OXFORD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF

# FOOD and DRINK in AMERICA

SECOND EDITION

ANDREW F. SMITH EDITOR IN CHIEF

# The Oxford Encyclopedia of FOOD AND DRINK IN AMERICA

Second Edition

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Andrew F. Smith

VOLUME 3

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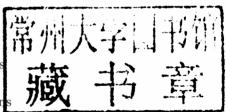
Food Websites Major Library Collections

Food-Related Museums

Food-Related Organization Topical Outline of Articles

Directory of Contributors

Index







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Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016 www.oup.com

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
The Oxford encyclopedia of food and drink in America / Andrew F. Smith,
editor in chief.—2nd ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-19-973496-2 (set: acid-free paper)—ISBN 978-0-19-973922-6 (set: ebook)

1. Food—United States—Dictionaries. 2. Cooking, American—Dictionaries.

3. Beverages—United States—Dictionaries. I. Smith, Andrew F.

II. Title: Food and drink in America.

TX349.E45 2013

641.597303-dc23

2012004649

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper

# The Oxford Encyclopedia of FOOD AND DRINK IN AMERICA

Second Edition

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### Common Abbreviations Used in This Work

AI adequate intake

AID Agency for International Development

AVA American Viticultural Area

BATF Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms

BCE before the Common Era (= B.C.)
BLT bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwich

c. *circa*, about, approximately

CARE Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere

CE Common Era (= A.D.) cf. confer, compare

DRI dietary reference intake

EAT estimated average requirement

ed. editor (pl., eds.), edition

FDA Food and Drug Administration

GM genetically modified

GMO genetically modified organism

NAFTA North American Free Trade Agreement

n.d. no date
no. number
n.p. no place
n.s. new series
p. page (pl., pp.)
PL Public Law

pt. Part

RDA recommended dietary allowance

rev. revised ser. series

supp. supplement

UNICEF United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

USFA United States Food Administration

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

vol. volume (pl., vols.)

WHO World Health Organization
WTO World Trade Organization

# The Oxford Encyclopedia of FOOD AND DRINK IN AMERICA

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CONTINUED

### PIKE

In the family Esocidae are three popular American sport and food fish: pike, pickerel, and muskellunge. Also in this group are walleye and sauger. Pike is the most widely distributed freshwater fish in the world, found in North America, Europe, and northern Asia, usually in lakes and slowly moving streams. Pike have elongated, even serpentine, bodies and flattened heads with duck-billed jaws and sharp backslanting teeth. Muskellunge (*Esox masquinongy*), nicknamed "muskie" by sport anglers, is the largest of the pikes, averaging between ten and thirty pounds, some trophy fish weighing sixty pounds. Muskellunge occurs naturally in the Great Lakes but has been introduced elsewhere.

Northern pike (*Esox lucius*), also called common pike or American pike, jackfish, northern, and other names, averages eighteen to thirty inches in length and weighs slightly more than one pound to eight pounds, although the largest can measure more than four feet and weigh forty pounds. The Latin species name *lucius* is derived from the Greek *lukos* (wolf) and describes the fish's fierce predatory habit and capacity for fight when caught.

Pike, a favorite with ice fishers, once was part of the Great Lakes commercial fishery and is considered good for eating. Another of the fish mentioned by Izaak Walton, pike was recognized by settlers coming to North America as a good food fish, although there is scant mention of pike by name in cookery literature. Depending on size, pike was traditionally baked, poached, or roasted. More recent recipes call for panfrying, stuffing and baking, grilling, or steaming. The mild-flavored fish requires saucing or vegetable accompaniments for flavor interest.

Sandra L. Oliver

### **PILLSBURY**

Charles A. Pillsbury (1842–1899) bought one-third of the Minneapolis Flour Milling Company in 1869. By the early 1870s, using modernized equipment to process the local spring wheat at several mills, his company was producing two thousand barrels of flour a day. Renamed C. A. Pillsbury and Company in 1872, it adopted the trademark "Pillsbury's Best XXXX" (the four Xs constituting a medieval symbol for top quality).

Pillsbury installed "middlings purifiers" in 1871, implementing a process developed at the Washburn Mills (later to become General Mills) that removed dark specks of hull, producing whiter flour. In the mid-1870s, Pillsbury began using a Hungarian innovation that he saw on a visit to Europe, involving sets of iron and porcelain steamrollers that crushed and disintegrated the wheat, replacing traditional

millstones; all of the bran and wheat germ was removed, producing an even whiter and longer-lasting flour and boosting production by 3 percent. Pillsbury's brother sold the leftover bran as animal feed.

The company was expanding rapidly, and in 1882 it built a huge new facility, called the "A Mill," which was the largest flour mill in the Western Hemisphere. By 1889, the mill was producing almost seven thousand barrels of flour a day. The company continued to innovate and grow throughout the 1880s, helping Minneapolis become the leading flour-producing city in the United States.

An English financial syndicate acquired C. A. Pillsbury in 1889 along with Washburn Mills, creating Pillsbury–Washburn Flour Mills. Led by Charles Pillsbury, it was the world's largest miller, producing fifteen thousand barrels of flour a day. In 1923 Charles's sons and a nephew bought out the English owners and formed Pillsbury Flour Mills.

The new company began producing cake flours and cereals in 1932. Throughout the 1940s it specialized in kitchen staples, introducing the first convenience baking product, Pie Crust Mix, in 1945, and cake mixes in 1948. To celebrate the company's eightieth birthday, a contest, the Pillsbury Bake-Off, was held in 1949 at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City.

Pillsbury acquired Ballard and Ballard Flour in 1950 and introduced fresh dough products, followed by refrigerated cookie dough in 1957. The Pillsbury Doughboy was introduced in a television commercial for Crescent Rolls in 1965. In the succeeding decades, Pillsbury made many major acquisitions worldwide: Burger King in 1967, Totino's Pizza in 1975, Green Giant in 1979, the Steak & Ale restaurant chain in 1976, and Häagen-Dazs ice cream in 1983.

After twenty-seven years of steady growth, involving over two hundred products in fifty-five countries, losses began to mount in the mid-1980s, particularly in the restaurant sector. Pillsbury was acquired in a \$5.75 billion hostile takeover in 1989 by the U.K.-based food and spirits company Grand Metropolitan. Pillsbury's fortunes improved under GrandMet (renamed Diageo after a merger in 1997), and acquisitions continued: Country Hearth bread in 1993, Martha White mixes and flours in 1994, and

Pet in 1995, including Old El Paso Mexican foods, Progresso, and Pet-Ritz pie crusts.

In October 2002, Pillsbury was sold to General Mills, its longtime rival, for \$10.4 billion, creating the world's fifth-largest packaged food company. After a Federal Trade Commission review, several Pillsbury brands, including Martha White, Pillsbury baking mixes, and Softasilk flour, were sold to avoid antitrust concerns.

[See also Burger King; Häagen-Dazs; Pillsbury Bake-Off; Pillsbury Doughboy.]

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Joy Santlofer

### PILLSBURY BAKE-OFF

Pillsbury's Grand National Recipe and Baking Contest-dubbed the Bake-Off (now a Pillsbury trademark)—was inaugurated in 1949, marking the company's eightieth anniversary and the postwar return to normal home life. Each recipe submitted was required to use a half-cup of Pillsbury's flour, and contestants (mostly women, mostly homemakers) responded with from-scratch pies, cakes, cookies, crisps, cobblers, doughnuts, dumplings, quick breads, and yeast breads. Submissions were winnowed down by a team of home economists, and the finals were held at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, where one hundred electric stoves filled the ballroom. The winner, for her No-Knead Water-Rising Twists (that is, sweet rolls) was Mrs. Ralph E. Smafield of Detroit; her \$25,000 Grand Prize was presented by Eleanor Roosevelt, who also served as a judge. (The Grand Prize became \$1 million in 1996.)

In 1951, Jack Meili became the first male prizewinner, taking second place in the junior division with wiener-filled "Hot Ziggities." (Creative nomenclature is a Bake-Off tradition.) Over the years, the



Pillsbury Bake-Off Winner. A bake-off winner with President Ronald Reagan. Courtesy of the Culinary Arts Museum at Johnson & Wales University

use of Pillsbury convenience products-notably cake, cookie, and frosting mixes and refrigerated dough—was encouraged, and "quick and easy preparation" became a judging standard.

An illustrated booklet published after each Bake-Off affords the winning recipes wide distribution, and early Bake-Off booklets (especially the first one) are sought-after collectibles. Browsing through them yields fascinating insights into a half century of baking in America, and quite a few of the winning recipes have become national favorites.

[See also Advertising Cookbooklets and Recipes; Pillsbury; Pillsbury Doughboy; Recipes.]

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Bonnie J. Slotnick

### PILLSBURY DOUGHBOY

In 1965 Leo Burnett's Chicago ad agency, known for creating many endearing trademark critters to build brands, was assigned the Pillsbury refrigerateddough account. In search of a character, creative director Rudy Perz whacked a tube of dough on the table and imagined what might pop out. A sevenand-one-half-inch-tall Doughboy, weighing the equivalent of two and one-half cups of flour, did. The little fellow was a natural, an outgrowth of the product itself, who would go on to become the perfect spokesboy.

But first he needed a voice. Perz auditioned fifty actors before choosing Paul Frees, who also provided the voice of Boris Badenov in The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoon series. One of the twelve different dialects Frees used featured the catchy "Hoo, hoo" giggle that, along with the tummy poke, would become the Doughboy's signature.

The Doughboy was soon ready for his first TV commercial. In it he jumped out of a container of Crescent Dinner Rolls and danced a two-step on the kitchen counter. He introduced himself as "Poppin' Fresh, the Pillsbury Doughboy" and announced Pillsbury's slogan, "Nothin' Says Lovin' Like Something from the Oven, and Pillsbury Says It Best."

Although the Doughboy has become hipper over the years, at times rapping or playing blues harmonica in commercials, his personality has not changed much. He has always been helpful, trustworthy, likable, friendly, charming, and adorable, some might even say irresistible. His appearance too has remained the same-small and plump, with a doughy white complexion. He always sports a large chef's hat, a neckerchief, and a big smile. In addition to having a delightful personality, he is a versatile, multitalented little guy, having appeared as a ballet dancer, singer, musician, painter, rap artist, teacher, poet, Cupid, business executive, announcer, skateboarder, and even a cuckoo in a cuckoo clock.

The Doughboy's role, however, has changed over time. Originally envisioned as the ideal homemaker's helper, he was the main character in early commercials. He offered encouraging words and helped out in the kitchen. His job was to convince consumers that Pillsbury's products were as good as those made from scratch. In the 1970s and early 1980s, when he was considered dated, he made only cameo appearances in commercials, showing up for a belly poke and a giggle at the end of each ad. By the late 1980s, however, he was found at center stage in starring roles, like strumming air guitar for Pillsbury Cinnamon Rolls. His later tasks were more closely focused on the products. He is likely to highlight a product attribute—for example, to close up a resealable package.

The Doughboy quickly captured the hearts of Americans and held onto them. By 1968 he was recognized in a random sampling by nine out of ten Americans, giving him a recognition factor similar to that of the president of the United States. In 1987 he won *Advertising Age*'s "Whom Do You Love?" contest. *Advertising Age* considers him to be number six of the top ten advertising icons of the twentieth century.

[See also Advertising; Marketing; Pillsbury.]

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Sharon Kapnick

### PILSENER

This style of beer is a light-straw colored, full-bodied, lagered, bottom fermented beer named after the town of Pilzen (in what was then known as Bohemia), where it was first brewed in 1842. It quickly became a popular unique style because it was so different from the amber brews that were the norm at that time. Pilsner Urquell (literal translation: "original source of pilsener"), named for the town of Pilzen, in what is now the Czech Republic, was the first golden-colored lager developed in the seventeenth century. Until that time almost all brews, ale and lager, were amber-colored or darker.

Unlike the producers of champagne, who legislated on an international level, the use of the word "pilsener" on the label of a beer often has no relation at all to the place of origin of that particular beer. The word "pilsener" has come to mean any bottom-fermented, golden-colored, sparkling malt beverage.

Even the Association of Brewers' 2011 Beer Style Guidelines has four different "pilsener" classifications: German-style pilsener, Bohemian-style pilsener, American-style pilsener, and International-style pilsener. They describe the American-style pilsener as a "classic and unique pre-Prohibition American-style Pilsener [that] is straw to deep gold in color. Hop bitterness, flavor and aroma are medium to high, and use of noble-type hops for flavor and aroma is preferred. Up to 25 percent corn and/or rice in the grist should be used." Alcohol by volume is between 5 and 6 percent.

N.B.—"Pilsener" is the spelling used by the Association of Brewers.

Peter LaFrance

### PIMIENTO CHEESE SANDWICH

Pimiento cheese has often been called the "comfort food" of the American South, where the sandwich filling is usually homemade in either a cooked or uncooked version and served on white bread. The basic mixture includes grated cheddar or American cheese combined with mayonnaise, chopped canned pimientos, salt, and pepper. Various additions include mustard, cayenne or hot red pepper sauce, garlic, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, or horseradish. Researchers have been unable to discover the origin of pimiento cheese, but its popularity has been noted since the availability of hoop cheese in country stores. A recipe for Pimento (sic) Sandwich appeared in the Up-to-Date Sandwich Book (1909) by Eva Greene Fuller. By the Depression, pimiento cheese sandwiches were served as a popular and economical meal throughout the United States. They were even featured on luncheon menus of some restaurants, including the Hotel Barbara Worth in El Centro,

California, where, in 1930, the sandwich was priced at thirty cents. Pimiento cheese remains a favorite homemade sandwich filling, and in the South, it is also a popular topping for hamburgers and hot dogs.

[See also Cheese; Sandwiches; Southern Regional Cookery.]

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**Becky Mercuri** 

### PIÑA COLADA

The Piña Colada cocktail was created in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in the Caribe Hilton's Beachcomber Bar. Its ingredients typically include white rum, cream of coconut, pineapple juice, and crushed ice, combined in an electric blender until smooth and icy, then garnished with a pineapple wedge and maraschino cherry. (However, this is an oft-adapted cocktail and myriad variations exist, such as the additions of dark rum and heavy cream.)

Although its birthplace is well documented, there is some debate as to who exactly created the drink, and the precise date of its creation. In general, Ramon "Monchito" Marrero Perez, one of the Caribe Hilton's early local bartenders, gets the nod, dating the drink to 15 August 1954. As the story goes, Perez spent three months experimenting before he finally created a drink he felt captured "the sunny, tropical flavors of Puerto Rico in a glass."

Other bartenders may have had a hand in the drink's evolution, if not its outright creation. For example, while Monchito served his cocktail in a tall glass, Ricardo Gracia, another Caribe Hilton bartender, was the first to serve the drink in a hollowedout coconut, and later, when the pickers who gathered coconuts from the trees around the resort went on strike, in a hollowed-out pineapple. Gracia also named the drink for the strained pineapple he added. Literally translated, Piña Colada means "strained pineapple."

Coco Lopez (a premade cream of coconut, usually sold in a can) was an integral ingredient in the original Piña Colada and played a key role in the drink's origin. First sold in 1954, Coco Lopez creator Don Ramon Lopez-Irizarry began approaching bartenders and chefs around San Juan, encouraging them to experiment with his new creation; Caribe Hilton was among Irizarry's first customers, possibly the first.

And Coco Lopez made sure there were plenty of tropical drinks to go around, furnishing the Caribe Hilton with commercial blenders and hiring a piano player to perform at the Beachcomber Bar, while the bartenders made complimentary Piña Coladas for all the guests. The Caribe Hilton promotion was so successful that Coco Lopez began moving their entertainer, Monchito, to other San Juan Hotels and bars.

The Piña Colada enjoyed a wave of popularity in the late 1970s and early 1980s thanks to the Rupert Holmes song "Escape (The Piña Colada Song)." The infectious ditty hit number one on the U.S. music charts in December 1979 and January 1980. Although Holmes admitted he had never tried a Piña Colada before he wrote the song (the original lyric was "If you like Humphrey Bogart," not "If you like Piña Coladas"), the lyric stuck. In fact, it was so popular that the record company added the parenthetical subtitle later because people were calling radio stations requesting "the Piña Colada song."

[See also Cocktails; Rum.]

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Kara Newman

### PINEAPPLE

The pineapple (*Ananas comosus*) originated in South America, probably in the area around the Orinoco and Negro river basins. Technically, it is not a single fruit but the fruits of a hundred or more separate flowers that grow on a central plant spike. As they grow, they swell with juice and pulp, expanding to become the fruit. There are two major pineapple cultivars: the Smooth Cayenne from Venezuela, which is cultivated for its large, juicy fruit and lack of spines on its leaves, and the Red Spanish from the Caribbean.

In pre-Columbian times, pineapples grew widely in Central America and the Caribbean, where they were called *anana*. Caribbean Indians introduced the pineapple to early Spanish explorers, who, noting that it resembled a pinecone, called it *piña*, from which the English word derives. The Spanish promptly shipped some pineapples back to Spain, where they became an instant sensation. Pineapples were disseminated to Africa and Asia during the sixteenth century. While pineapples thrived in tropical climates, European gardeners had to grow them in hothouses for the wealthy.

In North America, English colonists imported pineapples from the Caribbean beginning in the seventeenth century. The pineapple became a symbol of hospitality in America; pineapple motifs were common in the decorative arts of colonial America, including in architecture, furniture, gateposts, and silverware. Pineapple recipes appeared in English cookbooks during the eighteenth century and in American cookbooks by the early nineteenth century. Mary Randolph's *Virginia House-wife* (1824), for instance, includes a recipe for pineapple ice cream.

Over the decades several attempts were made to cultivate pineapples commercially in Florida and California, but growers were unable to compete with lower-cost production in foreign lands.

Pineapples were also canned in small quantities in Florida and the Caribbean by 1882. The major American pineapple industry started in Hawaii. Pineapples had appeared in Hawaii well before it became a U.S. territory in 1898. Plantations grew pineapples that were shipped to West Coast American cities, but this was expensive. Canning in Hawaii began in 1885 but was of little importance until Jim Dole founded the Hawaiian Pineapple Company in 1901. Pineapple production increased dramatically. By 1911, 95 percent of all Hawaiian pineapples were canned and sent to the mainland. By 1921 pineapple was Hawaii's largest crop and industry.

The vast increase in supply created the need to expand the market, and pineapple growers encouraged publication of pineapple recipes, which soon appeared in cookery magazines and cookbooks. For instance, Riley M. Fletcher-Berry's *Fruit Recipes* (1907) included thirty-four pineapple recipes, among them pineapple beer, champagne, muffins, fritters, and omelets. Around 1909 the Hawaii Pineapple Growers' Association issued its first advertising cookery booklet encouraging Americans to serve pineapple in new ways. During the following decade, the cost of canned pineapple decreased until it was affordable to almost all Americans. Cookery magazines and cookbook authors published hundreds of recipes using canned pineapple, including such



Pineapple Label. A label for Priscilla brand sliced pineapples. Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

dishes as hollowed-out pineapple boats for edible presentation of cold salads, vegetables, or fruits; pineapple upside-down cake; and numerous dishes with pork, seafood, and poultry.

Until the 1960s Hawaii supplied almost threequarters of the world's pineapples, but urbanization and labor costs encouraged Dole and other growers to transfer production to the Philippines, Thailand, and Costa Rica. Though America is no longer the primary producer of pineapple crops, pineapple remains a staple in the American diet.

[See also Advertising Cookbooklets and Recipes; Canning and Bottling; Fruit; Randolph, Mary.]

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Andrew F. Smith

### PINEDO, ENCARNACIÓN

Encarnación Pinedo (1848–1902), cookbook author, wrote the first cookbook by a Hispanic in the United States. El Cocinero Español (The Spanish Cook) is a landmark, the only contemporary record of what Californios (the original Spanish colonists in California and their descendants) ate and how they prepared it. Through the nineteenth century the Californios lost their social, political, and economic dominance to the Anglo Americans. Encarnación Pinedo deliberately attempted to keep her cultural foodways from disappearing by compiling this cookbook, printed in San Francisco in 1898.

Encarnación Pinedo's family suffered considerably during the Anglo takeover of California. Her

first ancestor in California was her great-grandfather Nicolas Berreyesa, who arrived in the San Francisco Bay area with the De Anza expedition in 1775. His son, her grandfather José Berreyesa, received a land grant for the Rancho San Vicente. It included the very valuable New Almaden quicksilver mine, which was to become a source of tragedy and litigation for the prominent family. José married Maria Bernal, and their daughter, Maria del Carmen, was born in 1811. As the Americans established control over California, they lynched or shot eight Berreyesa men, including Encarnación's namesake uncle. José himself was murdered by Kit Carson in 1846.

Maria del Carmen married an Ecuadoran, Lorenzo Pinedo, and they had two daughters, Dolores, born 29 April 1845, and Encarnación, born 21 May 1848. Lorenzo died suddenly of cholera in 1852 when Encarnación was only four. Encarnación received a secondary education at a well-regarded convent school, the Notre Dame Academy in San Jose, but she then conformed with Mexican custom and devoted her life to caring for her widowed mother. When Maria del Carmen died in 1876, Encarnación was twenty-eight, considered too old to marry. Her sister, however, had married an Anglo, much against the family's wishes. We know that by 1880 Encarnación was living in her sister's household and cooking for the family. Her book was published when she was fifty, and on 9 April 1902, she died at fifty-three.

In El Cocinero Español Pinedo comments on the insipidity of English food, and we may infer that she feels the same way about the American foodways familiar to her brother-in-law. Her book is one of the most comprehensive cookbooks published in California in the nineteenth century. Most California cookbooks of the period were much smaller. Her book includes some 880 recipes in which she demonstrates a liberal use of spices, chilies, vinegars, and wines. No American cookbook of the time includes more than a few Mexican (usually called "Spanish") recipes. The sophistication of her recipes is striking, their range remarkable. Pinedo includes recipes not only from Mexico and Spain but from France and Italy as well. The nuns of her convent school may have had a library of cookbooks, and San Francisco was certainly a bookish city with European connections.

Pinedo was not a professional writer. She took some of her recipes from published sources; some recipes are detailed while others are sketchy, and they are written in different and inconsistent voices. Nonetheless, *El Cocinero Español* is a major culinary work, clear evidence that the Mexican community in California harbored cooks of great sophistication showcasing a wealth of flavors that were not widely known in the Anglo community until decades later.

[See also California; Cookbooks: Ethnic Cookbooks; Mexican American Food.]

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Dan Strehl

### PINE NUTS

Pine nuts are the seeds of any member of the pine tree family (Pinaceae). Pine nuts were commonly consumed by Native Americans. Piñon nuts (*Pinus edulis*) were particularly important to pre-Columbian Native Americans in the Southwest. They were eaten raw or roasted. Roasted nuts were ground into flour, then mixed with cornmeal to make bread. Pine nuts are an important wild food but have been minimally commercialized. Old World pine nuts have been imported into the United States, and Italian pignoli are the kind most commonly available here. Pignoli are sold shelled and are used in pasta dishes and sauces as well as cakes and cookies.

[See also Native American Foods; Nuts.]

Andrew F. Smith

### PINOLE

Pinole is flour or powder made of toasted maize and also the beverage prepared by dissolving the powder in water or milk. Sugar, other sweeteners, or flavorings such as chocolate, vanilla, or cinnamon may be added. Pinole (from the Nahuatl pinolli) belongs to the category of maize-based atole gruels used by native peoples in Mexico and the American Southwest. Because pinole requires no cooking, the Aztecs found it ideal food for travelers. Spanish explorers quickly adopted it, and pinole became a staple among Hispanic settlers as well as Native Americans. In Commerce of the Prairies (1844), a classic account of the Santa Fe trade, Josiah Gregg likened pinole to the "cold flour" of the northern Plains Indians, used by hunters and fur-trappers, and noted that some tribes made a similar product from dried mesquite beans. Pinole is still used by elderly people in Hispanic and Native American communities.

[See also Corn; Native American Foods: Before and After Contact; Southwestern Regional Cookery.]

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Cheryl Foote

### PIONEERS AND SURVIVAL FOOD

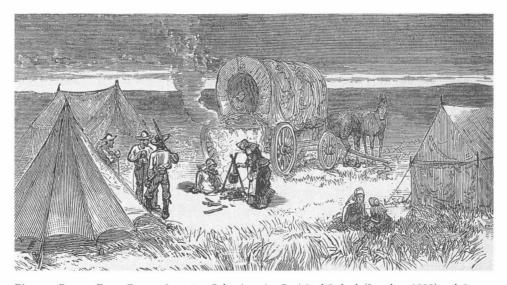
From the arrival of the earliest settlers to the closing of the American frontier, pioneers in the wilderness depended on food supplies for their survival. They prepared by bringing staples, seeds, and as much animal stock as they could transport over difficult terrain, and depended on skills and equipment for foraging, hunting, and fishing. The first stage of life on the frontier often lasted a relatively short time, sometimes only two or three years, before the area's growth could support trade and supplies from the outside. The timing depended largely on available transportation. For example, Ohio River settlements, benefiting from the river's commerce, grew beyond the frontier stage far more quickly than remote areas of the Smoky Mountains.

Survival strategy drove emigrants to arrive at the last possible moment, that is, with enough time to become established before the freezes but not so early as to use up staples needed to get them through the winter. They packed using information from published lists of recommendations. Most brought preserving salt, flours, beans, salt pork, bacon, molasses, and perhaps a little tea and sugar. Those who could also brought draft animals, cattle, pigs, and "dung hill fowl" (poultry). In later years, rice, dried apples, and potatoes were added; these were supplemented by foods from the wild.

Good foraging was essential while waiting for field crops, gardens, and herds and flocks to become productive. Hunting, trapping, and fishing were often the major sources of food, but they provided a boring and scurvy-producing diet. Foraged nuts, fruits, berries, greens, and roots added occasional seasonal diversity—dried cattail roots or processed acorns made palatable starches, and English tea was replaced with infusions of monarda or of red sumac berries.

At first, frontier fields and gardens on newly worked soils yielded uncertain results. Depending on the time of arrival and plant requirements, northern gardens yielded corn, beans, squash, and pumpkins, and assorted root vegetables that dried easily or stored well. Gardens planted late were limited to short-season plants, such as peas and greens. Cabbages and parsnips, which withstood cold when mulched, were wintered in the ground and dug as needed. Southern settlers found longer growing seasons and had more flexibility in what they planted. Ethnic cuisines were perforce adapted to materials at hand. In emergencies it was sometimes possible to obtain corn or meat from Native Americans; eating one's breeding stock or seed was the last resort.

Cooking utensils were also limited—often a large iron pot, a frying pan, some tinware, and a teakettle, supplemented by home-fashioned implements. With little equipment and heavy demands on time, newcomers cooked very simply, frequently making one-dish meals of meats, root vegetables (when at hand), corn, and beans. Improvised cookery made



**Pioneer Camp.** From George Augustus Sala, *America Revisited*, 3rd ed. (London, 1883), vol. 2, p. 139.

use of hot embers and ash to bake flatbreads and ash cakes, root vegetables, and meats. Roasting methods included planking (securing meat or fish to the face of a split log propped before the fire), string roasting (suspending a roast near the heat from a length of twisting homemade string), or spit-roasting on a green branch. Foods were abundant, and were preserved by drying and smoking; customary preservatives (sugar, vinegar, and salt) were scarce. Although many settlers did not survive this harsh regimen, large numbers of the young and healthy lived to enlarge their holdings and prosper.

[See also Frontier Cooking; Hearth Cookery.]

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Alice Ross

### **PISTACHIOS**

The pistachio (*Pistacia vera*) is native to central Asia, where it has been cultivated for over nine thousand years. The ancient Greeks consumed pistachios, and the nuts were introduced to Italy in the first century CE. The first pistachio seeds were planted in California and several southern states in 1854, but the trees did not thrive. Pistachio nuts were imported, and recipes for them

published in American cookbooks, by the early twentieth century. In 1929, William E. Whitehouse, an American plant scientist, planted pistachio seeds from Persia (Iran) in California's San Joaquin Valley, where they thrived. The nuts became popular during the 1930s, when they were largely sold to immigrant groups and distributed through vending machines. In 1976, the first major crop of pistachio nuts was harvested in California, which, in the early 2000s, was the world's second-largest producer. Roasted pistachio nuts in the shell are an addictive snack; the nuts are also used in pastries, cakes, confectionery, and ice cream, and pistachios appear in some savory dishes as well. The nuts are a good source of protein and several important minerals.

[See also California; Nuts.]

Andrew F. Smith

### PITA BREAD

Pita bread takes on many roles in Middle Eastern cookery. Invented by the ancient Greeks, pita bread (from the Greek word pita, meaning "pie") is a vessel, a serving dish, and a utensil. It is a principal ingredient in fattoush, an Egyptian salad similar to panzanella, and in fattah in which stewed chicken or lamb rests on a bed of toasted pita crisps and is topped with fresh labna. In Afghan cuisine, kebabs and mezze are laid out on a blanket, and pita bread is shredded by hand and used to scoop up the dips and meats. Eating with the right hand is customary in many Middle Eastern and Asian cultures, and pita bread is the perfect vessel. Soft, pliant, and extremely nutritious, pita bread is a staple of the Egyptian diet. Bread programs subsidized by the government make pita available to all social classes.

Referred to by the ancient Egyptians as "the staff of life," pita bread was actually invented in Greece. In Arabic the word for bread is *aish*, while the expression *aish balady* translates as "country bread," colloquially referred to as pita. In Persia, where some versions include the incorporation of ground meat,