

Keeler Tavern



Museum
and History Center

July 4th Virtual Picnic **A Look at 300 Years of Celebrations**

By Cheryl Crawl, Patty Linnon and Carol Vazzana
July 4th, 2020

18th Century

Turtle soup
Corn pone
Pickled watermelon
Apple pan dowdy
Ice cream

19th Century

Pork butt (a 21st century update to roasted pig)
Deviled eggs
Lemonade
Soda
New England traditional dinner

20th Century

Watermelon salad
Paper plates and cups
Prepared salads from the deli
Hot dogs
Hamburgers
Potato salad
Cole slaw

18th Century

1776

Our founding fathers celebrated July 4, 1776 in Philadelphia's City Tavern. The restaurant confirms there is no record of the bill of fare served that day.

From <http://foodtimeline.org/july4th.html>

Turtle Soup

Turtle soup was considered a delicacy in the 18th century. John and Abigail Adams had turtle soup for dinner on July 4th, 1777. Abraham Lincoln had mock turtle soup at his first inauguration dinner and real turtle soup on his second. As turtles became scarcer and efforts to preserve them became more popular, mock turtle soup was frequently substituted.

For an overview of July 4th cooking, including turtle soup, go to:

<https://honestcooking.com/history-fourth-july-foods/>

For more information on turtle soup and mock turtle soup, go to:

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/mock-turtle-soup-rise-and-fall-calf-head>

Mock Turtle Soup Recipe

1 hour 30 mins

8 servings

Ingredients

20 gingersnap cookies (preferably Nabisco)

2 cup water

2 lb 90/10 ground beef

4 cup water

1 medium onion, diced

1 14-ounce bottle ketchup

½ cup Worcestershire sauce (preferably Lea & Perrin's)

1 tbsp apple cider vinegar

2 tsp sea salt

½ tsp ground black pepper

¾ medium lemon, thinly sliced

3 hard-boiled eggs, crumbled

Additional water, Worcestershire, and lemon juice if needed

1 shot of sherry and oyster crackers on the side

Steps

1. Soak the gingersnaps in 2 cups of water and set aside.
2. In a large soup pot, add the 4 cups of water and the ground beef. Simmer over medium heat, breaking up the ground beef, until there is no more pink.
3. Add the onions, ketchup, worchestershire, vinegar, salt, pepper, and lemon. Let simmer in a covered pot for 1 hour.
4. Stir in the gingersnap slurry and continue cooking for another 15 minutes.
5. If the soup is a little too thick, add some additional water. Be sure to add additional Worcestershire and lemon juice to taste.
6. Serve garnished with hard-boiled egg and serve with a shot of sherry and oyster crackers on the side.

Recipe courtesy of King Crimson

<https://cookpad.com/in/recipes/350261-moms-70s-mock-turtle-soup>

Other turtle soup recipes:

New Orleans version

<https://www.foodrepublic.com/recipes/classic-turtle-soup-recipe/>

From Bobby Flay's Food Network show in an episode titled *New Orleans*

foodnetwork.com/recipes/turtle-soup-recipe2-1943824

A mock turtle soup recipe from Epicurious.com, made with sirloin.

<https://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/treme-mock-turtle-soup-51224210>

Corn Pone

A bona fide Southern tradition! Authentic Southern corn pone is never sweet and is baked in a cast iron skillet.

For the history of corn pone, go to:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornbread#Corn_pone

For a discussion on the differences between corn pone and corn bread, go to: <http://www.virginialiving.com/food/cornpone-versus-cornbread/>

Corn Pone Recipe

Ingredients

¼ cup canola oil
1 ½ cups white cornmeal
1 ½ teaspoons salt
1 ⅓ cups buttermilk
2 eggs

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C). Place a 9-inch cast iron skillet on the center rack.
2. When the skillet is hot, carefully remove the skillet from the oven. Pour the canola oil into the skillet and gently swirl the pan to coat the bottom and the sides. Return the pan to the oven for ten minutes.
3. While the oil is heating, mix together the cornmeal and salt in a medium bowl. Add the eggs and buttermilk and mix together to make a thin batter.
4. Carefully pull out the rack with the cast iron skillet and pour the batter into the preheated skillet.

5. Bake the corn pone until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, 20 to 25 minutes. If desired, turn the oven to broil for the last few minutes of baking to brown the top.
6. Remove the skillet from the oven and shake the pan to loosen the corn pone from the skillet. Serve the corn pone warm from the skillet or turn out onto a plate.

Recipe courtesy of www.allrecipes.com

Pickled Watermelon

“Waste not, want not” as always been smart advice—especially when it produces pickled watermelon rind that’s so refreshing.

Typically a southern condiment:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watermelon_rind_preserves

Dates back to the Civil War:

<https://thedomesticman.com/2013/03/05/pickled-watermelon-rinds/>

Pickled Watermelon Recipe

Ingredients

1 large watermelon rind, peeled and cubed into approx. $\frac{3}{4}$ in. pieces

5 cups of sugar

1 quart cider vinegar

Cheesecloth to tie spices in a bag:

3 or 4 Tbsp. mustard seed

3 sticks of cinnamon

3 Tbsp. Whole cloves

Water to almost cover

Directions

Place all ingredients in a large, heavy duty pot and fill with water until watermelon is almost covered. Bring to a near boil and then lower heat, simmering until rind is tender, about 2 or 3 hours. Pierce the watermelon to test for doneness. Place watermelon in jars with plenty of syrup above the pickles. Melt paraffin in a double boiler and pour on top of pickles to seal well.

Recipe courtesy of Cheryl Crowl’s North Carolina grandmother.

Apple Pan Dowdy

Apple pandowdy was a favorite colonial dish. Research done to make it just like Abigail Adams concluded she would probably have used Newton Pippin apples to make the dish. Other varieties would not have been ripe by July 4th.

What makes the dessert “dowdy”?

Half-way through baking, take the pan out of the oven, and press several times around the dough until some of the juices flood over the crust. This step of disturbing the crust, or “dowdying,” allows the juices to rise over the crust and caramelize as the dessert continues to bake.

History of Apple Pan Dowdy: <https://www.history.com/news/pandowdy-buckles-slumps-and-grunts-americas-forgotten-apple-desserts>

Apple Pan Dowdy discussion: <https://cleobuttera.com/pies-and-tarts/apple-pandowdy/>

Apple Pan Dowdy Recipe

Ingredients

For the Crust:

- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup powdered sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup very cold unsalted butter, cut into ¼-inch pieces and chilled
- 1 large egg

For the Apple Filling:

- 2 ½ pounds (about 7-8 apples) Golden Delicious (sweet, yellow) apples, peeled, cored, halved, and cut into ½-inch-thick wedges
- ¼ cup packed soft brown sugar, preferably dark
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon salt

¼ cup unsalted butter
 ¾ cup apple cider or reduced apple juice if you don't have cider*(see notes below for details)
 1 tablespoon cornstarch
 1 teaspoon lemon juice

For the Topping:

1 tablespoon granulated sugar
 ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 1 large egg, beaten with 1 tablespoon heavy cream or milk
 Vanilla ice cream, for serving

Directions:

For the Crust:

1. In a food processor, pulse together the flour, sugar and salt until combined.
2. Scatter the butter over the top and pulse until the butter is thoroughly cut through the dry ingredients and the mixture resembles coarse cornmeal, about 15 pulses.
3. With the machine running, add the egg through the feed tube and continue to process until the dough just comes together around the processor blade, about 12 seconds.
4. Turn the dough and any crumbs onto a sheet of plastic wrap and flatten into a 6-inch disk. Wrap the dough tightly in the plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. (Wrapped dough can be refrigerated for up to 2 days or frozen for up to 1 month. If frozen, let dough thaw completely on counter before rolling.)
5. Before rolling the dough, let it soften slightly at room temperature until malleable but still cold, 5 to 10 minutes. Roll out the dough to an 11-inch circle between 2 sheets of parchment paper. Peel off the top sheet of parchment and using a pizza cutter or very sharp paring knife, cut the dough into 6 strips, then make 6 perpendicular cuts to form squares. (Pieces around edges of dough will be smaller.) Slide the sheet of dough onto a rimless (or

inverted) baking sheet, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until firm, at least 30 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare the topping.

For the Apple Filling

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 400F.
2. In a large bowl, toss the apples, sugar, cinnamon, and salt together to combine.
3. Melt the butter in an oven-safe 10-inch skillet over medium heat. Continue to cook, stirring and scraping bottom of the skillet with a spatula, until milk solids are dark golden brown and butter has a nutty aroma, 1 to 2 minutes. Be careful not to burn. Add the apple mixture, give it a stir to coat it with the butter, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until apples become slightly pliable and release their juice, about 10 minutes. Do not overcook.
4. In a measuring cup with a spout (or medium bowl) whisk together the cider (or reduced apple juice), cornstarch, and lemon juice until no lumps remain. Add the cider mixture to the skillet; stirring it in to combine. Bring to a simmer and cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until sauce is thickened, about 2 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat and press lightly over the apples to form an even layer.

For the Topping:

1. In a small bowl, combine together the sugar and cinnamon. Working quickly, shingle the dough pieces in a random fashion over apple filling until mostly covered, overlapping as needed. Brush the dough pieces with the egg wash and sprinkle with the cinnamon sugar.
2. Bake until the crust is slightly puffed and beginning to brown, about 15 minutes. Remove the skillet from the oven, and using the back of a large spoon, press down in center of the crust until some of the juices come up over top of crust. Continue to press around the edge of the skillet. This step of disturbing the crust, or “dowdying,” allows juices from the filling to rise over the crust and caramelize as the dessert continues to bake. Make sure all apples

are submerged and return the skillet to the oven. Continue to bake until crust is golden brown, about 15 minutes longer.

3. Allow to cool down slightly then serve with vanilla ice cream, spooning extra sauce over top.

Notes:

If you do not have apple cider, reduced apple juice may be used as a substitute—simmer 1 ½ cup apple juice in a small saucepan over medium heat until reduced to ¾ cup (about 10 minutes). Alternatively, heat the juice in a glass measuring cup in the microwave on high power until reduced (8 to 10 minutes) Just make sure, to allow the reduced juice to cool to room temperature before stirring in the cornstarch.

Recipe adapted from www.cleobuttera.com

Ice Cream

It wasn't until 1660 that ice cream was made available to the general public in Europe. The Sicilian Procopio introduced a recipe blending milk, cream, butter and eggs at *Café Procope*, the first café in Paris.

This is the history of ice cream from the International Dairy Foods Association, mentioning George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.
<https://www.idfa.org/the-history-of-ice-cream>

Thomas Jefferson's recipe for making ice cream, written in his own hand. <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/tr33b.html#obj36>

Since Jefferson's handwriting is close to illegible, our friends at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello have posted the recipe on their site. The recipe below is a modern adaptation from the 1938 book, *Thomas Jefferson's Cookbook*.

Vanilla Ice Cream Recipe

Ingredients

2. bottles of good cream.
6. Yolks of eggs.
½ lb. sugar

Directions

Beat the yolks of 6 eggs until thick and lemon colored. Add, gradually, 1 cup of sugar and a pinch of salt. Bring to a boil 1 quart of cream and pour slowly on the egg mixture. Put in top of double boiler and when it thickens, remove and strain through a fine sieve into a bowl. When cool add 2 teaspoonfuls of vanilla. Freeze, as usual, with one part of salt to three parts of ice. Place in a mould, pack in ice and salt for several hours. For electric refrigerators, follow usual direction, but stir frequently.

19th Century

The practice of barbecuing spread in the first half of the 19th century.

From <https://honestcooking.com/history-fourth-july-foods/>

Pork Butt

In the first half of the nineteenth century, political leaders began creating rallies to mark Independence Day; which was not yet a national holiday. Specifically, in the South, political leaders used the rallies to celebrate the barbecue as an expression of regional pride. In doing so, they drew crowds by holding large barbecues, often roasting pigs or oxen.

History of pig roast: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pig_roast#United_States

Video of pig roast (not for the faint hearted!):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THfntzceTpc>

Roasted Pork Butt Recipe

Ingredients

6-8 pound pork butt or fresh ham

4 Tbsp. Liquid smoke (optional)

2 1/2 Tbsp. coarse salt (kosher)

Corn husks - enough to cover roast with thick layer of leaves

Foil

Salt

1/2 hot water

Directions

Make light incisions in the pork roast. Sprinkle salt all over the roast. Rub with liquid smoke. Wrap the roast with leaves and tie securely with string. Wrap the roast in foil and place on a rack in a shallow pan. Bake in hot 500° oven for 30 minutes. Lower temperature to 400° and roast for 4½ hours. Remove foil and string. Discard the leaves. Cut or tear pork into serving sizes or bite size pieces. Pour water over it and season with salt.

The rind may be removed from the pork roast, placed on a rack, and roasted separately during the last 30 minutes or placed in a 450° oven for 15 minutes. Cut crisp rind and serve with the pork.

Recipe courtesy of Cheryl Crawl

Deviled Eggs

The deviled egg we know today can be traced back to ancient Rome, where boiled eggs were seasoned with spicy sauces and served as the starter of a fancy meal usually made for guests. Serving eggs while entertaining guests was so common for wealthy Romans that they even had a saying for it, “ab ova usque ad mala” meaning “from eggs to apples”, or from the beginning of a meal to the end. “Deviling” became a verb to describe the process of making food spicy. In other places, many continued using the terms “mimosa eggs,” “stuffed eggs,” “dressed eggs,” or “salad eggs” to describe the dish to avoid any association with Satan.

History of deviled eggs from the North Carolina Egg Association:

<https://ncegg.org/blog/deviled-eggs-history-from-rome-to-your-home/>

Deviled egg history: <https://blog.thenibble.com/2015/11/02/food-holiday-the-history-of-deviled-eggs/>

Why are they called “deviled” eggs: <https://www.myrecipes.com/how-to/cooking-questions/why-are-they-called-deviled-eggs>

Deviled Egg Recipe

Ingredients

12 hard-cooked eggs
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon of freshly squeezed lemon juice
1/3 cup mayonnaise
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

Options to hard-boil eggs:

Place eggs in a single layer in a saucepan and cover with enough water that there's 1 1/2 inches of water above the eggs. Heat on high until water begins to boil, then cover, turn the heat to low, and cook for 1 minute. Remove from heat and leave covered for 14 minutes, then rinse under cold water continuously for 1 minute.

Another way to make easy-to-peel hard boiled eggs is not to boil them, but to steam them. The hot steam penetrates the porous shell of the eggs to create just enough separation between the shells and the eggs to make them easy to peel. You can steam eggs in the same pan you would use to boil them, you just use much less water and a few more minutes. You can use a steaming rack or not. You can also steam eggs easily in a pressure cooker.

Directions

Take eggs out of the refrigerator and bring to room temperature. Bring pot of water to a boil. Gently put eggs into the boiling water using a slotted spoon. Let cook for 20 minutes. Dump hot water and fill pot with cold water and add ice.

Slice the eggs in half lengthwise, removing yolks to a medium bowl, and placing the whites on a serving platter. Mash the yolks into a fine crumble. Add mayonnaise, lemon juice, mustard, salt, and pepper, and mix well. Evenly disperse heaping teaspoons of the yolk mixture into the egg whites. Sprinkle with paprika and serve.

Recipe courtesy of Patty Linnon

Soda

A brief history of the introduction of soda:

1767 – Carbonation process discovered by Joseph Priestley in U.K.

1783 – Schweppe founded a company in Geneva Switzerland to manufacture carbonated mineral water

1866 – Vernor's ginger ale

1876 – Hire's root beer

1885 – Dr. Pepper

1886 – Coca Cola

1886 – Sarsaparilla

1898 – Pepsi Cola

. . . and syrup water and lemonade with a fine bowl of temperance beverage and bottled soda, which will generally leave a more clear recollection, than wines, cordials, and champagne."

---The American System of Cookery, Mrs. T.J. Crowen [T.J. Crowen:New York] 1847 (p. 405-406)

Lemonade

With roots going back to Egypt in medieval times, lemonade has been a favorite in many countries and for good reason. When sugarcane became a cheap commodity in the U.S. during the colonial era, it became a particularly American specialty.

History of lemonade:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lemonade>

<https://recipes.howstuffworks.com/what-is-history-lemonade.htm>

<https://dustyoldthing.com/fascinating-history-lemonade/>

Lemonade Recipe

Makes 2 quarts

Ingredients

8 to 10 large lemons

1 cup granulated sugar

1 1/2 quarts water (6 cups)

Ice

Lemon slices, for serving (optional)

Equipment

Measuring cup or medium bowl

Knife and cutting board

Juicer or citrus reamer, or stand mixer with the paddle attachment

Pitcher

Fine-mesh strainer

Directions

1. Juice the lemons and strain out the pulp. Halve the lemons, then squeeze the juice from the halves — you can do this manually with your favorite juicer or reamer. My favorite alternative method: Quarter the lemons and use the stand mixer to juice all of the

lemons at once. Place the quartered lemons in a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, then beat on low speed for 2 minutes. With either method, strain the juice through a fine-mesh strainer into a large measuring cup or bowl to remove the pulp before making the lemonade. You need 1 cup of strained lemon juice.

2. Combine the lemon juice and sugar to make a lemonade base. Add the sugar to the strained lemon juice and whisk until the sugar is completely dissolved.
3. Add the water and chill. Transfer the lemonade base to a serving pitcher. Add the water and stir to combine. Chill the lemonade for at least 1 hour before serving.
4. Serve with ice and lemon slices. Serve the lemonade over ice with lemon slices if desired.

Notes

The lemonade can be refrigerated for up to 4 days.

Recipe courtesy of www.thekitchn.com

New England Traditional Dinner

Since we are a regional history center in Connecticut, it is important to note that the traditional New England celebration dinner was:

Salmon with egg sauce (perhaps hollandaise?)
Peas
New Potatoes

According to <https://honestcooking.com/history-fourth-july-foods/> when referring to early July 4th celebrations, “The traditional meal also included poached salmon with egg sauce, green peas, boiled potatoes, Indian pudding, and apple pandowdy.”

[1868]

"New Englanders marked Independence Day with seasonal fare. Tradition has it that salmon, peas, and new potatoes made up one common menu. Nathan Fish confirms part of this in his diary entry of 4 July 1868: 'Had salmon, Peas and beans.' A whole poached or baked salmon, often served with an egg sauce, made an impressive centerpiece...salmon, because of its size, firm texture, and flavor, conveyed more status and elegance to a meal than, for example, cod or haddock. Green peas and new potatoes at dinner meant the last of fresh peas before hot weather and the earliest of new potatoes. According to his diary, Nathan Fish didn't have new potatoes that year until two weeks after the Fourth. The beans he speaks of could have been early green beans; it was a little too early for shell beans."

From Saltwater Foodways, Sandra L. Oliver [Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic CT] 1995 (p. 221)

20th Century

1904

"The complaint has often been made by very young ladies and frequently by older young ladies, that the Fourth of July was a day much more enjoyed by boys and young men than by the members of their sex. There are ways, however, in which the young lady may both enjoy and celebrate the occasion. An Independence day party is one of these

From "For Independence Day," L.A. Browne, The Good Housekeeping Hostess, facsimile 1904 edition [Hearst Books:New York] (p. 107-111)

Paper plates and cups

[1933]

"The Fourth of July has a way of becoming a holiday for everyone but mother unless she diverts the current. The children want picnics or parties, and father wants a good time. So does mother for that matter, only a good time is a bit more difficult for her because she is responsible for the food for family and friends who may drop in. Her good time depends on her forethought. She really can act with surprising ease as a magic combination hostess, mother and dispenser of favors. That is, she can if she plans the main dish or two she can prepare the day before, *and if she buys plenty of paper plates, cups, glasses, napkins and so forth to do away with dishwashing and other service on what often proves to be a boiling hot day.*"

From "Fourth of July Menus," Floris Culver Thompson, Christian Science Monitor, June 30, 1933 (p. 6)

[1934]

"You can't have too many ideas for the Fourth of July picnic. Whether you go away or stay at home for the celebration, the food should be festive and tempting. Today, however, let's concentrate on the stay-at-home picnic. Set the scene under a big shade tree or on the screened porch, with a table for the food and a few comfortable porch chairs or cushions. Place at one end of the table, *the paper napkins, plates and cups and just the necessary flat silver.* Visualize a big salad bowl with a crisp vegetable salad, a tray of cold spreads and sliced meats for sandwich fillings, a cutting board holding all the necessary sliced bread and crackers to satisfy the biggest appetite, one hot casserole dish, if the day is not too warm and a big pot of hot coffee or pitcher of ice tea with a tray of paper cups close by. Dessert may be a big cake—brought out at the close of the meal, a big bowl of fresh fruit, a short cake or frozen dessert.

From "Capital Kitchen: Here are Some Tempting Menus for July 4th 'Porch Picnics'," Susan Mills, Washington Post, July 2, 1934 (p. 13)

Prepared Salads from the Deli

“Fourth of July...brings up the subject of picnics. For what’s an Independence day if it means a lot of overcooked ladies and hours of extra labor in the kitchens, preparing feasts and foolishness...In keeping with this spirit of emancipation let’s change the order of outgoing and make the sandwiches where and when we picnic, not stew over them at home. So make it **a buy-it-as-you-go picnic** and do it buffet style. **Stop at the grocer’s** and supply yourself with butter, sliced bread or buns, cheese, jams, peanut butter, assorted cold meats, a jar of salad dressing, and a head of lettuce. **A good delicatessen will furnish the salad or a few ingredients in the way of fresh vegetables or fruits** may be poked into a bag and the salad made ‘on location.’...

Dinner for Campfire Picnickers. Kabobs, Baked Potatoes, Toasted Rolls, Radishes, Pickles, Tomato and Lettuce Salad, Fresh Fruit, Crackers and Cheese, Coffee.”

From “Fourth of July Picnic Needn’t Shackle Cooks,” Chicago Daily Tribune, July 2, 1934 (p. 19)

Hot Dogs

“Boys of St. Joseph’s Home and School who had been dreaming for the past several weeks of a real outdoor ‘weenie roast’ on Independence Day awoke with saddened faces yesterday as they saw the rain. However, their disappointed expressions were soon turned to broad grins when they were told that the feast was to be held indoors. Absence of the odor of burning leaves and an improvised stove made with stones did not detract from the success of the celebration inside the home. *The weenies, and there were hundreds of them, tasted just the same, the lads testified.* The picnic was a revelation to a number of visitors. They saw a group of healthy, sturdy, real American boys who have been permitted to develop naturally under the guidance of the corps of Sisters of the Holy Cross.”

*From “St. Joseph’s Home Holds Weenie Roast Despite Rain,”
Washington Post, July 5, 1932 (p. 4)*

...And Hamburgers

The current most popular foods on Independence Day: hot dogs and hamburgers. Spanish explorers first brought domesticated livestock like cattle, pigs, chicken, to the New World. In the early days, cattle ranches did not exist, so people did not have hamburgers and hot dogs to barbecue. Hence, why they chose other meals, like turtle soup.

Fun fact: The National Hot Dog and Sausage Council predicts Americans will eat 150 million hot dogs each and every Independence Day.

Today, food has become less formal as it has changed with the technology of our times. Cooking outside is still a favorite way to celebrate including some traditional, seasonal, and historic foods like pig, peas, potatoes, and corn.

So why do we celebrate USA's independence with hot dogs and hamburgers? Because we're a nation of immigrants therefore we have liked and currently like a lot of different kinds of foods. The nation as a whole came together with their differing culinary backgrounds and helped to create and popularize what is currently on your Fourth of July picnic table.

From <https://honestcooking.com/history-fourth-july-foods/>

Happy Fourth!
Happy Birthday, America!

