

18th Century Food Items Available in Maine

These items have been taken from documentary and archeological records with the preponderance of information being drawn from Fort Richmond and Fort Fredrick (Pemaquid). These two sites share interesting similarities with Fort Saint George. Fort Richmond was part of the truck house system as was Fort Saint George and many of the items traded at Fort Richmond would also have made their way through St. Georges truck house. Like Fort Saint George, Fort Fredrick was located in the midst of a Scots-Irish community only a few miles from the community at St. George. Presumably the same cultural food ways would have been found at both sites.

There is tremendous similarity between the documentary evidence from Fort Richmond and the archeological record found at Fort Fredrick. Likely, when the faunal remains from Fort Richmond are examined and compiled they will reveal a striking similarity to the finds at Pemaquid. Going outside of Maine and looking at the archeological record from Ft. William Henry (See David Starbuck Massacre at Fort William Henry) and the forts of Massachusetts' western frontier (See Michael Coe The Line of Forts) it becomes clear the patterns of food consumption at Maine sites is consistent with other regional sites of the same period.

Amelia Simmons' American Cookery has also yielded useful information on the typical New England diet of the 18th century. Although the book was published in 1796, it reflects knowledge accumulated over an adult lifetime. What makes Simmons more relevant than many other earlier authors including Hannah Glasse is Simmons is an American writing about American food and ingredients rather than an English author writing to English sensibilities using English ingredients and marketing their work in America. For the sake of this inquiry the most useful part of American Cookery is the first chapter in which she identifies the most common food items and how to best to assure their quality. Amazingly, the items listed, with the exception of some fruits and herbs, match the documentary and archeological records of Forts Richmond and Fredrick.

Proteins	Source	Notes
Pork	R, F, S	Pork was by far the most commonly consumed source of animal protein as evidenced by both faunal remains and documentary evidence (for Faunal remains see Coe, Starbuck, and Bradley & Camp, for Documentary evidence see John Minot Account Book).
Mutton	R, F, S	
Beef	R, F, S	
Veal	R, S	
Duck	R, F, S	

Lobster	R, F, S	
Salmon	R, S	
Fish	R, F, S	
Shad	R, S	
Smelts	R, E	
Frost Fish (TomCod)	E	
Eggs		
Chicken	F, S	1 See below
Turkey	F, S	1 See Below
Oysters	F, S	
Clams	F	2 See Below
Mussels	F	2 See Below
Rabbit and Game	R, F, S	3 See Below

Cereals/Grains	Source	Notes
Bread	R	
Rice	S	
Flour	R	
Corn Meal	R, S	
Oats	R	
Cakes Bread	R	Unknown item. Perhaps also known as ships bread, biscuit or by 19th century hardtack?

Dairy	Source	Notes
Milk	R, F, S	
Cheese	R, F, S	
Butter	R, F, S	

Produce	Source	Notes
Peas	R, F, S	
Beans	R, F, S	
Corn	R, F, S	
Plums	R, S	
Apples	R, S	
Cider	R	
Turnips	R, F, S	

Parsnips	R, F, S	
Onions	R, F, S	
Potatoes	R, F, S	
Carrots	R, F, S	
Pumpkins	F, S	
Various Greens	F, S	
Beets	S	
Watermelon	S, J	Simmons also mentions muskmelons
Lemon	R, S	
Pears	S	
Asparagus	S	
Radish	S	
Artichoke	S	Tuber like Jerusalem Artichoke according to Simmons. Not the artichoke that we commonly think of today.
Cucumber	S	
Quinces	S	
Cherries	S	
Currants	S	
Strawberries	S	
Peaches	S	
Apricots	S	
Gooseberries	S	
Damsons	S	? unfamiliar with this fruit
Raspberries	S	
Barberries	S	
Cranberries	S	
Oranges	S	
Cabbage	S	

Herbs/Spices/ Flavoring	Source	Notes
Salt	R, S	
Pepper	R, S	
Ginger	R, S	
Sugar	R, S	
Molasses	R, S	
Nutmeg		Presumed
Allspice		Presumed
Molasses	R, S	
Parsley	S	
Marjoram	S	
Thyme	S	
Sage	S	

Savory	S	
Garlicks	S	“tho used by the French, are better adapted to the uses of medicine than cookery”
Horse Radish	S	

Source Key

R –Fort Richmond Account Book of John Minot, Truck Master. Maine Historical Society

F-Fort Fredrick. Bradley and Camp the Forts of Pemaquid Maine: An Archeological and Historical Study

S- Simmons, Amelia American Cookery

E- Eaton, Cyrus History of Thomaston, Rockland and South Thomaston

J- Captivity Narrative of Susanna Johnson

Also See

Starbuck, David Massacre at Fort William Henry

Coe, Michael The Line of Forts

- 1. Amelia Simmons makes reference to several types of poultry including chicken, turkey, capon, ducks, geese, woodcock, snipes, partridge and pigeons. The archeological report from Fort Fredrick list bones that could have belonged to all of these species. Based on the number of bones recovered it seems these species accounted for only a small percentage of the garrisons diet.**
- 2. Although Mussel and Clam shells were found within the context of Food items at Fort Fredrick they were found in small quantities. Generally these were looked upon with distain by 17th and 18th century whites and were eaten only in times of hardship.**
- 3. Amelia Simmons mentions rabbit. Faunal remains of rabbit and snowshoe hare have been found at Fort Fredrick. Although not yet published (as of June 2013), archeologists working on the Fort Richmond site have discussed finding some evidence of wild game including turtle. Based on the findings of Coe, Starbuck and Bradley and Camp, wild game did not contribute significantly to the garrison’s diet**