



For the earliest settlers, food was sometimes scarce and the diet was monotonous.

But a wider choice and better supply of food was available once the settlements became organ-

Beef, tea and johnny cakes

In the earliest days of settlement at Townsville, shipment of supplies by sea was irregular. Food supply was even less reliable for people living further inland. They were dependent on supplies brought in by bullock or horse teams.

The mainstays of diet were salt beef, tea and white flour, from which dampers and johnny cakes were made.

Johnny cakes were small dampers, like bread rolls, cooked by dropping dollops of dough on a heated and greased skillet suspended over a fire — unlike dampers which were cooked in the hot coals. Butter did not carry well, so the johnny cakes and damper were frequently eaten with treacle (which could be carried in a tin) or sometimes with pickles. Tea was made in a billy suspended over an open fire, and was drunk black, as milk was not often available.

These staples were supplemented by fresh meat when wild game was shot or

a bullock or sheep was killed.

Food for the folk in Townsville

As more settlers arrived in Townsville, bringing goats and chickens, the supply of meat became more varied. Butchers established businesses, selling fresh meat. Hens also supplied eggs, which provided a welcome change.

Chinese settlers established vegetable gardens and started fishing, supplying fish and crustaceans, and also turtles from which delicious soup was made. Dairies supplied the residents of the town with fresh milk, butter and cream. A bakery was established and freshly baked bread was supplied every day. As merchants organised their businesses, other food supplies became available: bagged potatoes and onions, and dried, canned and bottled food.

Within a few years of settlement, Townsville residents were well supplied with a variety of foods, such as you might have found in European-settled areas in many parts of the world. In a few more years fruit trees introduced by earlier settlers began to bear fruit. So locally grown fruit became a regular



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Wild game includes emu, wallaby, kangaroo and any other edible animals, and also wild fowl such as ducks.

BILLY TEA

After lighting a small fire, perhaps using sticks of melaleuca or eucalyptus trees, fill your billy can with the desired quantity of water and hang it half-way down the flame.

When it is boiling, throw in a teaspoonful of tea per person and one for the billy. Allow to boil for about 10 seconds, and then remove it from the flame. Tap it to settle the grounds and let it draw for five minutes with the lid on.

BURDEKIN DUCK

Opinions differ in north Queensland as to what Burdekin Duck actually was! It was certainly not a wildfowl, but referred to a dish developed by early settlers along the Burdekin River, though no one knows exactly where.

Here is one of the oldest recipes:

Ingredients:
damp dough
corn beef

Make dough rather damp. Dip slices of corn beef into the mixture and fry to a golden brown in boiling fat in a camp oven.

JAM TIN DAMPER

Originally dampers were shaped in large rounds or in log shapes, and baked in the coals of a fire. This recipe uses a jam tin and modern self-raising flour and is cooked in an oven.

You need a clean large jam tin with the label removed. Fill the jam tin with self-raising flour. Pour flour into a bowl with a pinch of salt. Mix with enough water to form stiff dough. Turn into the jam tin and cook in a very hot oven until golden brown.

from National Trust Volunteer Mrs Elizabeth Pearse

part of the diet: mangoes, bananas, tamarinds, citrus fruits, and even strawberries!

Food for the settlers 'out west'

By 1880 residents of Townsville enjoyed a more varied diet; but settlers to the west still relied on horse and bullock teams for supplies. Many of the foods were expensive so that poorer people could not afford them. Butter, jam sugar and honey were luxuries. Foods like margarine had not been invented. Poultry was prized for eggs — roast chicken was regarded as a luxury to be enjoyed only on special occasions such as Christmas. Bread and dripping was the staple in many households.

Dripping is the solidified fat that dripped from roast meat during cooking.

Three simple 'bush' recipes are reproduced here.

Home cooking — the 'cookbook'

The meals enjoyed by the early settlers were similar to those we eat today, and were mainly influenced by British cuisine with a small French influence. Some dishes, like curry and kedgerree, originated in India.

Recipes for home cooking were based usually on British cooking. Many pioneering men and women did not use printed cookery books but relied on memory for simple dishes, or carried a small notebook with handwritten recipes.

* * *

Today we have a wide choice of restaurants and we can sample food styles from many parts of the world — Chinese, Japanese, South-east Asian, Indian, Mexican, United States, French, Austrian, Italian, Spanish, German and Scandinavian, as well as British.

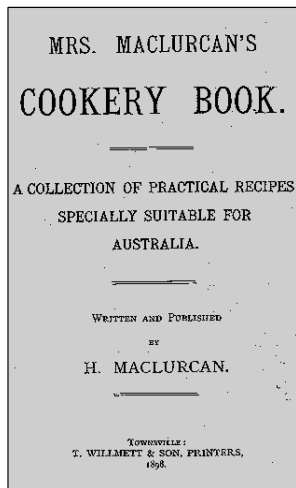
The early settlers did not have this wide choice. Nevertheless the people who lived in 'Currajong' and in the Worker's Dwelling were able to enjoy a surprisingly diverse variety of foods.

Mrs Maclurcan's Cookery Book

A very popular cookery book was written and published in Townsville by Mrs Maclurcan, the wife of the landlord of Queen's Hotel (now the TV studios of Ten Queensland).

Three simple recipes and some advertisements from *Mrs Maclurcan's Cookery Book*, 2nd ed., 1898. are reproduced on the next page.

Reproduced from *Mrs Maclurcan's Cookery Book*,
2nd ed., 1898.



Conversions (approximate)

- 1 oz (ounce) = 28 g
- 1lb (pound) = 16 oz = 450 g
- 1 teaspoon = 5 mL
- 1 tablespoon = 20 mL
- 1 cup = 250 mL

**MRS MACLURCAN'S ANGELS
CAKES**

- 1 lb flour
- 1 cup sugar
- whites of 6 eggs
- ¼ lb butter

Rub the butter into the flour, add the sugar and a pinch of salt, beat the whites of the eggs to a stiff froth, stir in with the flour and sugar, add sufficient milk to make it moist enough to drop from the spoon.

Butter some patty cake pans and put a spoonful of the mixture into each pan.

Bake in a hot oven for nearly twenty minutes.

MRS MACLURCAN'S ROCK CAKES

- ¾ lb plain flour
- ½ lb sugar
- 2oz candied orange or lemon peel
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ lb currants
- ½ lb butter
- 2 eggs

Put all the dry ingredients into a basin, beat the butter to a cream and beat the eggs with the milk; now add the butter to the ingredients in the basin, then mix to a very stiff dough with the eggs and milk.

Bake on a greased baking tin in little rocky pieces in a hot oven for twenty minutes.

**MRS MACLURCAN'S COCONUT
BISCUITS**

- ½ lb sugar
- ½ cup butter
- ¾ lb plain flour
- 3 tablespoons coconut
- 3 eggs
- 2 teaspoons baking powder

Beat the butter and sugar to a cream, mix the baking power and coconut with the flour and add to the butter and sugar, then add the eggs (well beaten).

Bake for ten minutes in a hot oven.

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