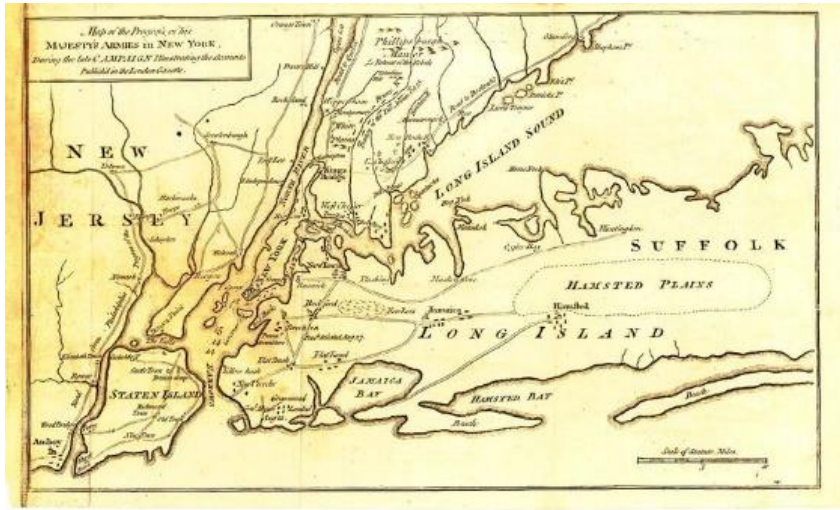


DO YOU WANT TO EAT LIKE A COLONIST?

We think a lot about the colonial era here at the Huntington Historical Society, and that is because Huntington was a British settlement. A big part of a colonist's day would have been centered on food because most people in Huntington were producing their own food. There were quite a few farms here in Huntington, including David Conklin's farm. There were also fishermen and shop keepers. One thing they all had in common was that a large part of the day was spent getting food and preparing it. There were no refrigerators, so the food needed to be fresh. And you could not go to a supermarket to buy prepared foods, that preparation took place at home. Most towns in North America were along bodies of water, such as rivers and the ocean, so fresh fish and shellfish were often available.



DID THE COLONISTS EAT MEALS THE WAY WE DO?

Yes, the colonists would have eaten 2-3 meals a day. For breakfast colonist might have eaten porridge or mush, which is a warm cereal and could have been made with cornmeal, oats or beans. They may have had bread with butter and jam, but one thing they would not have had was milk! Milk was used to make



cheese and butter, it spoiled too quickly without refrigeration for the colonists to rely on it as a drink. They would likely have had water, beer or cider with each meal. Even the children had watered down beer!

For lunch many colonists would have had bread, meat or cheese along with water, beer or cider. Most cheese making was done at home, and was very hard work. At

dinnertime the colonial people might have had a meat stew, meat pies, or more of that porridge, and again beer, water or corder to drink.

The colonists did have sweets. They may have been lucky enough to have a little sugar to bake with, but would likely have used maple syrup, molasses and honey to sweeten their foods. Most desserts were made with fruit, like pies and betties, which was a dessert that contained sweetened fruit with dough baked on top. Here in New York colonists even had a type of fried dough that was popular with the first European settlers of New York, the Dutch.

Food would have been cooked in the fireplace over the flames, or in a big cast iron pot with a lid called a Dutch oven, or a tin oven or tin kitchen which is like a rotisserie. Most colonists would have used wooden plates and spoons to eat with.



The Colonial Kitchen in our Conklin House, 2 High Street, Huntington

WHERE DID THE COLONISTS GET THEIR FOOD?



Early colonists brought all kinds of livestock with them when they came from Europe. They might have brought sheep, chickens, cows and pigs. Those animals settled in the colonies along with the people and became a source of food. After a time people started hunting for deer, turkey, ducks and geese. They also were able to fish for cod and flounder and catch lobster and clams.

Farmers grew corn, wheat, rice, barley, oats, squash, pumpkins and beans. They had apple and peach trees and blueberry bushes.

WHAT DID THE COLONISTS EAT ALL WINTER?

Winter was a problem for the colonists. They could not grow food, and even hunting would have been harder to do. Colonists preserved food in the fall to get them through the winter. They would dry fruits and meats and dry and grind grains. They would make jam from fruit and would pickle vegetables. Drying the foods would make them last longer, and adding salt to foods preserved it and kept it from going bad.



What's going on in this picture?

DO YOU WANT TO EAT LIKE A COLONIST?

You can see why food was such a big part of the colonist's day. All that farming, hunting, fishing and food preparation was very hard work and very time consuming. We thought you might like to try some popular colonial era recipes, here are a few links!

<https://mybeautifulmess.net/2019/07/03/hoecakes-a-revolutionary-war-recipe/>

<https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/chunky-apple-cake/>

<https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/a-bit-nutty-boston-brown-bread/>

<https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/beef-barley-soup-with-roasted-vegetables/>

<https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/fresh-corn-potato-chowder/>

<https://foodchannel.com/recipes/new-england-apple-brown-betty>

Please share pictures of your colonial dishes with us! Email them to info@huntingtonhistoricalsociety.org.

For added fun try comparing how getting and preparing food is similar or different than today.