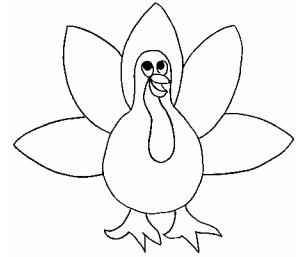


Colonial American

Fare (Food & Drink)



Meals cooked by the American colonists were made with foods brought from their British homelands and foods introduced to them by the Native Americans, Spanish and French explorers and African slaves.

- There were native foods available to the early American colonists; game, fish, berries and Indian crops (corn, squash, pumpkin). It took some time for the colonists to change their old eating habits and adapt to the new foods available.
- Settlers brought wheat and rye seeds with them to grow in America but found these crops were difficult to grow in the soil along the coast. Corn, a Native American crop, was easier to grow. They adapted their bread and pudding recipes to use corn instead of wheat and rye flour.
- With no electricity or refrigeration it was difficult to store perishable foods. Eventually foods were stored in cool cellars. Cellars are similar to basements. It is a room located below ground level. Eventually the colonists learned to store winter ice and used this as refrigeration. Meats and fish could be salted and smoked and saved for later use.
- Most colonists produced all the foods they ate. Most meals were cooked in one large iron kettle over an open log fire. Ovens, used for baking, were eventually built in the sides of the fireplaces.
- Maple sugar and honey were used for sweetening. Berries (huckleberries, strawberries, blackberries) grew wild and were used for making pies, tarts, sauces and preserves. Ice cream was available toward the end of the colonial period.
- Coffee, tea, cider, rum, chocolate drinks, beer and wine were some of the popular drinks of this time. It has been suggested some of these drinks became popular because the water supply was often not safe to drink.
- Domestic cows, pigs and sheep were eventually introduced into America.



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