was also one of the main grains grown in the South. Sometimes both wheat and rye were grown, harvested, threshed, ground, and even baked together, forming a mixture known as ‘meslin.’ This was a common practice that ensured an adequate crop, even if the wheat failed.

When all else failed, there was always corn. While corn might have been entirely unknown to Europeans and the rest of the world before arrival to the New World, corn served as the most important grain in times of strain. The corn introduced to colonists by the Indians was much different from the sweet yellow corn ears found in the supermarket today. What became known as "Indian corn" came in a large array of colors, patterns, and sizes. Red, pink, blue, brown, black, swirled, striped, and spotted could all be found as well as corn ranging from the size of a small grain of rice to that larger than a lima bean. This Indian corn saved the early settlers from starvation when they first arrived in America, serving as a mainstay in those first years. Still yearning for their treasured bread in some form, colonists who had no access to wheat made cornbread by first grinding corn into a very fine meal that resembled a coarse flour. "Indian breads" Somp and Pone were such examples, each made with stomping and grinding the corn into something close to a flour. Indian-style pone gained popularity due to its ability to travel well, subsequently taking on the name "Journey Cake," a name that eventually got mixed up and transformed into "Johnnycake." Making full use of the monotonous corn diet, colonists formed corn into every imaginable dish. Hominy, samp, posole, hasty pudding, hoe cake, ash cake, indian meal dumplings, pancakes, popcorn, and succotash kept the Colonial table appearing like a table that was amply filled with variety.

While corn provided readily available energy in the form of carbohydrates and aided those on long journeys, subsisting solely on corn could lead to the disease known as Pellagra. Pellagra, a diet related disease, is caused by a lack of the B vitamin niacin. The Native Americans of the New World had avoided pellagra, even with their corn laden diet, by performing 'nixtamalization,' a process where by corn kernels are soaked or boiled in lye (an alkaline solution) before grinding the corn into a flour. This process ensured the release of niacin so that it could be absorbed.

African American slaves who were rationed a diet of mainly corn and salt pork and other Eastern colonists who were entirely dependent on non-alkalized corn were likely to suffer from Pellagra. While many of the European colonists had observed the Native Americans perform the process of 'nixtamalization,' they did not always perform the process, unaware at the time of its importance in preventing the disease that would become known as pellagra. This served as a potential major problem since corn served as a staple to so many colonists, filling the gap that a lack of wheat had created, particularly in New England and the South where wheat often could not be cultivated. Regardless of whether or not the early Colonists practiced the process of 'nixtamalization,' the practice was not passed down to subsequent generations, leading to the occurrence of pellagra in epidemic proportions between 1906 and 1940 in areas where people had become heavily reliant upon corn such as in the southern United States.

Other grains from Northern Europe were also sometimes used such as buckwheat, barley, and rice. Buckwheat was made into pancakes, puddings, often eaten by the poor and those who had used buckwheat in their homelands such as the Germans. Barley was mainly used for beer but could occasionally be added to soups and pudding as well. Similar to wheat, barley did not readily adapt to the soil and climate of New England, facilitating the increase in popularity of cider made from the surpluses of apples that grew abundantly all across New England. Last but

not least, rice became a premier export crop of lowland South Carolina and Georgia by 1700, serving there as a key ingredient in main dishes, sweet dishes, and even in bread. By the mid-18th century, cooks were making the puddings boiled in cloth similar to the puddings of England that were a mix of grains, starchy vegetables, often dried peas, as well as milk, water, eggs, shortening, and seasonings. Puddings could also be baked in a pie crust instead that was typically not eaten, except by the poor.

In wealthier households, rice could be combined with sugar to make a sweet pudding. Due to sugar's expense from processing and transportation costs, sugar was largely reserved for the upper classes. The early settlers of America valued the little sugar they did have access to considering it to have medicinal properties, a belief that had flourished from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Sugar was also used sparingly to lightly sweeten dishes. The first settlers, of course, had no access to sugar, instead using only honey and maple syrup as sweeteners. Once trade with the West Indies was established, the colonists of New England would trade dried fish and timber for molasses, the thick brown liquid that was a cheap byproduct of the manufacture of sugar.

Molasses, along with honey and maple syrup, were considered the main sweeteners for ordinary people throughout all of the colonies. White sugar in the form of loaves was considered the highest quality since it required the most processing and had a pure and refined white color. Soft brown sugar, also known as "raw" or "muscovado" was a dark and damp sugar that was frequently used by people who could not afford white loaf sugar. White sugar remained difficult to obtain and expensive until the 1700s, making sweet cakes, ice cream, and preserves mainly luxuries of the wealthy and well-to-do. Nevertheless, sweeteners were commonplace in the Colonial American diet, considered essential for sweetening bitter beverages such as tea, coffee, chocolate and for a long list of baked goods including cookies and doughnuts, brought over by the Dutch, as well as puddings and fruit pies.

Many new fruits and vegetables, yet to be discovered by Europeans, could be found in the New World when the first colonists arrived. Squash and beans had been cultivated by the Native Americans who shared their knowledge of how to cultivate them, along with corn. The New England countryside was rich with fruit that grew wild there. Blackberries, huckleberries, gooseberries, strawberries, raspberries, and wild crabapple trees could be found almost everywhere. However, most of the fruit was so tart that it was basically inedible in its raw form.

Since sugar, the remedy for this tartness, was largely unavailable and highly expensive for the early Colonists, they decided to plant English apple and pear trees that ended up taking to the soil and climate of New England very well. With time, apple trees became an important export crop for New England as "New England apples" gained a favorable reputation worldwide. New Englanders used their surpluses of apples to make such staples as cider and apple pie. In fact, fruit pies became so popular that New Englanders were feasting on pies for breakfast by the time of the American Revolution, a custom that was popular through the hearty eating years of the 19th century.

Due to the importance of milk in the diet of the English colonists, dairy cattle were brought to the Plymouth colony from England during the late 1620s, increasing the availability of milk and milk products that were limited with early settlement. At first, milk was only a seasonal product due to cows halting milk production in the cool winter months. As dairy-based agriculture continued to expand in the North, milk, cheese, and butter reclaimed their important place in the diet. When available, milk was included in one or two meals a day for many of the Colonists. Both cow's milk and goat's milk were popular, with cow's milk as the favorite. Colonists even found a use for milk that had soured (i.e. sour milk and buttermilk), using it as the acidic ingredient to combine with alkaline pearl ash to form a chemical leaven. By the late 1700s, chemical leavens became popular for raising breads due to their increased efficiency, their innovative nature, and their healthy reputation.

Cattle also served as a source of highly prized domestic meat among the European settlers. Beef's importance spanned the Colonies, often considered of higher quality than other meats. People ate as many parts of these prized animals as possible including the heart, liver, tripe, sweetbreads, kidneys, and tongue. The hard fat encasing the kidneys, known as "suet," was used in making pastry and pudding. The majority of people ate beef fresh, leaving the fattier portions to be corned or salted, and maybe even smoked.

While beef was deemed the supreme domestic meat, the abundance of pork led to its consumption in such great quantities that some suggested the United States should be renamed as "The Republic of Porkdom." The abundance of pigs were native to the New England woodlands, becoming a sure source of food from the beginning. Pig raising did not require much work either, necessitating the domestication of pigs only to a degree that would enable colonists to lure the pigs back to their shelters for slaughter. Otherwise, the pigs roamed freely, foraging on acorns, nuts, and roots as they had always done. Every part of the pig was utilized, similar to cows. Utilizing basically everything but the squeal, colonists ate the liver, kidneys, heart, tongue, brains, and lungs, in addition to the meat and fat, of course. The small and large intestines were used as casings for sausage and the stomachs were filled and boiled as pudding. The English upheld their tradition of making head cheese and the Germans kept their tradition of making scrapple from the head and feet. A few of the colonists saved the blood to make black pudding, which included the special ingredient --the blood of the animal-- in the recipe. Similar to cattle, the hard, white fat encasing the kidneys (referred to as lard) was saved for baking and frying. Due to its abundance, flavor and utility, lard became one of the main fats used in Colonial America for cooking and baking.

Mutton, poultry, and lamb were also on the menu for the early colonists of America. The joints of calves were known for being rich in cartilage that could be cooked and formed into gelatin. Thus, calves' feet were deemed essential for gelatin based desserts and wine jellies. Colonists also made use of as much of the calves for food as possible, even making a calf's head soup that was quite fashionable in early America.

Wildfowl, roast turkey, and geese were widely available in the New World but were considered to have too little meat and required too much labor to cook to come to form a major part of the

Colonial. However, they still were considered high-quality meats, often appearing on the table for festive occasions that could accommodate more labor in the kitchen. Among the earliest colonists, the gentry enjoyed exotic fowl (swans, cranes, herons, eagles, songbirds etc.), a custom that had been of fashion for centuries in Europe. This custom eventually fell out of fashion at the end of the 18th century when exotic fowl became appropriate only as survival fare. Small animals such as squirrels, raccoons, rabbits, beavers, woodchucks, and possum were all deemed edible and were included in the American diet during and well past the Colonial era.

Since many of the colonists lived on or somewhat near the sea, seafood was an important part of the Colonial diet. New England was most famous for its cod that was typically salted and served at least once per week. Cod was the basis for the dried-fish trade with the West Indies which, as previously mentioned, supplied sugar and molasses to the colonies. New Englanders also feasted upon other saltwater fish such as alewives, herring, mackerel, shad, bass, haddock, salmon, and even eel. Trout was the favorite fish from freshwater and lobsters and oysters were the most popular shellfish. Since shellfish could not be preserved by salting or drying, severe winters included few clams, oysters, mussels, or scallops in the diet.

The Middle Atlantic colonists also enjoyed trout, along with shad, herring, oysters, crabs, perch, sturgeon, bass, and rockfish. The esteemed reputation given to salmon in England and Europe carried over to Colonial American culture, where the author of the first American cookbook from 1796 noted salmon to be of "the noblest and richest fish taken in freshwater." All fish were preferred freshly caught but many were salted, dried, smoked, and sometimes stored in barrels for use in other seasons.

Any foods that had to be imported, making the long journey across the Atlantic, such as spices, coffee, tea, and olive oil, often lost much of their flavor. Olive oil, often referred to as a 'sweet oil' could easily become rancid, preventing it from forming a major part of the Colonial diet. Instead, many colonial foods were cooked with fats and oils derived from animals. The most popular cooking medium was rendered pork fat, especially from bacon. Pork fat was particularly popular in the southern colonies. Bear oil stored in a deerskin sack and solidified bear fat that resembled shortening could be found in many homes. Butter was also used for cooking, whenever available. Butter was somewhat rare before the American Revolution since cattle was not yet plentiful.

Meats were cooked preferably in soups that made for a very soft meat that was easier to chew than roasted meats. Bread was cooked atop of heated bricks in ovens that were built into the chimneys. Boiled dinners, a.k.a. 'meal-in-a-pot,' was considered the perfect meal, combining meat, potatoes, and other vegetables such as carrots, turnips, onions, parsnips, cabbage, beets and rutabagas. Common meats used in boiled dinners included chicken, salted codfish, ham, and the most popular of all, corned beef, enjoyed once cattle had become plentiful enough to provide families a meal as often as two times per week. Leftovers from the boiled dinners could then be chopped up and reheated later by frying them in salt-pork drippings or bacon fat.

Up until the mid-1660s, following the British fashion of the time, spices were added in ample amounts. However, by the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, colonists began to restrain their use of spices using only salt, small amounts of pepper, cloves, cinnamon, mace, ginger, nutmeg, and a few herbs. Spicy foods became correlated with cravings for alcohol and many people suspected that spicy foods might stimulate inordinate appetites for sex.

Food preservation was critical in ensuring ample amounts of fruits, vegetables, meat, and fish throughout the seasons. Meat was typically preserved by salting and vegetables were most often pickled if they could not be dried or effectively stored cold. This made salt and vinegar necessary staples. Vinegar was typically homemade from apple cider or wine. Meat could also be potted by first cooking it, followed by pounding it into a paste that was then mixed with spices, salt, pepper, and melted animal fat or butter that sealed the meat in tightly packed earthenware or pottery jars. Sometimes meats were also baked in the form of a pie sealed by melted butter. Corning (light salting), pickling (different from vegetable pickling) with a mix of salt, sugar, and saltpeter dissolved in water were both considered common practices in the preservation of meat. Mincemeat, a mix of cooked meat (often beef or venison) with suet, apples, currants/raisins, citrus peel, and brandy/cider was very popular.

Caveaching fish used a similar method by frying the fish in oil and then storing it in a vinegar pickle that was sealed off with more oil. Fruit could be preserved in a sugar syrup or by covering them in brandy, a common practice. Root cellars were used to store some of this preserved foodstuffs, and spring houses were built over flowing springs that kept butter and cream cool.

The slaves who were brought to the New World in the mid-1600s came with many of their staple foods from Africa. Stuffed in their pockets, they brought with them peanuts, black-eyed peas, okra, benne (sesame) seeds, and a tolerance for hot spices like chili peppers and cayenne. Because of their connection to slaves, white farmers and plantation owners largely rejected these foods, instead using them to feed their animal domesticates. In general, slaves were fed on the food that was most plentiful and cheap such as dried salted fish from New England, molasses from the West Indies, sweet potatoes, peanuts, and other vegetables they were able to scrounge up from the garden. Diamondback terrapins, turtles from the marshy lands, were reported to have been fed to slaves to the point of monotony.

Making the most use of their food, slaves ate almost everything they could from the pig. Hog Jowl (pig jaws and cheeks) and the small intestines of the hogs, known as 'chitterlings' or 'chitlins' were cut up, coated in meal, and fried in hot lard. The head, feet, entrails, and other leavings from the plantation's pig, poultry, or cattle usually was given to the slaves. 'Cracklin' bread,' a cornbread containing bits of crispy pork crackling--the fried bits of skin, was considered a treat for slaves. The consumption of a variety of organ meats and other offal supplied slaves with important nutrients, particularly in the winter when fruits and vegetables were not available. European colonists also benefited from the consumption of nutrient-rich organ meats in times of fruit and vegetable scarcity.

DIET

US Colonies from the 1770s to end of 19th century

PLANT FOODS

CORN

reliable crop that became the dominant grain almost everywhere in US colonies...used for drink, bread, feeding animals

“monotony of the American diet, which was dominated by corn. In the winter Americans ate dried, parched corn kernels; in the summer, roasted green ears; in the autumn, freshly boiled golden ripe ears dripping with melted butter. But it was corn pummeled into hominy or ground into a meal that was ever present at all seasons. It appeared on the table three times a day as fried johnny cakes or corn bread, Indian pudding with milk and sugar, or the ubiquitous corn mush...Corn was also fed to the hogs...” (Rorabaugh 113).

“Indian maize was a native, American grain that provided corn bread, corn-fed meat, and corn-made drink. These three were American’s ‘common necessities.’” (Rorabaugh 117-118).

“Corn, being a native plant, proved to be a reliable and plentiful crop in most places and to be a reliable and plentiful crop in most places and soon predominated as the staple grain, with wheat a second almost everywhere except New England.” (Oliver 18)

wheat: was not readily available for the first settlers & was a luxury until it became a major crop. Thus as you will see in the bread section, bread made with wheat was rare and only for the wealthy in the beginnings of America.

“By the 1870s the complex developments set in train by the American civil war had turned vast expanses of the continent into a granary. Between 1860 and 1900 more than 400 million acres of virgin soil were put under the plough.” (Tannahill 308). They were able to sell the wheat for so cheap that it put other country’s wheat markets out of business. The cheap grain satisfied a demand from Europe since their agriculture was not thriving as far as wheat due to such things as war and poor soil conditions. (summary of Tannahill 308-309).

However, in the beginning wheat was not able to be grown in all colonies, unlike corn, which is why corn was widely more popular:

“Although wheat was preferred by Europeans to other grains, they had a difficult time cultivating it in some of the colonies. Corn, on the other hand, grew well almost everywhere. Because of its similarity to wheat- or oatmeal when ground, the early Americans used their cooking knowledge for wheat and oats in order to utilize cornmeal.” (Weinsteiger) (see grain prep for an example of prep of corn performed)

“...Indian corn was unknown in Europe and elsewhere around the globe before the discovery and investigation of the New World...” (Perl, Lila p. 16).

“But the maize of the newly discovered Americas hardly resembled the sweet, delicate, white or golden ears that most of us are familiar with today. Indian corn came in a bewildering array of colors and patterns, with kernels that might be red or pink, blue, brown, or black, striped, swirled, or spotted. The kernels ranged in size from smaller than a grain of rice to larger than a lima bean.” (Perl, Lila p. 18).

“When the first settlers came to America in the early 1600s, corn (called maize by the Native Americans) saved them from starvation.” (Ichord, Loretta Frances p. 30).

“So Indian corn was to be the mainstay of the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony, of the Puritans who founded Massachusetts Bay Colony at Salem in 1628, and of the other early colonists of New England.” (Perl, Lila p. 22).

“Even though the improved wheaten loaves continued to gain popularity as time went by, the New England colonists never forgot the early versions of Indian corn pone that saw them through the first days, months, and years in the New World.” (Perl, Lila p. 33).

“In the southwest, where corn was truly the premier crop.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 40).

“Wheat didn’t grow well; so corn flour was used for most breads and puddings.” (Ichord, Loretta F. p. 18).

RYE

“Rye, a bread grain introduced into America by European settlers, was generally not prized as high as wheat except by German settlers. Still, it was usually of the most commonly grown (with wheat and corn) for flour...Rye became very important in New England in the Colonial period when wheat could not be grown everywhere in the region because it suffered from a rust.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 41).

Rye flour was mixed then with cornmeal and sometimes with wheat. Rye flour was at times used to make pastry for savory pies, and could also be used in porridges.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 41).

“Little by little, other grains began to creep into baked cornmeal products, adding new flavors and textures, and pleasing the palates of the bread-hungry colonists... ‘Rye ‘n Injun’ was the name of one early improvement. It contained a mixture of rye flour and cornmeal. Rye was a grain that took to the New England soil more readily than wheat.” (Perl, Lila p. 33).

“Boston Brown Bread, which became the traditional accompaniment to Saturday night baked beans, was so good it was almost a pudding. It called for about equal quantities of cornmeal, wheat, and rye flour, and it was sweetened with molasses and sometimes raisins. It was originally prepared by steaming, in an English-style pudding bag...” (Perl, Lila p. 33).

“In the Middle Atlantic Colonies, German settlers grew wheat for market and rye for their own use. Rye was among grains grown in the South, but it was never as important as corn and wheat.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 41).

MESLIN

Rye + Wheat Mix- “A mixture of grains, usually rye and wheat, grown together on one field was called meslin or maslin. The two were harvested, threshed and ground together, and sometimes the bread baked from the mixture was called meslin. Meslin was common in the North in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as a strategy for using soil where wheat began to fail.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 41).

Pie from Rye & Wheat: [Pie often referred to a sweet dish, by mid-1700s. In early New England, pie was often a raised crust of rye or coarse wheat flour, in which meat or fish was baked, the crust serving as a baking and serving dish while the contents were scooped out to be eaten. Poorer households could hardly afford to throw out the empty crust, but crust made from coarse grains were not necessarily intended for consumption.] (Summarized from Oliver, Sandra p. 153).

BUCKWHEAT

for flour and livestock

“Buckwheat (*Fagopyrum sagittatum* Gilib) has been grown in America since colonial days, and the crop once was common on farms in the northeastern and northcentral United States. Production reached a peak in 1866 at which time the grain was a common livestock-feed and was in demand for making flour.” (Oblinger, Oelke, Brinkman, Kelling).

[Barley was mainly grown to be malted (sprouted, roasted, ground, and made into mash for beer). Barley was also sometimes included in soups and puddings]. (Summary of Oliver, Sandra p. 42).

“Like wheat, barley proved to be less productive in parts of the Northeast, which may have helped nudge colonists toward making cider.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 43).

RICE

[Rice was a premier crop of lowland S. Carolina & Georgia by 1700. Rice was a huge and valuable export crop, especially for England. Rice was widely used in the South in bread, main dishes, and sweet dishes. Carolina rice was considered of very high quality]. (Summary of rice from Oliver, Sandra p. 43).

“By the mid-18th century, cooks mixed grains, as well as starchy vegetables and dried peas, with some combination of milk, water, eggs, shortening, and seasoning to make a pudding boiled on a cloth.”... “Another version of pudding was baked in a crust like a pie.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 153).

SUGAR

“In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, sugar was considered to have medicinal properties.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 199). “At earliest settlement in America, sugar was used both medicinally and to season dishes lightly.”...“By the beginning of the 19th century, it [sugar] was called for in a substantial number of recipes for baked goods, puddings, and pie. Many regarded it as essential for sweetening bitter beverages such as tea, coffee, and chocolate.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 77).

“Native Americans introduced maple sugar to the colonists; only sweetener the first settlers had ever used in their food was honey.” (Ichord, Loretta F.).

“Maple syrup, honey, or molasses would have been used by the earliest settlers. White sugar was hard to get and expensive until the 1700s.” (Ichord, Loretta F. p. 28).

[Sweet cakes and ice cream were mainly for the wealthy]. (Ichord, Loretta F. p. 50).

“Sugar’s cost meant the well-to do were most likely to make preserves, and to a certain extent, preserves were reserved as food for invalids.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 121). [Although], “By the time New England was being colonized, the sugar plantations of the Western hemisphere were flourishing, exporting refined sugar to Europe and importing slaves from Africa to work the sugar fields.” (Perl, Lila p. 36)... “...the colonists soon saw their chance to carve out a trading pattern of their own by sailing down to the West Indies with timber and dried fish, and returning with molasses, the sweet thick brown liquid that was the cheap by-product of sugar manufacture. By the second half of the 17th century, much of the molasses that was unloaded at Boston harbor was being thriftily converted into the alcoholic beverage, rum, at New England distilleries.” (Perl, Lila p. 37).

[The primary forms sugar was sold during the colonial period included white, refined sugar in loaves, soft brown sugar, and molasses.] (Oliver, Sandra p. 78).

“Raw, muscovado, or brown sugar was damp dark sugar. Relatively inexpensive compared with loaf sugar, it was often used by people who could not afford loaf sugar for baking. Even cheaper was molasses, which was a very common sweetening for ordinary people all through the Colonies, used in baking cakes, sweetening puddings, and even added to cream to make a sweet sauce.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 78).

“Sorghum was introduced in the later nineteenth century.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 77)... “Sweet sorghum has been widely cultivated in the U.S. since the 1850s for use in sweeteners, primarily in the form of sorghum syrup. By the early 1900s, the U.S. produced 20 million US gallons (76,000 m³) of sweet sorghum syrup annually. Making syrup from sorghum (as from sugar cane) is heavily labor intensive. Following World War II, with the declining availability of farm labor, sorghum syrup production fell drastically.” (Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia “Sweet Sorghum.”).

[Dutch brought cookies & doughnuts...even less well off ones fried a batch of these each week]...late 1700s, early 1800s, the invention of the 'doughnut holes.' (Oliver, Sandra p. 154).

VEGETABLES

[In New England, corn, squash, beans, and peas were easiest to grow.] (Ichord, Loretta F. p. 18).

FRUIT

"Inland, the New England countryside was dotted with thickets of wild blackberries and huckleberries, gooseberries, strawberries, and raspberries, while wild crabapple trees were to be found almost everywhere. There was only one trouble with this bounty of uncultivated fruit. It was almost all sour, ranging from mouth-puckering to stingingly tart."... "And sugar, which had greater sweetening power than either West Indian molasses or New England's honey or maple syrup, was scarce and expensive." (Perl, Lila p. 51-52)... "So it is not surprising that as early as 1629, John Winthrop, the governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, had English apple trees planted in the Salem area, and by 1634 young apple and pear orchards has been established in many parts of colonial Massachusetts. New England's soil and climate were apparently...well suited to apple-growing..." (Perl, Lila p. 52).

Fruit Pies became a staple: "Fruit pies, in fact, became so popular as oven-baking facilities improved that by the time the American Revolution was over New Englanders were eating pie for breakfast, a custom that continued right on through the 19th century, which was an era of hearty eating. Apple remained the all-time favorite filling..." (Perl, Lila p. 54).

Apples: so plentiful that they were commonly free for the picking

"Trees planted on farms in Virginia, Pennsylvania, parts of Ohio and New York, and throughout New England produced a glut of apples. On the Erie Canal this fruit was 'floating away on the Water;' in eastern Ohio apples lay 'so thick that at every step you must tread upon them.'...apples had such little value that they were usually free for the picking. The farmer found this annual crop to be an embarrassment of riches." (Rorabaugh 110-111).

"In the summer the kitchen yielded onions, cabbages, and potatoes, but not tomatoes, which during the early nineteenth century were thought to be poisonous. Autumn brought peaches, pears, and apples. Seasonal fruits and vegetables were eaten fresh because of the difficulty in preserving them." (Rorabaugh 114).

"Wherever the colonists and settlers went, they took with them seeds of familiar vegetables and grains to plant. In 1609 the Virginia company provided seeds for parsnips, carrots, cabbages, turnips, lettuce, onions, mustard, and garlic." (Oliver 18).

"Apples and peaches were free for the picking, and many were allowed to rot on the ground." (Rorabaugh 78).

“...cucumbers did well and became a very common vegetable. Cucumbers fermented when salted, which preserved them, and they could be pickled by immersion in spiced vinegar and salt; both methods were used...” (Oliver 39).

GRAIN CONSUMPTION

Mainly as porridge. SEE RECIPES at end of document under “MUSH”; basically just meal in hot water, boil, and then stir in milk, molasses, salt

“...no wheat or oats, no rye or barley - had ever been heard of before the first visits of European ships & sailors.” (Perl, Lila p. 16).

“However, the wheat and peas, brought from England, seemed to adapt poorly to the new soil and climate.” (Perl, Lila p. 22).

“Later, after some experimentation in adapting the proper seed strains to the soil and climate, wheat was grown more successfully. But the New England landscape, hilly and stony, lacked the broad rolling spaces for large wheat fields, and corn continued to come to the dinner table in one form or another for many years. Not surprisingly, corn was the principal ingredient in most of the early New England recipes.” (Perl, Lila p. 22).

Wheat grew better in the Middle Colonies...”Because of the milder climate and longer growing season, crops were easier to grow, including wheat, which could be made into finely grained breads and puddings.” (Ichord, Loretta F. p. 19).

“Although the native corn (maize) had higher yields, farmers grew wheat whenever climate and geography permitted, and found a market for it in other colonies and abroad. The Middle Atlantic States, Virginia, and some of the backcountry regions grew wheat abundantly and sold it to the West Indies and the Northeast, where wheat showed a susceptibility to rust after 1660.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 40).

“The first breadbasket of the New World extended into other parts of the Middle Atlantic region: across the Hudson into New Jersey and Delaware, which were settled by both the Swedish and the Dutch, and especially into Pennsylvania.” (Perl, Lila p. 64).

“...the Dutch were planting wheat, barley, rye, and buckwheat in the Hudson Valley and elsewhere with remarkable success. The land was less rocky and more sweeping than that of New England, and the soil and climate appeared ideally suited to European grains. If this had not been the case, it is possible that the Dutch, who were great lovers of all sorts of breadstuffs, would not have stayed on...” (Perl, Lila p. 60).

“Soon the [Dutch] wheat fields were producing enough grain to supply New England and the Southern colonies and also to export fine white flour to Holland...agriculture remained an important commercial mainstay of Dutch colonial life, as well as the source of its basic foodstuff, wheat flour. And even after the English took over in 1664 and the colony of New Netherland

(i.e. New Amsterdam) became New York, the cultivation of wheat and other cereal grains continued to flourish so steadily that New York, in the late 1700s, became the 'Granary of the Revolution.' ” (Perl, Lila p. 64).

New Amsterdam (New Netherland) had commercial bakeries by the middle of the 17th c.:
“...commercial bakeries such as those that flourished in New Amsterdam by the middle of the 17th century were unknown [in the coastal South].” (Perl, Lila p. 97).

“Indian corn was integrated into the colonial diet mainly out of necessity: strains of European wheat did not begin to adapt to and thrive in America until the later eighteenth century, and wheat remained expensive until the 1820s and 1830s.” (Levenstein, Harvey p. 3-4).

On Virginia tobacco plantations, the prized wheat from the Middle Atlantic region were reserved for the masters' tables, while the slaves were left to eat cornbread:

“In the great houses of Virginia such as the James River tobacco plantations, cornbreads were eaten regularly in the slave cabins but came to the master's table much less often. Wheat, which did not do especially well in the South, was shipped from the Middle Atlantic region, and fine, delicate breads made with white flour were baked several times a day by the slave women of the kitchen staff and brought to the table fresh from the oven for each meal.” (Perl, Lila p. 96).

“Among the favorite home-baked breads of the Virginia planter families was beaten biscuit, a hot bread made of flour, milk, and shortening -lard. As baking powder did not come into use in the south until after the revolution, the biscuits had to be made light and fluffy by beating air into the dough mixture rather than by the addition of chemical agents....It was...whacked hard anywhere from 300-500x with a heavy iron pestle, a flatiron, or the side of a hatchet head...in terms of the labor required, we can say that beaten biscuit was really a luxury food.” (Perl, Lila p. 97 & Ichord, Loretta F. p. 22-25).

“Besides being ground into flour for bread and pastry, wheat was used whole in dishes such as frumenty, wheat kernels boiled until they were soft and had burst open.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 40).

“English settlers planted wheat...wheat was reserved for finer baking, such as pastry crusts or the occasional cake.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 153).

“...fine cakes were largely found in more prosperous households until the Erie Canal was completed in 1825 opening eastern markets to less costly wheat and putting the price of flour within reach of less wealthy households.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 154).

“If grain was not ground into flour for bread, it was boiled whole or cracked into a coarse meal and cooked into porridge. Though most people preferred porridge with milk or butter.” (Oliver 200).

as bread: white wheat flour a luxury in cities, mixes of flour such as corn & rye most common and not thought of as low of a quality as in Europe, traditional yeast and egg whites give way to

chemical leavens and compressed yeasts later on in America, and in some cases yeast was unknown & chemical leavens dominated

“Bread was central to the Colonial diet, as it had been for centuries in the Old World.” (Oliver 200).

“Further, most settlers wanted bread with most meals, and bread required grain, which in turn required agriculture. The Europeans brought wheat, rye, oats, and barley, and took readily to corn...” (Oliver 18).

“Ordinary bread was baked with flour compounded of corn and rye; bread made with white wheat flour was a luxury for the rich or for special occasions...Each day, it was calculated, the typical adult American ate a pound of bread, most often made with cornmeal...” (Rorabaugh 113).

There was a change in bread-making when it arrived with the first colonizers to America. Corn was soon added to the bread baking mix. Refined white wheat bread only retained its high status in urban centers. Negative associations of admixtures were lost. People had to make do with what they could get their hands on to grind and include in their bread. This even applied to the wealthy. Bread became more egalitarian in America, with even the wealthy eating similar mixes with rye, corn, and little wheat.

Bread was an important source of carbohydrates and food in general in colonial America. Social scientists calculated that the average colonial person living in Philadelphia between 1750-1800 got a pound and a half of grain of some form, usually bread, supplemented by small amounts of other food groups such as dairy and meat. (my summary from http://www.engr.psu.edu/mtah/articles/flower_of_wheat.htm written by Vickie L. Ziegler)

How Bread was Cooked often led to it being rare

“Before 1850, for example, corn bread was usually fried in a skillet over a fire rather than baked because most households had no stove and no ovens except cumbersome, portable Dutch ovens that were placed over the open hearth. With rudimentary equipment and no way to control the temperature of the fire, it is not surprising that roasted meats, oven-baked bread, and cakes were rare.” (Rorabaugh 116).

Use of Chemical Leavening from Pearl Ash Speeded up Prep Time for Baked Goods in Colonial America:

“A tremendous timesaver to colonial bakers was the chemical leaven, first referenced in Amelia Simmons’ 1796 cookbook, *Art of Cookery*. Pearl ash, the particular type of chemical leaven used during this period, is simply the alkaline substance potassium carbonate. When mixed with an acidic ingredient, such as lemon, sour milk or molasses, it creates gas bubbles that raise the baked product, typically some sort of cake or biscuit. The addition of chemical leaven to baking recipes sped up the process immensely, as it eliminated the need to wait for yeast to rise in the dough. Before chemical leaven, cooks needed to raise cakes with either yeast or beaten

egg whites, a process that would take a frustrating amount of time, and one that would be repeated multiple times a week, if not every day. In a society where baked goods were an important and commonplace component of practically every meal, the subtraction of this rising time significantly expedited the baking process.” (Weinsteiger)

Side Note: Under document titled “Modern Industry Foods” I provide further information on how pearl ash was considered a source of nutrition (at least around 1900, in which my source is from). This along with another idea that fermented bread had lower nutrition value because some of it was lost with the gas that was released brought on a greater popularity for the use of other methods that may be considered ‘chemical leavens’---also under “Ongoing Bread Notes.”

Yeast was unknown & Baking Soda or Pearl Ash Techniques were not Universally known: “Such a simple baking aid as yeast was little known, and even the baking soda or pearl ash methods by which heavy, hard to digest, ‘salt rising’ bread could be made were not universally known.”

“One Illinois pioneer was quizzed by an ignorant neighbor on the pearl ash technique. “They say,” said the inquirer, “...you put a lot of nasty trucks in your bread. It is what you keep in a bottle, purlass, I believe, is the name, and they say it is full of dead flies, and bugs, and cricket legs.” With this challenge, Christiana Tillson produced her “little bottle of dissolved pearl ash, looking so clear and pure.” (Rorabaugh 116).

More on Pearl Ash that will make more sense out of the last quote. since it explains that pearl ash is derived from baking potash. Potash is commonly derived from traces of organic materials such as plant remains. Potassium carbonate was identified in 1742 from potash, pearl ash, and tartar salts:

“Historically, pearl ash was created by baking potash (see next qt. below) in a kiln to remove impurities. The fine, white powder remaining was the pearl ash. The first patent issued by the US Patent Office was awarded to Samuel Hopkins in 1790 for an improved method of making potash and pearl ash.

In late 18th century North America, before the development of baking powder, pearl ash was used as a leavening agent in quick breads.” (wiki under “potassium carbonate”)

“Potash is the common name for various mined and manufactured salts that contain potassium in water-soluble form. In some rare cases, potash can be formed with traces of organic materials such as plant remains, and this was the major historical source for it before the industrial era. The name derives from “pot ash,” which refers to plant ashes soaked in water in a pot.” (wiki under “potash” link from “potassium carbonate”)

“Potassium carbonate was first identified in 1742 by Antonio Campanella and is the primary component of potash and the more refined pearl ash or salts of tartar.” (wiki under “potassium carbonate”)

“The North American predilection for speed and innovation spurred the nineteenth-century adoption of chemical leavenings in common baking and so laid the groundwork for prepackaged mixes...The first recorded mention of pearl ash use in America was in Amelia Simmon’s “American Cookery,” published in 1796, though the practice was surely established by that time. Pearl ash is potassium carbonate, refined from potash, which was derived from plant material ashes...in America usually from wood.” (Smith, Andrew F. p. 109).

“The potash or salt of tartar is most excellent for health, especially of people apt to be affected with slow or bilious fevers, in flat countries.” (Simmons, Amelia).

Also used egg whites as a leavening agent: Besides using beaten egg whites as a leaven in baking...” (Oliver 55).

“Traditional cooking lasted longer in the South than elsewhere--for example, the continued use of yeast or beaten egg whites in making cakes when cooks elsewhere in the country turned to chemical leaven.” (Oliver 123).

GRAIN PREPARATION

Corn: one way of preparing the corn (for a traveler...from 1751..see recipes at end of doc)

“They take the corn and parch it in hot ashes, til it becomes brown, then clean it, pound it in a mortar and sift it, this powder is mixed with sugar. About 1 quarter of a pint, diluted in a pint of water, is a hearty traveling dinner.” (Weinsteiger)

preparation of corn bread written by a British physician (Edward Smith) who lived from early to mid 19th c: “In the western parts of America, the grain is freshly ground in a hand-mill, and mixed with water, and a little salt, and sometimes a little soda is added; and when a paste is made, it is spread into a cake, about one inch in thickness, and baked before or over the fire...When milk and eggs are attainable, they may be added with great advantage to the flavor of the bread.” (Smith 50).

Grinding Commonly done by Millers & Baking sometimes performed by the local baker who shared his oven for those who did not have access to an oven:

“Miller were essential to flour production and ground the grain brought to them by individual farmers. As part of the fee, or toll, they retained a portion of the flour for sale elsewhere. Bakers usually made bread of various kinds, including fine whites and coarser rye or blends; rolls and some pastries might also be part of the baker’s offering. Some bakers rented space in their ovens for the use of households lacking them.” (Oliver 124).

“...the overriding desire of the early New England settlers was for bread, bread as similar as possible to the yeast-raised wheaten loaves of Europe...it was possible to grind dried corn into a very fine meal that resembled a coarse flour...” (Perl, Lila p. 29).

CORNMEAL: [The method of grinding cornmeal was taught by Native Americans...(1) Soak the corn kernels in hot water for 12 hours, then pound the grain a mortar (hollowed stone or block of wood) until it was a coarse meal called samp. (2) sifted in a woven basket, sweep-and-mortar mill]...[By the 1600s, the colonists had built windmills to grind larger amounts of corn]. (Summarized from Ichord, Loretta F. p. 33-34).

“The first settlers made Hasty Pudding with just water and cornmeal, [boiled together until thick]. Then as times became more prosperous, milk, molasses or maple syrup...sometimes eggs, [butter, cinnamon, and ginger] were added...” (Ichord, Loretta F. p. 37; Perl, Lila p. 36 in []).

“Samp and pone (Indian words that the early colonists soon adopted) were really the Indians’ “breads.” Samp was a porridge of cornmeal and water, cooked to a lumpy thickness over an open fire, while pone was a small rounded or oval cake of cornmeal with just enough water to make the grains stick together.” (Perl, Lila p. 30). **Samp is prepared with corn kernels that have been stamped and chopped until broken but not as fine as Mielie-meal or mielie rice. The coating around the kernel loosens and is removed during the pounding and stamping process. (Wiki “Samp” Retrieved 8/14/2013).

“By the 1630s, the Indian-style samp mortars...were being replaced by gristmills, with millstones that were kept turning by a water-powered wheel.” (Perl, Lila p. 32).

“Colonial Americans on the eastern seaboard were less likely to grind soaked corn than to allow it to swell for use as a starch, as rice might be. ‘Hominy,’ ‘samp,’ and posole,’ were terms applied to corn prepared this way. ‘Hominy’ and ‘samp’ changed meanings from region to region and over time. ‘Hominy’ could also refer to nonalkali-processed corn, ground or broken into grits to be boiled.”(Oliver, Sandra p. 41).

“The early settlers in Virginia watched the American Indians make hominy (hulled dried corn) by using ashes and water to remove the skin from dried kernels. These hulled morsels were cooked as a soup mixed with meat and wild greens.” (Ichord, Loretta Frances p. 31).

“Hominy was also ground coarsely and became known as grits (eaten as a cereal or a side dish) by southern cooks.” (Ichord, Loretta Frances p. 31).

“It [Indian meal] was also made into bannocks, called jonnycakes in Rhode Island, which consisted of meal, hot water, and salt mixed to form a thick dough and spread on a board or griddle to bake before the fire or over it.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 153).

“One of the great advantages of Indian-style pone was that it could be baked quickly, even at a wayside campfire if need be. Also, it traveled well...These cornmeal cakes came to be quite popular with the early traveling preachers and judges who did their rounds of duty in the scattered New England settlements and it was not long before their traveling bread got to be known as ‘journey cake.’ In Rhode Island...the name “journey cake” somehow slid into

“jonnycake.” Other places picked up the word and assuming it had something to do with name John (which it did not), inserted the “h” making it ‘johnnycake.’ ” (Perl, Lila p. 32).

“Hoecake and ashcake were made of cornmeal and salt, water or milk, and usually pork dripping---the fat that fried out or was skimmed off when pork was cooked. The dough had to be stiff enough to be molded into a small, flat cake.” (Perl, Lila p. 91).

“There were also Indian meal dumplings and by the end of the Colonial era, pancakes made of it as well.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 153).

Colonists learned from Native Americans to eat corn in its fresh or ‘green’ state as a vegetable roasted in its husk or boiled on the cob, or mixed with beans in succotash. They also learned to cook it when fresh, they dry it for use later; in the East this was called dried sweet corn, in the Southwest this was called chicos.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 40).

“The Indians also showed the colonists how to mix corn with meat and beans. This combo dish was called succotash. The oldest succotash recipe, from the early 1600s, described mixing boiled fowl with white beans, salt pork, turnips, potatoes, and cooked dried corn.” (Ichord, Loretta F. p. 31).

“The indian dish of corn and beans was called sukqudashash (i.e. succotash). It was one of the first, the simplest, and the most directly adopted recipes taken from the Indians by the colonists.” (Perl, Lila p. 25).

“...the Native Americans showed the settlers another variety of corn, called popcorn. As you know, this type of corn bursts into white, fluffy morsels when exposed to heat.” (Ichord, Loretta Frances p. 31).

“When the English commented that Indian corn in America was disagreeable, Benjamin Franklin defended the yellow vegetable in a letter to the London Gazette... ‘Pray let me, an American, affirm that Indian corn, take it all in all, is one of the most agreeable and wholesome grains in the world...and that jonnycake or hoecake, hot from the fire, is better than a Yorkshire muffin...’ ” (Ichord, Loretta Frances p. 30).

[But with all this corn, Americans eventually did grow tired of it, leading to breads such as “anadama bread.”]:

“And then there was anadama bread, a cornmeal and wheat bread that actually had enough wheat flour in it to be raised by yeast. The story behind anadama bread is that there was once a New England fisherman who grew exceedingly tired of the cornmeal mush served up for dinner day after day by his unimaginative wife, Anna. Adding several fistfuls of wheat flour, some yeast, and some molasses to Anna’s mush, he set the entire mess to rise, baked it, and ate the hot delicious loaf, while muttering angrily to himself between satisfying mouthfuls, “Anna, damn her!” (Perl, Lila p. 33).

ANIMAL FOODS

Consumed in HIGH AMTS!--probably the highest in the world according to author Rorabaugh

Animal Fat was used for frying; meat drippings (lower class) replacement for butter, suet, lard (higher status)

“Any drippings from roasted meat not used in a sauce or gravy with the meat, and the pot skimmings from boiling meat, or rendered fat from frying meat, were reserved for cooking to replace more desirable lard, suet, or butter.” (Oliver 77).

“The proportion of meat in the diet was probably the highest in the world. Americans were sufficiently prosperous that they could afford to raise stock or to buy meat, and meat was cheap because of open grazing amid sparse settlement, but the high consumption of meat also showed a preference for the taste of meat, especially salt pork. That Americans liked meat is clear from the fact that on festive occasions, when they might have been expected to indulge their whims, they chose to have they chose to have barbecued pigs, beefs, oxen, or game birds, or burgoos, which were meat stews concocted of pork, beef, venison, and fowl.” (Rorabaugh 113-114).

“Besides using beaten egg whites as a leaven in baking (incl. in bread section above), colonists found eggs were a handy food, eaten at breakfast or as an accompaniment to meat at another meal. They were roasted by being buried in hot ashes by the fire, or boiled or fried.” (Oliver 55).

“Even the gentry might eat modestly in the morning, although they could afford meat or fish. By the end of the 18th century, however, many travelers to America noted that Americans ate meat as often as twice or three times a day.” (Oliver 157).

Kinds of animal flesh & derived food products they were eating: ‘salt pork, smoked ham, lard...Although there were many species of fish in western rivers, most frontiersmen rejected even an occasional fish dinner in favor of a steady continuous diet of salt pork. Similarly, many farmers who might have kept both hogs and poultry refused to be troubled with chickens, ducks, geese, or turkeys. There were few who objected to so much meat...Most Americans believed so strongly in ‘the eternal hog meat’ that slaveholders among them gave their slaves generous rations of pork fat as well as corn meal, and, until later in the century, prison officials fed inmates meat stews with their corn mush.’ (Rorabaugh 113-114).

“The monotonous corn and pork diet of the average American was only occasionally varied. Sometimes frontiersmen had forest game such as deer or wild turkey, while those who lived near the ocean enjoyed local delicacies such as oysters...” (Rorabaugh 114).

“Some families kept chickens either for the eggs or to honor occasional dinner guests.”
(Rorabaugh 115).

Pork was especially popular because of its high fat content, which made it excellent for salt curing. (Graham & Ramsey 23).

BEEF

“Beef was the most highly prized domestic meat among the European settlers...” (Oliver 43).

“...meat was both fresh and salted, and might include ham, beef, tongue, roast beef, fowls, mutton, veal, a pasty of chickens, partridges, or lamb, beefsteak, veal cutlets, mutton chops, turkey, or goose.” (Oliver 164).

“Beef was the most highly prized domestic meat among European settlers...” (Oliver, Sandra p. 43).

[Beef was important almost everywhere in the Colonies and often predominated over other meats]. (Summary from Oliver, Sandra p. 43).

[cattle ranged freely in frontier areas in West and South] (Summary from Oliver, Sandra p. 43).

“Most people preferred to eat beef fresh, but the fattier portions were corned or salted, and some subsequently were smoked.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 43)...[beef could be dried and jerked as well]. (Summary from Oliver, Sandra p. 43).

“The hard fat surrounding the kidneys (suet) was used in making pastry and pudding...” (Oliver, Sandra p. 44).

“As with nearly all domestic animals...as many parts of the animal as possible were utilized...in the case of beef, hearts, liver, sweetbreads, tripe, and kidneys were all commonly used fresh, and tongue were salted and smoked.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 44).

PORK

“Before the 1860s, pork was consumed in such large quantities in America that wags often suggested that the United States be rechristened, “The Republic of Porkdom.” Yet beef reigned supreme in status. “We are essentially a hungry beef-eating people, who live by eating,” proclaimed a proud mid-nineteenth-century American frontier newspaper.” (Levenstein, Harvey p. 4).

“Pigs were native to the New England woods and were a source of ‘pickled’ ham and ‘salt pork.’” (Ichord, Loretta F. p. 18).

“Like cattle, they foraged on their own in woods, eating acorns, nuts, and roots, and were kept just tame enough to be lured back to shelter for slaughter or wintering over.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 44).

“Hogs are famous for their usefulness, and the saying “You can use everything except the squeal” is very nearly true. Besides the meat and fat, the organs - liver, kidneys, heart, tongue, brains, and lungs-were eaten. The small and large intestines were cleaned and stuffed for sausage. Stomachs were cleaned, filled and boiled as pudding. The English had a tradition of making head cheese, and the Germans a tradition of making scrapple from the head and feet. Some colonists saved the blood to make black pudding.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 45).

“The hard, white fat surrounding the kidneys, called lard, was tried out and saved for baking and frying.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 45).

MUTTON, LAMB, POULTRY

“Both British and Spanish colonists appreciated mutton, and though they favored beef and pork, it was one of the domestic meats eaten in early America.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 45).

“Mutton was most often eaten fresh.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 46).

“Poultry and lamb were also held in high esteem...” (Levenstein, Harvey p. 4).

VEAL

“Like the other animals that have been discussed, as many parts of the calves were used for food as possible. Calf’s head soup was fashionable for a while in early America. Young animals’ joints were rich in cartilage that when cooked yielded gelatin, so calves’ feet were essential to making dessert and wine jellies, the forerunners of modern gelatin desserts...” (Oliver, Sandra p. 46).

WILDFOWL, ROAST TURKEY, & GEESE

“Roast turkey and geese appeared on festive occasions”...[they were too small (with little meat) for efforts to pluck and clean for cooking to be a large part of the Colonial/Federal diet]. (Oliver, Sandra p. 47).

[Turkey was plentiful during early settlement and was considered excellent wildfowl, and was also easy to kill.] (Oliver, Sandra p. 49).

“The earliest colonists, following a centuries-old custom of gentry favoring a variety of exotic fowl for the tables, ate many kinds of birds now not considered suitable for food, including swans, cranes, herons, cormorants, eagles, and many smaller songbirds, such as larks and thrushes. Most of these fell out of fashion by the end of the eighteenth century. At times, some of these birds were taken as survival fare.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 50).

VENISON

“Most English settlers in America regarded venison as a high-status food because in England it was the privilege of the gentry to hunt deer as a sport...” (Oliver, Sandra p. 47).

“On the frontier through the entire Colonial & Federal eras, however, settlers continued to hunt deer, and venison often constituted a large part of the diet until domestic animals could be established.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 48).

“Venison is a very lean meat, so cooks larded it before roasting it, or braised it. The fashion for venison dishes led to the creation of mock-venison dishes...” (Oliver, Sandra p. 48).

SMALL ANIMALS

“Squirrels, raccoons, rabbits, beavers, woodchucks, and possum are all edible, and had a place in the American diet during and well past the Colonial and Federal eras.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 48).

FISH

“In New England, the most frequently mentioned saltwater fish were cod, alewives and herring, mackerel, shad, bass, haddock, eel, and salmon. Trout was the favorite freshwater fish, and lobsters and oysters were the favored shellfish.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 51).

“In the Middle Atlantic Colonies, colonials ate shad, herring, oysters, crabs, perch, trout, sturgeon, bass, and rockfish.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 51).

“New England is famous for salt cod, which was primarily a commodity, but which most families served once a week.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 52). “By the 1630s, the New England colonists were putting out to sea for cod...Cod was the basis of the dried-fish trade with the West Indies.”... “While dried, salted cod was the staple food...the scarcer fresh cod was the food chosen for festive occasions by coastal New Englanders.” (Perl, Lila p. 42).

“Oysters were most abundant in New England and Chesapeake waters and supported a commercial fishery in both places. New England fished out its oyster population before the end of the Federal era, and raided the Chesapeake for oysters.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 52).

“Unlike cod, haddock, and other plentiful ocean fish, shellfish did not lend itself to salting and drying, or to other preserving methods known at the time, so severe winters meant few clams or oysters, mussels or scallops.” (Perl, Lila p. 42).

“Salmon was held in high esteem in England and Europe because of their large bones and meaty pink flesh...Cookbook author Amelia Simmons described salmon in her 1796 *American Cookery* as ‘the noblest and richest fish taken in freshwater.’” (Oliver, Sandra p. 52).

“In the late Colonial period, a fad for turtle soup (sea turtle) resulted in recipes for it appearing in most cookbooks.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 52).

"All fish were generally preferred freshly caught and cooked, but some - particularly cod, mackerel, shad, herring, and alewives - could be salted and saved for use in other seasons." (Oliver, Sandra p. 51).

"Fishermen often salted fish aboard their fishing vessels as soon as they caught the fish." (Oliver, Sandra p. 119).

"White-fleshed fish were taken ashore for drying on racks called flakes, a practice that hardly changed from the late Middle Ages up to the mid-1800s." (Oliver, Sandra p. 119).

"Oilier fish such as mackerel, shad, and herring were stored in barrels in the brine that formed when they were salted. Occasionally these fish were smoked." (Oliver, Sandra p. 119).

Imported Foods: spices, coffee, tea, olive oil:

"Breaks or long delays in the supply may have had an adverse effect on the quality of imported foods such as spices, coffee, or tea, which could lose flavor. Olive oil, often called sweet oil, could become rancid. Dried fruits such as raisins and currants could become wormy and nuts could become rancid." (Oliver, Sandra p. 13).

PREPARATION

"Butchers in towns bought animals driven in on foot, and slaughtered to provide a constant supply of fresh meat; some also salted and smoked meat. Other butchers traveled from farm to farm in butchering season to help with the slaughtering of cattle or pigs, receiving meat or cash in payment." (Oliver 124).

"..the hog meat was eaten in the form of salt pork, smoked ham, and lard. Each day, it was calculated, the typical American ate....a pound of meat, usually salt pork." (Rorabaugh 113).

"With rudimentary equipment and no way to control the temperature of the fire, it is not surprising that roasted meats, oven-baked bread, and cakes were rare." (Rorabaugh 116).

"Fried fish, chicken, ham, salt pork, beefsteak, eggs, johnny cakes, and mush poured forth from the nation's kitchens." (Rorabaugh 116)

"One enormously popular way in which meat and poultry were preserved and prepared in advance was potting. It basically involved boiling or baking meat until it was tender, then pounding it into a paste with a mortar and pestle, stirring in spices and butter or animal fat, packing it into earthenware jars and sealing them with a layer of melted butter or animal fat poured over the top. The same was done for fish, called "caveaching," except the fish was fried in oil, stored in a vinegar pickle, and sealed with a top layer of oil....be used (later) as a quick spread on bread or as a ready-made filling for pies." (Weinsteiger)

"It (sugar) is less generally used to cure hams (in Britain), but in Western and Southern America its use is by no means uncommon, for there, sugar, whether from the maple-tree or the

sugar-cane, is within reach, whilst salt and saltpetre (niter, aka nitrous salt on WIKI) are obtained with difficulty.” (Smith 64).

“Some foods were subjected to a two-step preservation process: meat could be kept in brine, but it might then be smoked or dried.” (Oliver 116).

“Domestic slaughtering was done in the fall and winter, with the onset of cooler weather, so that natural cold made it possible to store meat fresh for later consumption.” (Oliver 45).

“Venison is a very lean meat, so cooks larded it before roasting it, or braising it. The fashion (high status) of venison dishes led to the creation of mock-venison dishes, such as mutton cooked venison-style and venison pasty recipes that used beef, mutton...” (Oliver 48).

“Most English or European settlers preferred to smoke their salted meats if they wished to keep them for use later...Smoking dried the meat slightly, further diminishing chance of spoilage, and the smoky exterior discouraged insects.” (Oliver 119).

DAIRY

Consumed milk whenever it was available, but was considered ‘risky’

“...many Americans drank milk--when they could get it. Sometimes milk was excellent, cheap, and plentiful; at other times, especially on the frontier, it was not available or its price was as high as 12 cents a quart, more than whiskey. Costs were erratic and supplies spotty because each locality depended upon its own production. Bulk and transportation made both transportation and storage difficult....Even when milk was plentiful, many did not drink it for fear of the fatal ‘milk sickness.’

“While most farmers kept a cow, the milk usually went to the children. Adults had to content with butter, which was at times so rancid that it turned black. One frontiersmen recalled that ‘skimmed milk brought three miles to eat with hominy for a meal seemed a luxury.” (Rorabaugh 114-115).

“Milk from cows or goats was a desirable product in Colonial & Federal America. Cow’s milk was the favorite, and dairying was women’s work.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 53).

“During early settlement, it [milk] was a seasonal product, because cows ceased giving milk in the winter months.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 53).

“Many colonists kept at least one cow expressly for milking, and milk formed an important part of one to two meals a day for many.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 54).

[In North, dairy based agriculture arose and the cheese and butter business grew]. (Summary of Oliver, Sandra p. 43)... “With the increase in the number of dairy cattle brought to Plymouth Colony from England during the late 1620s, milk and milk products became somewhat more plentiful.” (Perl, Lila p. 36).

“Soured milk was a useful ingredient in cooking and was not considered spoiled, particularly after the adoption of chemical leavens; sour milk and buttermilk provided the necessary acid to combine with the alkaline pearl ash to form leavening gases.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 54).

Milk Substitute

“A lack of milk on the hardscrabble frontier meant that corn mush might be served with molasses, maple syrup, or even oil obtained from the blubbery fat of a bear.” (Rorabaugh 115)

Preservation an obstacle that decreased dairy consumption

“Without refrigeration food spoiled very rapidly in the scorching American summers. Cheese melted into unappetizing blobs and morning-fresh cow’s milk soured by mid-afternoon.” (Rorabaugh 116).

Clabber

“Clabber”, “bonny clabber” or clabbered milk was a tradition. Scotch-Irish dish that often constituted a substantial part of the backcountry settler’s diet. It is formed when milk naturally sours in warm weather and forms curds, similar to the yogurt we eat today.” (Weinsteiger)

Cheese: a way to preserve the milk

“There is little evidence of an aged cheese tradition, though in the 18th century there is evidence of pressed cheeses. However, fresh cheeses were made and used in cooking, or sometimes served with syrup as a desert.” (Oliver 142).

“Cheese made from cow’s milk predominated in the eastern Colonies, whereas goats’ milk predominated in the Southwest.” (Oliver 54).

CULINARY HERITAGE

“The United States may have won its political independence from Great Britain in 1783, but during the hundred-odd years that followed, Americans never liberated themselves from the British culinary heritage. Americans tended to eat more corn, pork, molasses, and indeed (according to nineteenth century travelers from Britain) much more of everything.” (Levenstein, Harvey p. 3).

“...the colonists “turned their backs on most of the new foods, often refusing to eat them until after Europe had accepted them and re-imported them to the land of their origin. The potato and tomato, which originated in Native American Indian civilizations just to the south of them some millennia before, reached Anglo-America late in the eighteenth century, only after gaining grudging approval in Britain. Colonials accepted the pumpkins of the New World because they resembled European squash.” (Levenstein, Harvey p. 3).

FERMENTATION

“...they (17th c colonists of America) very soon discovered that potable brews could be made from pumpkins, maple sugar and persimmons.” (Tannahill 254).

“Plentiful seasonal fruits, especially peaches and apples, had to be eaten fresh, dried, or, more commonly, converted into mild alcoholic beverages.” (Rorabaugh 116).

Whiskey: THE drink, food, and even medicine for the majority of Americans

Whiskey was healthful, patriotic

“Americans believed that whiskey was healthful because it was made of a nutritive grain, that it was patriotic to drink it because corn was native, and that its wholesome, American qualities ought to make it the national drink.” (Rorabaugh 91).

broke up the monotonous diet, derived from surplus homegrown corn, and provided a source of calories

“In addition, whiskey was a refreshing potion that helped break the monotony of a corn and pork diet. Furthermore, in a country where food supplies were sometimes erratic, whiskey could, at 83 calories an ounce, provide a substantial part of an American’s daily food requirements. Finally, whiskey shared with pork a common origin in the corn cult.” (Rorabaugh 117).

Its abundance as well as low cost was a result of an abundance of surplus grain that could not be sold locally, nor shipped in its unprocessed form, but could be shipped much more easily in the form of whiskey (less bulky and preserved) & the farmer made more profit off of whisky (thus financial incentive as well): “To market their surplus grain more profitably, western farmers turned to distilling. [While ‘corn was so bulky that a horse could not carry enough across the Appalachian Mountains to provide his own feed’...and ‘it was calculated that grain could not be sent profitably by land more than twenty miles’] A man could make money sending his whiskey overland by pack animal because distillation so reduced the bulk of grain that horse could carry six times as much corn in that form...Whereas corn sold for 25 cents a bushel in Kentucky, whiskey brought, after trip expenses, four times that amount in Philadelphia.” (Rorabaugh 78-9)

Industrialization that occurred with the creation of a national grain market led to an overabundance of whiskey. Whiskey itself became a surplus commodity so that the price halved in the 1820s. Whiskey circulated like money as well as beef, pork, wheat, and corn, particularly in the west where hard money was sometimes hard to get. This was a time in which the national economy was unstable and the first bank of the US died in 1811, leading to commodity exchange becoming more important, whiskey being one of the most common due to its abundance and shared perceived value. The author, Rorabaugh, asserts that “a glut of distilled spirits has preceded industrial development in many modern nations (England, Prussia, Sweden)...agricultural surpluses had created conditions favorable to rapid industrial development.” (89) (summary of Rorabaugh 80-89).

“many Scottish, Irish, and Scotch-Irish grain distillers had immigrated to America during the last quarter of the eighteenth century....they found conditions favorable for the exercise of their talents: plentiful water, abundant grain, and ample wood to fuel their stills.” (Rorabaugh 69).

Also technological advances occurred in the early nineteenth century to further benefit the whiskey industry: went from still to flat still to perpetual still. These improved technology made use of the heat given off by the condenser, saved both fuel, and cooling water, and could be fed continuously instead of making liquor in batches. Labor costs were also cut. (summary 69-72)

Distilling was very popular, even George Washington did it..& was considered a genteel occupation. “Travelers to western Pennsylvania observed that in that region one of every thirty families or an even greater proportion owned stills.”

Distilling had economic value & was derived from surplus

“The process of distillation interested Americans because it performed a vital economic function by transforming fragile, perishable, bulky, surplus fruit and grain into nonperishable spirits that could be easily stored, shipped, or sold....could be shipped at a profit....A farmer could realize handsome profits from processing his grain into spirits, since a bushel of corn worth 25 cents yielded 2.5 gallons of spirits worth \$1.25 or more. Even if the farmer did not do his own distilling and had to give a commercial distiller half the output in payment for his service, he would increase the value of his corn by 150 percent.”

Beer: not as popular as cider or whiskey because what the author Rorabaugh asserts is due to an American taste for higher alcohol drinks..see more on this under Cider

“Beer or hard cider as a daily family beverage, even at breakfast, seems incredible today, yet among the Puritans of New England and the English adventurers in Virginia it was the usual thing. Beer and cider, however, especially as a home-brewed beverage, were relatively low in alcohol, beer at about 5% and hard cider at 10%.” (Oliver 203).

“One of the seventeenth century colonists’ first priorities had been to organize a supply of fermented drinks, but their initial experiments in growing hops and barley in New England proved disappointing; there was to be no beer until Pennsylvania was settled.” (Tannahill 254).

“Brewers were found in larger towns and cities, making beer and selling yeast for household use (in bread and home-brews).” (Oliver 124).

establishes an important position in the Colonial diet right from the start.

“...beer came to New England on the Mayflower....it was the breakfast drink of children in New Netherland. Beer was one of the reasons the colonists began to plant barley in the very early days of settlement. And by 1640, New England (where even Puritan families started the day with a bracing draft of beer all around the table) had its first licensed, commercial breweries.” (Perl, Lila p. 114).

“Beer was the staple beverage for everyone from adults to infants when America was first settled in the early 1600s.” (Ichord, Loretta F. p. 44). “The colonists first made beer from pumpkins, maple sugar, and persimmons.”...[later on from barley and hops when they could be grown successfully in the colonies]. (Ichord, Loretta F).

Beer, like wine was advocated as a substitute for distilled spirits....Americans who found wine too costly to drink, drank beer, a beverage that could be brewed in America and that the masses could afford. One of the prominent doctor's of the time that disdained the consumption of distilled spirits argued that beer was more healthful than distilled spirits. This was popularized both by late 18th c. agricultural improvement associations and by agricultural guides, which were then a new and powerful force for modernization and change. One of the guides flatly called beer ‘the most wholesome beverage’ and went on to advise farm owners that if they replaced cider and spirits with beer their workers would be able to perform ‘double the labor, with half the fatigue.’ Farmers were also told that a switch from rum to beer would improve morals, reduce imports, and create a new market for 2.25 million bushels of barley. This campaign received official support in the 1790s when the federal government levied duties and excises on wine and spirits but not on beer. (Rorabaugh 107).

“Then, too, beer was so bulky, expensive to transport, and difficult to store that it needed a concentrated market, and at the time most Americans lived on farms dispersed across the countryside. Finally, beer spoiled easily” Bottles were too expensive, so beer usually came in 16 gallon kegs or 31 gallon barrels, but few taverns could sell that much beer before it spoiled (Rorabaugh 108-9).

There were also Technical Problems with producing beer that were worked out when German immigrants introduced their bottom vat yeast & cool aging (lager style): Before 1840, they employed the English method of brewing in which fermentation was produced by a yeast that floated on the top of a vat of barley malt....this did not work well in America....produced a bitter brew that was ill-tasting, cloudy, and without sparkle. The problem, according to a Yale scientist was that American breweries used smaller vats than their English counterparts, exposing too much of the contents to the top-floating yeast and to the air within. Others argued that the climate was at fault. The difficulty was finally solved in the 1840s when German immigrants introduced a new kind of yeast that sank to the bottom of the vat and, hence, was not exposed to the air. This beer did not turn bitter. This beer was termed by Germans as “lager beer” because it was aged in a cool store room for several weeks. (Rorabaugh 109).

In the 1840s, native-born Americans did not drink lager but it soon became fashionable in the 1850s. It increased in popularity especially after the Civil War, because of the high taxes on spirits as well as nostalgic memories of wartime Union Army lager beer rations stimulated its sales. Today's major breweries, such as Anheuser-Busch, Schiltz, Pabst, Schaefer, and Miller (originally Müller), bear the names of German immigrants of the mid-nineteenth century. (Rorabaugh 109-110).

“Malsters sprouted grains such as barley, and roasted them for making beer. As a more specialized trade, they were mostly in cities where a large population demanded malt for making beer.” (Oliver 124).

BEER

“Colonial beer consumption was negligible, except for home brewed ‘small beer,’ which was only one percent alcohol. Until 1850, annual per capita consumption of commercial beer at no time reached 2 gallons, and it was not until after the Civil War that it rose dramatically towards today’s rate of more than 18 gallons.” (Rorabaugh 9).

“Despite the Dr.’s propaganda, agricultural guides, and tax incentives, little beer was brewed. STAT: In 1810, annual per capita consumption of beer was less than 1 gallon, today it is more than 18 gallons. Furthermore, the little beer that was consumed was not distributed evenly around the country. In Philadelphia, the nation’s premier brewing center, beer was ‘the common table drink of every family in easy circumstances.’ It was also popular in New York, Albany, Pittsburgh, and Cincinnati; indeed the states of New York and Pennsylvania produced three-fourths of the nation’s beer. Elsewhere the beverage was ‘not a fashion of the country.’ Lack of customers hampered the development of the industry because a low sales volume kept the price high at times that beer cost more than whiskey.” (Rorabaugh 107-108).

MEAD

“The colonists also followed the British tradition of fermenting honey with yeast to make a drink called mead or metheglin.” (Perl, Lila p. 114).

WINE

Originally for the elite due to price. It was considered undemocratic and unpatriotic to drink it, even though it was drunk by President Jefferson among other prominent society members. Efforts were made, backed by the upper class, to bring wine growing and production to the US, but this ultimately failed. Eventually duties were lowered, opening its market more. However, due to the adulteration of the wine by purveyors out to make more profits, wine failed to ever become democratic. The temperance men and women finally pushed to make upper classes renounce their drink, and wine consumption fell by 1/2 by the 1840s.

“Having found coffee, tea, milk, and water unacceptable for one reason or another, some Americans turned to fermented drinks, such as wine. Although its high price of one dollar a gallon, often four times that of whiskey, limited annual per capita consumption of wine...its preference by the wealthy and their attempts to promote its use gave it a social importance out of proportion to its small sales. Many upper class opponents of distilled spirits favored wine because they believed it to be free of alcohol, the chemical that a number of physicians and scientists regarded as a poison. While the presence of alcohol in distilled beverages had long been recognized, early nineteenth-century wine drinkers noted with satisfaction that no experimenter had found that compound in a fermented beverage. It was an unpleasant surprise when chemist William Brande succeeded in measuring the amount of alcohol in fermented drinks and not only proved that wine contained a higher percentage of alcohol than hard cider or

beer, but also showed that the favorite American wine, Madeira, was more than 20 percent alcohol. After 1820, as temperance organizations disseminated Brande's findings, the number of wine advocates declined, although a few, insisted that alcohol in wine was rendered harmless by its incorporation into the wine." (Rorabaugh, W. J. 100-102).

"Early wine connoisseurs included such men as Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, and John Marshall. At the executive mansion during Jefferson's presidency, diners enjoyed round after round of fine, light French wines, and at Monticello the Sage himself customarily drank three glasses of wine each day...." (Rorabaugh, W.J. 102).

"But it was the wealthy Southern planters who were the most lavish importers of fine European wines and brandies." (Perl, Lila p. 114).

"The growing of wine grapes had been tried in the early days at Jamestown, using both native wild stock and imported vines, but the vineyards had failed to produce a palatable wine." (Perl, Lila p. 116).

"During the first quarter of the century, among society's upper classes, wine was central to the male dinner party. Wine provided both a chief topic of discussion and an excuse for late hours, which were spent sampling new and exotic varieties." (Rorabaugh, W.J. 103).

"Although wealthy wine drinkers continued to indulge in their palates, the Revolution's patriotic and democratic ideals had put these Americans on the defensive. Nearly all wine Americans drank was imported, largely from Madeira, and to continue to purchase dutied, foreign beverages both worsened the American balance of payments and cast doubts upon patriotism of the purchasers. Then, too, continuing to drink a refreshment priced beyond the means of the average citizen was considered elitist and undemocratic....To resolve these conflicts, wine drinkers promoted the planting of American vineyards in the hope that the United States could produce a cheap, native wine." BUT the first vintners produced a wine that was "pronounced by visitors to be 'of an inferior quality,' 'poor stuff,' and 'too sour to drink.'" (Rorabaugh 104). Despite these first failures, senators still dreamt of producing enough wine to render it a common and daily beverage. (Rorabaugh 105).

In the years following, Congress reduced wine duties, which led to a modest increase in wine consumption. Purveyors adulterated wine by fortifying it with cheap whiskey, making a product that was 20 to 30 percent alcohol, as well as cutting the wine with water in order to increase profits. These practices were so common that "it was estimated that Americans drank five times as much Madeira as was imported." The fortified wine, of course, gave wine a further negative reputation amongst reformers who observed the debilitating consequences of ingesting wine of such high alcohol content. Thus, the reformers who had before accepted wine as okay to drink due to its high social status, began to put pressure on the upper classes to renounce their won drink. (summarized from Rorabaugh 106).

“By the 1840s...consumption of wine fell by half, and many Americans concluded that divine will had decreed the failure of their country’s vineyards.” (Rorabaugh 106).

“when Americans did drink wine, they drank highly alcoholic varieties, often fortified with distilled spirits, and seldom below 20 percent alcohol.” (Rorabaugh 113).

“Wine consumption was and always has been relatively light. In 1770 the typical American annually drank only one-tenth of a gallon, between 1770 and 1870 less than a third of a gallon; and even today less than one and a half gallons.”

CIDER

Whiskey’s Rival as the national beverage-

“Cider and whiskey were America’s most popular drinks. Both were cheap and plentiful where available, and because they were processed in the United States from home-grown products, both benefited from nationalistic sentiment.” (Rorabaugh 110, 112)

Preferable over beer “because those drinks (cider and whiskey) contained more alcohol than beer, which was too weak for American taste....at the root of the ‘alcoholic republic’ was the fact that Americans chose the most highly alcoholic beverages that they could obtain easily and cheaply. The taste for strong drinks was no doubt enhanced by the monotony of the American diet..” (Rorabaugh 113).

However “cider was not usually marketed because its bulk made its shipments unprofitable; hence, little was drunk in the South or in cities...

The rural North loved cider. The beverage was ‘omnipresent,’ with a pitcher on every table and a jug in every field. During the winter, a typical New England family could be expected to consume a barrel a week. (Rorabaugh 112).

So prevalent was cider that it became a symbol of egalitarianism as ‘the common drink of...rich and poor alike.’ Even crusty John Adams, who railed against distilled spirits for half a century, drank a tankardful every morning...Americans heralded their sparkling amber beverage as a cousin to champagne, indeed such a close relative that cider had ‘oftentimes been passed on knowing Europeans.’ These visitors, alas, were no doubt those who denounced the nation’s terrible, sour champagne.” (Rorabaugh 111-112).

“Beer or hard cider as a daily family beverage, even at breakfast, seems incredible today, yet among the Puritans of New England and the English adventurers in Virginia it was the usual thing. Beer and cider, however, especially as a home-brewed beverage, were relatively low in alcohol, beer at about 5% and hard cider at 10%.” (Oliver 203).

CIDER PRODUCTION

Farmers pressed their apples on wooden frames.

“Throughout the apple country, farmers pressed their fruit on wooden frames that stood in nearly every orchard....In contrast with brewing, a farmer could afford to press apples strictly for family use...half the price of local beer” (Rorabaugh 111).

Added Raisins and Yeast to Promote Fermentation

“Apple juice was pressed, barreled, and fermented, sometimes with the addition of yeast or raisins to promote fermentation.” p. 81

fortified with distilled spirits, therefore contained at least 10 percent alcohol, and up to 20 percent

“Though inexpensive, it was highly alcoholic: to avoid spoilage it was fortified with distilled spirits until it contained at least 10 percent alcohol, twice as much as beer. There were even stronger forms: cider royal, which was hard cider mixed with distilled apple brandy or whiskey, and applejack, which was 20 percent alcoholic liquor that could be poured off after cider had been set outside to freeze on an autumn night.” (Rorabaugh 111).

CIDER CONSUMPTION

“Pre-Revolutionary cider consumption, heaviest in the apple country from Virginia northward, was probably as high if not higher than in the early nineteenth century. In fact, so much cider was drunk that colonial Americans probably ingested more alcohol from that beverage than from their much more potent rum....after 1800, the annual per capita consumption of hard cider was 15 or more gallons...continued until the 1830s...Hard cider disappeared only after the leaders of the temperance movement succeeded in persuading farmers to cut down their apple trees.” (Rorabaugh 9-10).

RUM

“But of all the drinks that warmed the eighteenth-century Americans interior, rum was the most important. It is estimated that just before the War of Independence the colonists were downing twenty four pints of it per head per year, women and children included. Some historians argue that it was not the 1773 tax on tea that was responsible for the final schism between Britain and its American colonies (even if that was the catalyst), but the Molasses Act of forty years earlier, which imposed a heavy tax on sugar and molasses coming from anywhere other than the British sugar islands of the Caribbean. It is a persuasive argument since rum (unlike tea at that period) was very much more than a drink....Restrictions on the purchases of molasses therefore threatened not only the colonists' own favorite drink but a whole related trading cycle. Alcohol in its various forms-the stronger the better - was the great lubricant of eighteenth century America. It quenched the majestic thirst that resulted from too much preserved food...” (Tannahill 254-256)

decreased when became more expensive than whiskey:

“before the Revolution rum had been the universal beverage, and whiskey had been rare, so rare in 1774 that one author who used the word felt obliged to define it for his readers; but by 1790 rum accounted for only two-thirds of all the hard liquor consumed, and whiskey had

become so popular that, along with domestic fruit brandy, it accounted for the remaining one-third. The rum industry was ruined when the attempt to use taxes to equalize the price of rum and whiskey failed.” (Rorabaugh 68).

OVERALL ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

“Alcohol was pervasive in American society; it crossed regional, sexual, racial, and class lines.” (Rorabaugh 20).

“In colonial days there were two clearly differentiated patterns of drinking distilled spirits. One way was to drink small amounts with daily regularity, often alone or with the family at home. Dramas were taken upon rising, with meals, during mid-day breaks, and at bedtime. Americans who took their spirits in frequent but comparatively small doses did not become intoxicated; indeed, social scientists tell us that such drinking leads drinkers to develop a tolerance to alcohol’s intoxicating effects. Coexisting with this pattern of drinking, but in sharp contrast to it, was the communal binge....prevailed whenever Americans gathered for elections, court sessions, militia musters, holiday celebrations, or neighborly festivities.” (Rorabaugh 149-150).

“Because drinking was a matter of choice, it increased a man’s sense of autonomy. To be drunk was to be free.” (Rorabaugh 151).

“It was the consensus, then, among a wide variety of observers that Americans drank great quantities of alcohol. The beverages they drank were for the most part distilled liquors, commonly known as spirits--whiskey, rum, gin, and brandy. On the average those liquors were 45 percent alcohol, or, in the language of distillers, 90 proof....During the first third of the nineteenth century the typical American annually drank more distilled liquor than at any other time in history.” (Rorabaugh 7)

“...during the colonial period the annual per capita consumption of hard liquor, mostly rum, reached 3.7 gallons. After the revolution, because of decreased trade with the West Indies, high import duties on West Indian rum and on the West Indian molasses from which New England rum was made, and a new tax on domestic whiskey, the consumption of distilled liquors declined by one quarter....between 1800 and 1830, annual per capita consumption increased until it exceeded 5 gallons--a rate nearly tripled that of today’s consumption. After 1830, temperance movement and high fed tax discouraged drinking of distilled beverages. Annual per capita consumption fell to less than 2 gallons, a level from which there has been little deviation in more than a century.” (Rorabaugh 8).

““the American Temperance Society estimated that three million men, 60 million gallons (of distilled spirits). At this high point the average adult male was imbibing nearly a half a pint a day. Few, however, were average. It was calculated that half the men drank 2 ounces a day; one-quarter (‘habitual temperate drinkers’), 6 ounces; one-eighth (‘regular toppers, and occasional drunkards), 12 ounces; and another eighth (‘confirmed drunkards’) 24 ounces. Thus, half the adult males--one eighth of the total population--were drinking two-thirds of all the distilled spirits consumed.” (Rorabaugh 11)

CONSUMPTION BY WOMEN + CHILDREN

encouraged to show feminine prudence; however, alcoholic elixirs were accepted & in certain circumstances highly sugared, watered down cordials...pay attn to bold

“the American Temperance Society estimated that during each year of the late 1820s nine million women and children drank 12 million gallons of distilled spirits; three million men, 60 million gallons.” (Rorabaugh 11)

“While men were the heartiest toppers, women were not faint-hearted abstainers. Little, however, can be learned about either the reputed 100,000 female drunkards or the more numerous women who consumed from one-eighth to one-quarter of the nation’s spirituous liquor. The subject received scant attention because it was “too delicate” to be discussed. The ideal of femininity did discourage tipping, for a woman was supposed to show restraint consistent with virtue...and for beverages agreeable to a fragile constitution. The public was not tolerant of women drinking at taverns or groceries, unless they were travelers recovering from a day’s arduous journey. Then the ladies might be permitted watered and highly sugared spirituous cordials.” (Rorabaugh 12).

“The concept of feminine delicacy led women to drink alcohol-based medicines for their health; many who regarded spirits as vulgar happily downed a highly alcoholic ‘cordial or stomach elixir.’...there were some special occasions when it was proper for women to imbibe freely and openly.” (Rorabaugh 12-13).

“White males were taught to drink as children, even as babies. “I have frequently seen Fathers,” wrote one traveler, “wake their Child of a year old from a sound sleep to make it drink Rum, or Brandy.” “As soon as a toddler was old enough to drink from a cup, he was coaxed to consume the sugary residue at the bottom of an adult’s nearly empty glass of spirits. Many parents intended this early exposure to alcohol to accustom their offspring to the taste of liquor, to encourage them to accept the idea of drinking small amounts, and thus to protect them from becoming drunkards...Adolescents perceived drinking at a public house to be a mark of manhood.” (Rorabaugh 14).

CONSUMPTION BY SLAVES

prohibited with exceptions but not fully enforced

“Masters usually provided watered spirits as a work incentive during harvest time, and many allowed their bondsmen a three-day spree at Christmas. The law, however, generally prohibited African Americans from drinking at other times. This prohibition was only partially effective.” (Rorabaugh 13).

SETTING OF CONSUMPTION

“Most liquor was drunk in the home, where whiskey and rum provided mealtime drinks, customary fresheners, and hospitable treats for guests....Even the poorest host proffered his whiskey jug.” (Rorabaugh 16).

“Americans drank at home and abroad, alone and together, at work and at play, in fun and in earnest....Americans drank before meals, with meals, and after meals...Americans were certainly enjoying a spectacular binge.” (Rorabaugh 20-21).

Health Beliefs Surrounding Distilled Spirits According to the Major Population: aided digestion, nutritious, healthful foods, medications, and relaxants good for mental health...

“Tradition taught that spirituous liquor aided digestion, and Americans who indulged in starchy fried foods needed an aid to digestion.” (Rorabaugh 117).

“At the beginning of the eighteenth century, tradition taught, and Americans, like Englishmen and Europeans, universally believed that rum, gin, and brandy were nutritious and healthful. Distilled spirits were viewed as foods that supplemented limited and monotonous diets, as medications that could cure colds, fevers, snakebites, frosted toes, and broken legs, and as relaxants that would relieve depression, reduce tension, and enable hard-working laborers to enjoy a moment of happy, frivolous camaraderie.” (Rorabaugh 25).

DELICACIES

“On holidays such as Thanksgiving there might be applesauce, pumpkin pie, or plum puddings.” (Rorabaugh 114).

“local delicacies such as oysters.” (Rorabaugh 114).

“One frontiersmen recalled that ‘skimmed milk brought three miles to eat with hominy for a meal seemed a luxury.’” (Rorabaugh 114-115).

“bread made with white wheat flour was a luxury for the rich or for special occasions” (Rorabaugh 115).

CLASS, SEX, AND FOOD

Women were encouraged to eat delicately, however, due to their highly physical lives, esp. in the countryside, they ate their fare amount. Due to the democratic moral of the new, young country, there was also a democratic ideal placed upon access to food, leading to less of a distinction in food between the rich and the poor than in other civilizations. (my summary from readings overall and interpretation of some of the quotes listed under other headings)

Eating Food - Manners & Etiquette “But it was common practice to use the fingers freely...It was not until the middle of the 18th century that colonial families began to use table knives for cutting their food into bite-size pieces and three-tined forks for conveying it to their mouths.” (Perl, Lila p. 49). **My Note: Looked and could not find supporting evidence from another source for this

so may or may not be true. History of use of forks can be traced as far back as Italy in the 1500s, but maybe colonists did not have money or means for utensils in the beginning?

DIVISION OF LABOR

Women did a lot, mainly in the house. Men were almost always farmers, some doing a trade as well. They stuck mainly to outdoor work. All in all, the work was split half-way, making marriage important for survival.

“...most women tended houses and men pursued trades or business, the military, and farming.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 121).

“Society expected that a woman’s sphere was in the domestic arts alone; consequently, the jobs outside the home that were available were very few, limited to such occupations as seamstress, governess, needlework-instructor, milliner, cook and, of course, tavern-keeper.” (Weinsteiger).

“In addition to cooking, the average housewife was responsible for numerous other tasks related just to the sustenance of her family. These included maintaining the vegetable garden; harvesting in the field with the men and children; preparing remedies and special foods for the sick; brewing beer; assisting with butchering and performing secondary butchering, the process of turning large cuts of meat into cuts small enough for the table; milking cows and making butter and cheese; and preserving food and monitoring when it should be used.” (Weinsteiger)

“Making cheese also required the housewife to collect the lining of the calf’s stomach, when it was butchered; for a source of rennet.” (Oliver 115).

“Thus, the average white woman almost anywhere in the Colonial cooked; milked cows and made butter and cheese; baked bread and pastries; brewed beer, made wine and cordials; took care of poultry; cultivated the kitchen garden (vegetables used in daily cooking); prepared remedies and special food for the sick; and assisted with butchering, particularly preparing meat for preservation and what is called secondary butchering, which turned large pieces of meat into cuts ready for the table. All the household was called on to help with harvesting grain, and women and all capable children worked in the fields with men, cutting wheat and rye.” (Oliver 123).

“Housewives also monitored the family’s food supply to check for signs of spoiling, to determine when a food should be used, and to keep storage places clean. Failure to do any of this might put a family’s food supply at risk, sometimes with dire results if there was no alternative supply or sufficient cash to buy it. The housewife’s attention had economic value.” (Oliver 123).

“Slave cooks in the North or in the South, however, were usually women.” (Oliver)

“Women contributed to their household economy both by the judicious management of their farms’ products and by working for cash in some craft, and sometimes by supplying food.” (Oliver 122).

“Few widows or widowed men still in middle age remained unmarried for very long. One reason for this was that women’s work formed half of the subsistence equation...” (Oliver 122).

“Men in Colonial America, even if they had a trade, often farmed as well. They raised livestock and planted field crops of grains and fodder for animals, but once the food was harvested and brought into the house, it was the woman’s responsibility to turn it into a meal or store it for use another time. A woman might, under straitened circumstances, perhaps with the help of male relatives, attempt to operate a farm, but generally the work needed at least two people with the help from children and/or servants if all they hoped for was survival.” (Oliver 122).

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASSES

Politicians and doctors were of higher class. Farmers and tradesmen were pretty even, considering that many farmers were tradesmen as well of some kind. Slaves were common in households of higher wealth, esp. in the South. In the west, money was at times hard to obtain, making commodity trading more important than in the east. Overall, the society in early America resembled the beginnings of an egalitarian society that many of its first colonizers dreamed of establishing. (my brief summary from readings, selected quotes etc)

FOOD + CLASS

Yes, the wealthy had access to more variety as well as foods such as wine, specialty meats such as venison, breads made of highly ground flour (white wheat higher status in the cities), and the preparation of their food was more labor-intensive (ie. with yeasted breads, ragouts, pies etc). It should be noted that due to the egalitarian morals of the society in general, the wealthy were often encouraged to give up their specialty food items in the name of patriotism.

“Venison, as a meat restricted largely to the gentry, had special status.” (Oliver 133).

Wine was mainly only for the wealthy. Tea as well.

“Many descriptions of the meal show that the well-to-do put a great variety of dishes on their tables: soup, large joints of meats (both roasted and boiled), fish, smaller dishes of fricassees and ragouts, vegetables, and pies.” (Oliver 149).

“...in households where slaves cooked, a higher-style gentry cookery, with its concomitant increased effort, was supported by the labor-supply. This helps explain, in part, how labor-intensive traditional cookery lasted longer in the South than elsewhere--for example, the continued use of yeast or beaten egg whites in making cakes when cooks elsewhere in the country turned to chemical leaven.” (Oliver 123).

Meat was more available to lower classes relative to other civilizations--this was a unique aspect that comes to differentiate the American diet from other diets in human history. (my own consensus reached from readings) I will keep my eyes out for something that refutes this...Although the rich had access to more variety of meats and fish...

Food brought by African Slaves:

[The slaves from Africa brought food with them in the mid-1600s]... “Stuffed in their pockets were foods like peanuts, black-eyed peas, okra, and benne (sesame) seeds from their homeland in West Africa. They also brought with them a tolerance for hot spices like chili peppers and cayenne.” (Ichord, Loretta F. p. 38).

“When Africans arrived in America, they continued to use peanuts as a vegetable. Virginia farmers decided to grow the “slave food” (peanuts) and feed them to their pigs.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 40).

Foods eaten by Slaves:

“Food produced in excess were cheap so, depending on what was plentiful at a given time and place, the slaves might be fed on dried salted fish from New England, molasses from the West Indies, or sweet potatoes, peanuts, and vegetables from the surrounding fields. During the early slave era, diamondback terrapins (turtles - for more see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diamondback_terrapin#History_as_a_delicacy) from the marshy shores of Chesapeake Bay were so numerous that they were fed to Maryland slaves to the point of monotony.” (Perl, Lila p. 109).

“There was nothing very glamorous, in the slave era, about eating hog jowl (pig jaws and cheeks) or hog small intestines. The latter were called chitterlings or “chitlins.” For cooking, they were scrubbed as clean as possible, boiled in water to tenderize them, then cut up to oyster size, dipped in meal, and fried in hot lard. The heads, feet, entrails, and other leavings from pig, poultry, or cattle slaughter on the plantation almost always went to the slaves to be cooked and served up at their own tables along with black-eyed peas or hominy grits (coarsely ground hulled corn) and turnip or collard greens.” (Perl, Lila p. 109).

“There were a few slave-food treats, however. One was “cracklin’ bread,” a cornbread containing bits of pork crackling, the crisp fried bits of skin that floated to the top of the kettle when hog fat was being melted down to make lard.” (Perl, Lila p. 109).

OTHER BEVERAGES

Very little water, sometimes milk, little tea, coffee became a staple after the first third of the 19th century, wine for the upper classes...

“water was usually of poor quality, milk often scarce or unsafe, and coffee, tea, and wine imported and expensive.” (Rorabaugh 112).

WATER

considered unclean, unappetizing, and literally lethal

“...neither Americans nor Europeans of the period tended to indulge in refreshing glasses of water. This was not so much the consequence of an aversion to that healthful beverage as that the available water was seldom clear, sparkling, or appetizing....Instead people drank rain

water, which they collected in roof cisterns. Rural areas often lacked good water because deep wells were expensive and difficult to build, while the water from shallow wells was usually cloudy. The purest water came from clear, flowing spring, but these were not always conveniently located.” (Rorabaugh, W.J. 95-96)

“During the first third of the century (19th c.) water was often condemned on the ground that it lacked food value and did not aid digestion. Indeed, many people believed water was unfit for human consumption...Others thought water to be lowly and common; it was the drink of pigs, cows, and horses. Or, as Benjamin Franklin put it, if God had intended man to drink water, He would not have made him with an elbow capable of raising a wine glass. There were also those that thought that water could be lethal, especially if drunk in hot weather.” One Virginian of this time wrote to his father, “I shall not injure my health in drinking water. I have not drank a tumbler full since here. We always have a boll of toddy made for dinner.” Another man writes to his son, “I see by the papers, eight deaths in one week from cold water, in Philadelphia alone.” (Rorabaugh, W.J. 97-98)

“Like their contemporaries in Europe, early Americans had a built-in resistance to water. This was not altogether surprising. Much ‘fresh’ water within range of human habitation was, if not actually poisonous, not far from it.” (Tannahill 254)

TEA

expensive, culturally disdained

“As time passed, however, the abundance of fresh, pure water in the New World did cause some people to begin to frown on tipping, and efforts were made by members of polite society to lessen their consumption of alcohol or at least partially to conceal it. Tea-drinking grew very popular as Americans...for ‘the cup that cheers but does not inebriate.’...After the introduction of the tea tax in the American colonies, it became unpatriotic to drink tea, and the colonial taste also turned to coffee, which was to become the staple hot beverage of the new nation after the Revolutionary War.” (Perl, Lila p. 117).

“Americans also rejected tea, which was relatively expensive. During the 1820s, a cup of tea cost more than a mixed drink made with whiskey.” It was drunk by the rich. AND “even when its price was low, most Americans considered tea to be a foreign luxury. To drink it was unpatriotic.” “Westerners who disdained imports, brewed their own sassafras, spicewood, mint, and wild root teas. Frontiersmen believed imported teas to be insipid ‘slops’ fit only for the sick and those who, like British lords, were incapable of bodily labor.”(Rorabaugh, W.J. 99).

COFFEE

from luxury to a necessary of life due to falling prices & increasing cultural acceptance

“Although tea was expensive, it cost less per cup than coffee, and before 1825 tea outsold coffee....Imported coffee was then such a luxury that many Americans drank unappetizing homemade substitutes concocted from rye grain, peas, brown bread, or burned toast. Although coffee was imported, it did not share the scorn heaped upon tea. Perhaps coffee was more

acceptable because it was imported from Latin America. Nor had there ever been a Boston Coffee Party.” During the late 1820s, therefore when the price of coffee fell to 15 cents a pound, imports rose, and consumption increased correspondingly...in 1830 the temperance reformers succeeded in persuading Congress to remove the duty on coffee. By 1833 coffee had ceased to be a luxury and, according to the Baltimore American, entered ‘largely into the daily consumption of almost every family, rich and poor,’ prominent ‘among the necessities of life.’ But in the first third of the century it had been too expensive to compete with whiskey.” (Rorabaugh, W.J. 100).

LIFESPAN + STATURE

death rates higher in cities due to spread of disease, poor public sanitation etc.; infectious and contagious diseases were the major cause of death; male had higher mortality rate (slightly); the stature of the people in America differed less among social groups compared to Europe, reflecting a more egalitarian society where the majority had access to good nutrition; American men were taller than their European counterparts

“The average life expectancy in Colonial America was under 25 years in the Virginia colony, and in New England about 40% of children failed to reach adulthood.” (wiki under “life expectancy: life expectancy variation over time.”)

“General mortality trends varied during the colonial period. In New England, during the early 1700s, death rates were much higher in urban areas than they were in small towns, with estimated annual deaths per 1,000 persons ranging from the 30s to the 40s in urban areas and from 15 to 25 in small towns.” (stat from 2000, Bryant p. 188).

The mortality rate was lower in the Northeast than the South due to success in legislating and enforcing quarantine laws to decrease the spread of infectious and contagious disease in the Northeast.

“Life expectancy for the colonists has been estimated to be higher than that of their European counterparts because of lower population density (lessening the spread of epidemics), less travel and migration (reducing exposure to new contagious diseases), and better nutrition and standard of living. Studies of differences in stature between native-born American adult males and those in European countries in the mid-1700s point to sufficient nutritional support in that the American native had a height advantage of 5 to 7 cm.

Evidence also indicates that there were virtually no social class differences in adult height by the time of the Revolutionary War, which meant that everyone in the American colonies, including the poor and the slaves, had adequate access to nutrition. There were much greater class differences in stature in Europe at the time. However, the average adult male in colonial America was taller than the average upper-class male in England.” (Bryant 188).

“During the 19th century the major causes of death continued to be infectious and contagious diseases.”...yellow fever reached epidemic proportions in the 1840s, 1850s, and in 1878.

“Typhus, typhoid fever, scarlet fever, and tuberculosis continued to be major causes of death and sickness in the 19th century.” “The United States had its first cholera epidemic in 1832, brought by immigrants from England.”...cholera is caused by a bacteria that is spread through feces contaminated water and food & from 1832-1873 was a US epidemic due largely to filth and poor public sanitation. (summary and quotes of Bryant 189).

“Many of the diseases at the time (e.g. cholera, diarrhea, t.b., most respiratory infections, measles, and whooping cough) can negatively affect nutritional status, particularly among children, which in turn can inhibit the body’s ability to grow and develop at normal levels and remain healthy.” (Bryant 189).

“There was a decline in average height for men born in the 1820s and 1830s in the US until the later part of the 19th century; this trend points to a reduced nutritional sustenance.” Farmers had the greatest height advantage and laborers had the least. (Bryant 189).

“For most ages, males had higher death rates than did females. However, female deaths sometimes exceeded male death between the ages of 20 and 50 due to hazards of childbearing, frontier life, and vulnerability to disease-causing organisms.” (Bryant 189).

“...among American-born men [born around the American Revolution], the average height was close to five feet, nine inches, roughly two inches taller than comparable British soldiers of the era.” (Oliver).

FOOD PRESERVATION

“Although there were no widespread, long-lasting famines, people did starve in America, particularly during initial settlement in some locations. Crops destroyed by warfare or weather, such as drought, flood, or early frosts, created acute food shortages from time to time that, combined with destitution, caused most hunger...there were times when there were so few supplies that not even money could buy food.” (Oliver 200).

“Whether in New England, Virginia, or Louisiana, mortality from disease, starvation, or near-starvation was usually high among newly arrived colonists.” (Oliver 4).

Early Americans had high energy demands from being very physically active in their efforts to survive in the New World:

“The metabolism of the Early American population was very high compared with that of later eras...Much work required physical labor and muscle-powered tools, and people expended many calories merely walking or riding a horse. Only the wealthy could afford wheeled transportation...Food empowered activity, and grain and meat were the primary sources.” (Oliver 200).

Erratic food supplies, lack of diversity in diet, and use of rather strange substitutes of the main items of salt pork, biscuits, and whiskey:

"In the spring, before the corn crop came in, pioneers were forced to turn from agriculture to hunting and might call venison "bread" and bear flesh "meat." Erratic food supplies often led to odd combinations. One Ohio vagabond was spotted on the highway carrying a knapsack of bread and cheese and a canteen of distilled spirits, while Philadelphia railroad laborers were known to dine on watermelons, cucumbers, and whiskey." (Rorabaugh 115).

American gastronomy had a bad reputation according to foreigners:

"Foreigners who suffered through such experiences had no fondness for American cookery. 'I had never undergone such gastronomic privations,' wrote one, 'as in the western parts of America.' (Rorabaugh 115).

"As salting was the usual way to preserve meat, pickling was the usual way to preserve vegetables, particularly those vegetables that could not be dried or effectively stored cold, such as cucumbers and green beans." (Oliver, Sandra p. 120).

"From earliest settlement through the 1800s, pickling was an important form of food preservation, and vinegar was as necessary a staple as salt....many people made their own [vinegar] from apple cider or wine." (Oliver, Sandra p. 120).

Preserving & Storing Meat: "To pot meat, a cook boiled or baked meat or poultry until it was very tender, pounded it into a paste with a mortar and pestle, mixed it with spices, salt, pepper, and butter or melted animal fat, and then packed it tightly into earthenware or pottery jars, and sealed the top with melted butter or animal fat...Kept cold, this would last for a while, and was easily spread on bread, as canned deviled ham is used today. Sometimes meats were baked in pies, with melted butter poured in to exclude air, and stored until wanted." (Oliver, Sandra p. 117).

"Salt was essential for food preservation, particularly for meat and fish...Light salting was termed corning...This preserved meat for up to a week or more in cold weather, and a shorter time in warm weather...Salt, sugar, and saltpeter were also dissolved in hot water...it was poured over the meat in the barrel. This process was called pickling, but should not be confused with the pickling that used vinegar...Pork (hams, bacon, sausage) was more often salted than beef because its saturated fat readily absorbed salt...Some cuts of beef - fatty brisket and beef sausages made with lean and fat meat, took salt well and were even improved by it." (Oliver, Sandra p. 118).

"...mincemeat was enormously popular. Mincemeat combined cooked meat (often beef or venison) with suet, apples, currants or raisins, citrus peel, and brandy or cider. It was packed in earthenware jars from which quantities were scooped when needed, or baked into pies and kept cold to be reheated later." (Oliver, Sandra p. 117).

Caveaching Fish: "Caveaching fish was a variation on this. Heavily seasoned mackerel slices or pieces were fried in oil and then stored in a vinegar pickle on which more oil was poured to exclude air." (Oliver, Sandra p. 117).

[Spring houses were sheds built over flowing springs that kept animals from getting to butter and cream immersed in cool running water.] (Ichord, Loretta F. p. 15).

[Root cellars dug under the homes to store food]. (Ichord, Loretta F. p. 14).

[Branding of cherries (whole) and peaches that were dropped into a bottled and covered with brandy; peaches were then preserved in sugar syrup.] (Oliver, Sandra p. 121).

DIFFICULTIES

“Even where food was abundant, its preservation was difficult or impossible. Before the middle of the century home canning was unknown, but even if the process had been developed, its widespread use would have been precluded by the high prices of glass jars and sugar. Nor was there cold storage except for primitive burial. Plentiful seasonal fruits, especially peaches and apples, had to be eaten fresh, dried, or, more commonly, converted into mild alcoholic beverages. Without refrigeration food spoiled very rapidly in the scorching American summers. Cheese melted into unappetizing blobs and morning-fresh cow’s milk soured by mid-afternoon. Climatic conditions favored dry, salty foods that did not spoil readily, such as parched corn, smoked hams, or salt pork.” (Rorabaugh 116).

“This was before refrigeration. The biggest enemy of nineteenth-century butchers was spoilage. Eating cows did not make a whole lot of sense: Distributing the meat of a freshly killed 1,500-pound animal before it went bad was difficult without roads and temperature-controlled trains. But pigs are fatty, which makes them excellent for salt curing because they don’t lose flavor.” (Graham & Ramsey 23).

COOKING

lots of frying in pork lard or butter; no boiling because the American cooks were in a hurry...sounds familiar! Grease became the common ingredient within almost all dishes. “Without ovens for roasting and baking, American cooks had to either boil or fry. Boiling, however, was never popular with American cooks, who tended to be in a hurry. They preferred the quicker method of frying food in pork lard or butter. Fried foods became the American gastronomic specialty, and the country’s breakfasts, dinners, and suppers were soon floating in ‘extraordinary rivers of butter and oceans of grease.’ Everywhere, everything that was cooked was fried.

Fried fish, chicken, ham, salt pork, beefsteak, eggs, johnny cakes, and mush poured forth from the nation’s kitchens....one traveller who faced bread that arrived at the breakfast table afloat ‘in a menstruum of oleaginous matter’ it seemed that grease entered ‘largely into the composition of every dish; it constituted ‘the sole ingredient of many.’” (Rorabaugh 117)

“Fats and oils derived from animals were used to cook many colonial foods. Rendered pork fat, especially from bacon, was the most popular cooking medium. Pork fat was used more often in the southern colonies than the northern colonies as the Spanish introduced pigs earlier to the

south. Many homes kept a deerskin sack filled with bear oil for use in cooking. Solidified bear fat resembled shortening. The colonists enjoyed butter in cooking as well, but it was rare prior to the American Revolution, as cattle were not yet plentiful.” (Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia “Cuisine of the Thirteen Colonies.”).

[Bread was cooked in an oven built into the chimney....lit a fire, heated up bricks, put fire out, swept away ashes, and put food in according to desired temperature/cooking.] (Ichord, Loretta F. p. 11).

[Meat was cooked preferably in soups so that it would become very soft and easy to chew, better than roasting etc.] (Ichord, Loretta F. p. 27).

[In New England]... “the perfect meal-in-a-pot was the boiled dinner...it combined meat, potatoes, and other vegetables all cooked together in a large kettle...the content might include chicken or salted codfish, ham or corned beef, along with potatoes and such hardy vegetables as carrots and turnips, onions, and parsnips, cabbage, beets, and rutabagas...After cattle became plentiful enough...corned beef became the most popular meat to go into the boiled dinner...The boiled corned beef dinner became so popular in New England that some families had it as often as twice a week.” (Perl, Lila p. 46-48).

[From the boiled dinners]...colonists would “chop up the meat and vegetables and fry them all together in salt-pork drippings or bacon fat, making a thick, crusty-bottomed hash.” (Perl, Lila p. 49).

“The British upper classes spiced their food and beverages formidably until the mid-1660s, but by the late seventeenth and eighteenth century a modicum of restraint had gained the upper hand. Salt and small amounts of pepper, cloves, cinnamon, mace, ginger, nutmeg, and a few herbs were the main British/American seasonings. A relatively light hand with spices continued to characterize cooking in both countries during the nineteenth century. Not only were spicy foods blamed for inducing a craving for alcohol, many people shared the notion of antebellum American food reformer Sylvester Graham that they stimulated inordinate appetites for sex.” (Levenstein, Harvey p. 5).

Societal Consequences of High Alcohol Consumption in the US

“During the period of peak consumption liquor induced wife beating, family desertion, and assaults, as well as payments from public funds for the support of inebriates and their families, increased.” (Rorabaugh 89).

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

“Men and women in holy orders traditionally avoided all meat as part of their dedication to monastic and convent life.” (Oliver 209).

Temperance Movement's Effects on American Cookery and Diet
VEGETARIANS AND NO ALCOHOL, EVEN IN COOKING

Vigorous Vegetarianism became a trend among temperance reformers; wine and brandy was rooted out of cooking so that fewer recipe books included liquor (although they did recognize at this time that baking dissipated liquor). Brandy was even banned from mince meat pies that became known as “temperance pies.”

NO STIMULANTS AT THE TABLE Dietary reform even extended to other food items such as tea and coffee. The Oberlin College even proscribed gravy, butter, fish, and pepper. Dietary reformers banned things they considered to be stimulants such as whiskey, meat, and coffee because “...they feared...would overstimulate the emotional faculties, unleash uncontrollable passions, and destroy the capacity for doing God’s labors. Proper stimulation came from the Bible, not at the table. What man needed was a nutritional diet that would subdue passion.”

SHOULD EAT GRAIN“The belief that proper food was to be found in the vegetable rather than the animal kingdom may have followed from the belief that the eating of animal food made a man animalistic. This idea was rooted both in experience, where fiery spirits were perceived to kindle burning passions, and in theory, where the notion of animal magnetism suggested that objects containing similar qualities were attracted to each other....Reformers wanted man to be a grain eater so he would be a replenishing creature, sowing his heavenly inspired good deeds across the earth.”

THE GRAHAM CRACKER:“The quest for a godly diet culminated in Sylvester Graham’s experiments with grain , as this one-time estate agent for the Pennsylvania Temperance Society mixed a variety of grains to create a wholesome, nutritious, dark-colored flour that became the forerunner of the graham cracker. Three of the most prominent reformers of the era...followed the Graham diet at their New Jersey commune.” (Rorabaugh 120-121).

DENY AND PROHIBIT TO PROGRESS The prohibitionists mindset was that feeling and emotion needed to be subjugated to rules and rituals. Everything not needful or useful was to be rejected. To deny was to advance; to prohibit was to progress. (Rorabaugh 121).

NUTRITION RECOMMENDATIONS

Opposed high amts of meat and proposed a higher vegetable intake supported health

How Most Colonists Avoided Nutrient Deficiencies: Variety

“...the colonial diet did not usually adversely impact people’s health. While their diet might have been deficient in some vitamin or mineral at various seasons of the year, most people managed to obtain all the necessary nutrients over the course of a year as long as there were no major disruptions in growing seasons or supplies. For example, because they were open to eating many foods that modern people now reject, their diet benefited by the consumption of nutrient-rich organ meats during the winter when a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables was not available.” (Oliver, Sandra p. 202-203).

“Physician and artist Benjamin Rush in Philadelphia was among the first, by the early 1780s to identify alcoholism as a progressive disease.” (Oliver 205).

“Dr. Benjamin Rush, who had observed that the healthy and robust Pennsylvania Dutch ate a varied diet that included large quantities of turnips, onions, and sauerkraut. One of Rush’s dietary followers was Thomas Jefferson, who wrote that he ate ‘little animal food, and that...as a condiment for the vegetables, which constitute my principal diet.’ But Rush and Jefferson were exceptions.” (Rorabaugh 114).

“As early as 1772, Rush, by then a physician living in Philadelphia, condemned distilled spirits in a pamphlet in which he urged moderate drinking, eating, and exercise....he had concluded from observing his patients that spirituous liquor was a powerful stimulant that destroyed the body’s natural balance...he did not at that time recommend abstinence....when he served for a time as the Continental Army’s surgeon general...asserted (that alcohol) caused numerous diseases, particularly fevers and fluxes....in 1782 wrote “Against Spirituous Liquors”...urged farmers not to supply their harvest laborers with distilled spirits, which, he claimed, failed to aid physical labor, injured health, crippled morals, and wasted money....1784 wrote essay that catalogued liquor’s defects: it protected against neither hot nor cold weather, for on hot days it overstimulated and on cold ones it produced temporary warmth that led to chills; it caused numerous illnesses--stomach sickness, vomiting, hand tremors, dropsy, liver disorders, madness, palsy, apoplexy, and epilepsy. Spirituous liquor, he believed, should be replaced with beer, light wine, weak rum punch, sour milk, or switchel, a drink composed of vinegar, sugar, and water.....(became) the century’s most effective short piece and also a model for later temperance publications; by 1850 more than 170,000 copies had been circulated...by the 1780s, Rush’s medical and social theories had passed into the mainstream of educated American opinion....by the eighties his beliefs were respectable, even fashionable.” (Rorabaugh 39).

Nutrition Commentaries and Advice that Influenced Britain and America around the time of the following quotes from the work “Practical Dietary for Families, Schools, and Laboring Classes” written by the M.D. Edward Smith.

**background summary that verifies that Edward Smith was most influential for his time and thus his nutrition advice was not only reflective of his time (1817-1874) but also influence the nutrition beliefs of his time-----Edward Smith was the chief medical inspector appointed to the Poor Law Board in 1865, an important position that warranted much respect and gave him the ability to have a very large impact upon society. He is known and remembered for his work on diets in prisons and of the laboring classes that provided a better understanding of nutritional requirements for adults. He had also analyzed a variety of foods for their nutritional properties. He undertook surveys of their diets in workhouses in a number of regions, the last of which was published in “The Lancet.” His recommendations were born out of finding the most nutritious food at the least cost. (summary of Coveney 68-70). Also, under WIKI, Smith was a British physician and medical writer that “deserves to be better remembered by nutritionists, both for his contributions to the physiological basis of nutrition, and for his pioneering field surveys of dietary intake in relation to need among low income social groups.” Interestingly, he worked out that prisoners who were fed on a diet of 93% CHO would not be able to perform hard labor

(and would be more likely to resort to crime). According to WIKI, there was a prevailing idea that PROTEIN ALONE POWERED MUSCLES. At the time, two men climbed the Alps on a diet free of protein. Smith suggested that the chemical energy required for muscular effort does not come primarily from consumed protein but from fats and CHO's. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Smith_\(physician\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Smith_(physician))).

Now, for his RECOMMENDATIONS & Various Quotes from his work mentioned above and an American monthly journal that was sent for free to all subscribers of the American Journal of the Medical Sciences. The title of the journal was "The Medical News and Library." and the section that spoke of Edward's book also quoted below was titled "Foreign Intelligence" since it came from a British physician. NOTICE HIS FOCUS ON BREAD AND DAIRY, AND INTERESTING PERSPECTIVE ON ALCOHOL THAT AGAIN REFLECTS THE COMMON BELIEF THAT ALCOHOLIC DRINKS HAD MUCH NUTRITION. PEOPLE WERE IN DEBATE OVER WHETHER THESE NUTRITIOUS ALCOHOLIC DRINKS WERE NECESSARY.

He recommended heating foods for digestion and was all about the cheap bread that was more readily available at that time from cheap American wheat. "Dr. Smith urged the distribution among the poor of handbills with the heading 'The Cheapest and Best Kinds of Food,'...he includes, 'If you are very poor, spend nearly all of your money on bread. Bread and milk and porridge make the best breakfast for husband, wife, and children. Buttermilk is a very good and cheap food. Whey is food, and is a much better drink than water or beer. Every member of the family should, if possible, have two pints of new milk, skim milk, or buttermilk, daily. With plenty of bread and milk there will probably be health and strength, and no doctors' bills. When you can buy Indian corn meal you will find it a stronger and cheaper food than flour. Potatoes are the best of all garden vegetables. Tea is a very dear food. If you are very poor, do not buy any tea, but spend your money on bread and skim milk. When you cannot obtain sufficient milk, and must drink tea, let it be weak, and add as much milk as you can to it; but it is then better to make broth for breakfast and dinner. Hot food is both more agreeable and digestible than cold food. Children, old and feeble people, need hot food more than strong adults. When you are very poor, and have not enough to eat, do not drink cold fluids.

The teetotallers (those who advocated complete abstinence from alcoholic beverages) may like to know that Dr. Smith is convinced that the use of wine is quite unnecessary in the ordinary conditions of health, and that all the elements which give value to wine, except the alcohol, which has been added to it, are found equally in the so-called light wines and the strong wines of Spain and Portugal; and hence ordinary claret is quite as valuable to the system under numerous conditions both of health and disease as port or sherry. With regard to beer he says: 'Whilst we cannot deny to beers the position of foods, it may be doubted whether they are necessary ones, and whether others cannot be found which offer the same advantages at a less cost. It is impossible to regard them as economical foods, whilst as MEDICINAL AGENTS they may have much value, and as luxurious foods they may supply a want in the present state of society.' (The Medical News p.92).

Also Emergence of Solidism that had its own recommendations for low, middle, and full diets rooted partly in humoral theory:

“...the late sixteenth century English writer Thomas Moffett in his book “Health’s Improvement” (published in 1655 but written earlier), did not reject humoral physiology [my note: predominant theory of Middle Ages & Medieval Europe] completely but combined it with what is called solidism. The system prescribed full, middle, and low diets for the ill. The full diet was designed to build flesh, blood, and humors to promote growth and strength, particularly in young people. This diet called for vegetables and meat (which was considered stimulating food), bread, beer, and a rich boiled pudding. A middle diet was prescribed for middle-aged people to rebuild strength that was lost or expended. A low diet was recommended for old people and for the ill; it was designed to avoid stimulating and taxing the system, so it eliminated meat and offered broth, bread pudding, gruel, and milk porridge.” (Oliver 198)

Solidism and Concept of Digestibility Set Foundation for 19th c Nutritional Theory: food should move through unobstructed...chew well!

“Because solidism focused on the movement of blood and what were thought to be nervous fluids through the whole body, health was considered to be free movement of these and of other bodily functions, such as urinating and bowel movements. By extension, solidists thought food should move through the body unobstructed, an idea expressed by the term “digestibility.” The concept of digestibility has been around for many years, and became a focus of early nineteenth century nutritional theory...advisability of chewing food very well to promote digestion.” (Oliver 198).

RECIPES

“A Swedish visitor to the Alabama frontier was served a three-course dinner that began with pickled pigs feet, advanced to bacon and molasses, and concluded with a main course of milk and black bread soaked in whiskey.” (Rorabaugh 115)

Fast, Cheap Food in Taverns: Bacon and Biscuits:

“Bacon and other pork products were commonplace, inexpensive fare in American taverns, due to their abundance and the long preservation life of salted meat. Hot biscuits and butter, too, were a quick meal that could easily be put together with relatively few ingredients....For the frugal tavern-keeper, the sandwich was a perfect fast food solution in both its ease and cost-effectiveness.” (Weinsteiger)

“Amelia Simmons, for example, suggested that to prepare a ‘syllabub’ one should ‘Sweeten a quart of cider with double refined sugar, grate nutmeg into it, then milk your cow into your liquor...[and] pour half a pint or more...of the sweetest cream you can get all over it.’ (Rorabaugh 116).

Barley Soup

“Put on three gills of barley, three quarts of water, a few onions cut up, six carrots, scraped and cut in dice, an equal quantity of turnips cut small: boil it gently two hours, then put in four or five pounds of the rack or neck of mutton, a few slices of lean ham, with pepper and salt; boil it

slowly, two hours longer, and serve it up. Tomatas are an excellent addition to this soup.” by Mary Randolph the “Virginia Housewife”, 1824

Ms. Randolph wrote the cookbook the Virginia Housewife that was published in 1824 and became known for its easy-to-follow homestyle food prep. Editions were printed until the Civil War. (<http://recipes.history.org/2012/10/barley-soup/>) Mary was a tavern-keeper of the gentry class (a singular occurrence in itself). (Weinsteiger).

Broth

“Every 18th-century cook considered broths as essential as beer and bread.”

TAKE part of a leg of beef and the scrag-end of a neck of mutton, break the bones in pieces, and put to it as much water as will cover it, and a little salt; and when it boils, skin it clean, and put into it a whole onion stuck the cloves, a bunch of sweet herbs, some whole pepper, and a nutmeg quartered: let these boil till the meat is boiled in pieces, and the strength boiled out of it; strain it out, and keep it for use. Glasse, The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy, p.179 from <<http://recipes.history.org/2011/05/to-make-a-strong-broth-to-keep-for-use-2/>>

NOTE: The writer of this cookbook, Hannah Glasse (1708-1770), most well-known of the 18th c. cookbook authors. Her cookbook quoted above appealed to middle and upper classes and was also very popular in Britain.

Oyster Loaves

“Mary Randolph’s recipe for Oyster Loaves, probably an early forerunner of the po’boy:

To Make Oyster Loaves

Take little round loaves, cut off the top, scrape out all the crumbs, then put the oysters into a stew pan with the crumbs that came out of the loaves, a little water, and a good lump of butter; stew them together ten or fifteen minutes, then put in a spoonful of good cream, fill your loaves, lay the bit of crust carefully on again, set them in the oven to crisp. Three are enough for a side dish. (Weinsteiger).

Pies

“The most popular pies were mincemeat, which combined meat, fruit and brandy or cider. Often the pies were baked in advance, using melted butter over the top to seal out the air. They could then be stored away and reheated later when needed. Such pies were commonly served as fast food in the European Middle Ages and both practicality and taste insured their popularity in the colonies as well. The pie would be baked and served in a crust of rye or wheat flour, but the hard, coarse crust was not intended to be eaten. Poorer families, however, could not afford to throw anything away, and the crust would have been eaten along with the filling. (Weinsteiger).

Mush

“Other commonplace food items included variations of milk and corn dishes; sometimes with the addition of meat or eggs.

One such dish was “mush,” a recipe for which Hannah Glasse included in her 1747 The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy (same author of Broth recipe above).

To make mush:

Boil a pot of water, according to the quantity you wish to make, and then stir in the meal till it becomes quite thick, stirring all the time to keep out the lumps, season with salt, and eat it with milk or molasses.

Mush would generally be eaten for breakfast and supper, usually the smallest meals of the day, but would also serve for the midday meal, when nothing else could be had.

(Weinsteiger)

A Traveler's Hearty Meal of corn and sugar:

"One fast-food dish that settlers learned from them was a filling meal for a traveler on the road, recorded by John Bartram during his travels in Pennsylvania and Canada in 1751.

They take the corn and parch it in hot ashes, till it becomes brown, then clean it, pound it in a mortar and sift it, this powder is mixed with sugar. About 1 quarter of a pint, diluted in a pint of water, is a hearty traveling dinner (Weinsteiger).

Johnny Cakes: A Native American (Iroquois) dish for traveling

"Basically a dense cornmeal batter, shaped into a flat cake and baked or fried on a griddle, the johnnycake was known by numerous other names, such as "ashcake," "hoecake" and "Shawnee cake." It was also often known as "journeycake," and was probably so named because it was easily prepared and carried by travelers on long trips. The Iroquois used it for a similar purpose and taught this useful fast food to the colonists that settled there." (Weinsteiger)

HEALTH CONDITIONS

GOUT

Disease of the Wealthy; Protein Laden Diet

"Gout, another diet-related disease, afflicted the Colonial wealthy. Caused by a buildup of uric acid in the system as a result of a diet heavy in protein, it gave sufferers painful joints, often the ankles and toes...Generally associated with the prosperous, gout was attributed to a rich diet...Benjamin Franklin suffered from gout and complained that it reflected poorly on his good name because he had been for many years vocal on the wisdom of eating abstemiously." (Oliver 201).

"Americans also had a propensity for 'rapid eating.'" They had a general lack of interest in food; no one examined, smelled, or tasted it. "Eating was a bodily chore, a burden of nature, an animal function that was to be concluded as rapidly and painlessly as possible....the speedy ingestion of salt pork and fried corn cakes tended to produce headaches, nausea, and upset stomachs. Indigestion was very common and was widely blamed on seasonal fevers, bad water, or overexertion. Dyspepsia, like other illnesses, was commonly treated by drinking whiskey." (Rorabaugh 118-119).

"One particularly American characteristic that developed along with the fledgling nation, allowing for its increasing desire for fast, convenience foods, was a tendency to eat quickly, particularly among the working classes....the Americans were fond of friendly conversation while eating, but

that as soon as they were finished, they left to return to their work, "for the Americans know the value of time too well to waste it at the table." This characteristic, in turn, probably stems from the prevalent Protestant work ethic in the colonies, an attribute that would come to define the American people." (Weinsteiger).

NIXTAMALIZATION & PELLAGRA

"Corn's nutritive value was improved by being processed with an alkali, often lye derived from wood ashes. Soaking or boiling corn kernels in lye water loosened the outer hulls, and the corn's niacin was free for digestion. This process is called nixtamalization (from the Native American word "nixtamal," which is the flour ground from alkali-soaked corn), a process carried from Mexico into the Southwest for making tortillas." (Oliver, Sandra p. 41).

"Pellagra, another diet-related disease, is caused by the lack of the B vitamin niacin. It occurred among people who subsisted primarily on corn.....When maize was introduced to Europe from the New World, part of the knowledge about processing it to make it wholesome food did not travel with the seed corn. The Mexican Indians usually soaked the corn and mixed it with an alkaline solution before grinding it to form the dough from which they formed tortillas. This process, called nixtamalization, released niacin so it could be absorbed by the body. Many Europeans, particularly poor people, suffered from pellagra from the late eighteenth century through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. African American slaves and others who received rations containing primarily corn and salt pork probably also suffered from pellagra. Slaves who grew or gathered vegetables and hunted for fresh meat could avoid the disease, although barely, because the body can store niacin...In a few instances, when corn was soaked in lye, as it would be to make samp, that process released niacin. Clearly pellagra was a disease that primarily affected eastern colonists, whereas the Hispanics in the Southwest had wisely adopted the Native manner of preparing corn." (Oliver, Sandra p. 202).

"In the United States, European settlers did not always adopt the nixtamalization process, except in the case of hominy grits, though maize became a staple among the poor of the southern states. This led to endemic pellagra in poor populations throughout the southern US in the early 20th century." (Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia "Nixtamalization."). "Pellagra was studied mostly in Europe until the late 19th century when it became an epidemic especially in the southern United States. In the early 1900s, pellagra reached epidemic proportions in the American South. Between 1906 and 1940 more than 3 million Americans were affected by pellagra with more than 100,000 deaths...." (Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia "Pellagra").

