

What's for Lunch?

By Sharon Fabian

The colonists planned to raise their own food. They brought seeds to America. With seeds, they could plant vegetable gardens. They brought farm animals too. They planned to raise crops and animals each year.

Things didn't work out quite as they had planned. Some of their seeds didn't grow in American soil. They didn't have time to start farms right away. Soon, the colonists were very hungry. They ate whatever food they could find.

Then they had to find ways to get more food. The Native Americans helped the colonists. They taught them about crops that would grow here. They brought the colonists pumpkins, sweet potatoes, and squash. They brought the colonists corn.

Corn became very important to the colonists. It became their main food. Many colonists ate corn every day. Some colonists ate corn for breakfast, lunch, and supper.

There was yellow corn, white corn, blue corn, and red corn. Corn was a lifesaver for the colonists.

The colonists made pudding, pancakes, and soup from corn. They cooked succotash, a mixture of corn and beans. They made cornstarch candy. They made journey cakes that they could carry in their pockets.

The colonists also dried corn to preserve it for winter. Dried corn could be ground into corn meal for baking cornbread. They also made hominy from dried corn.

Corn was important for another reason. It was used to feed the livestock. So, corn helped the colonists raise animals for meat too.

In addition to raising livestock, the colonists hunted for meat. They shot deer and raccoons for meat. They caught fish and turtles. They found oysters.

Each home has its own garden to raise vegetables and herbs. They raised onions and lettuce. They raised cabbage. They raised turnips and radishes. They raised corn, leeks, spinach, beets, cucumbers, and parsnips. They raised corn.

The colonists found maple syrup and honey for sweetening food.

Of course, there were no refrigerators in colonial times. The colonists had to use their food before it spoiled. Sometimes they stored food in a cold cellar to keep it from spoiling.

Colonists cooked in their fireplace. They cooked most of their food in one big pot. It was hung on a hook above the fire. For baking, they built ovens into the sides of the fireplace. The heat from the fireplace baked cornbread and other breads and cakes.

The colonists had many recipes for soups and stews. One recipe called fish muddle was a stew with all kinds of seafood.

Some of their recipes took a long time to cook. A pot of baked beans for Sunday dinner was put into the fireplace on Saturday.

For treats, mothers and daughters baked sugar cookies, apple cookies, and raisin cookies. Sometimes they baked gingerbread.



Name _____



Date _____

The colonists never ate packaged dinners. They never ate fast food. The colonists had to provide all of their own food. Every day, three meals a day, someone had to cook.

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Questions

- _____ 1. The colonists brought _____ to America.
- A. seeds
 - B. animals
 - C. both A and B
 - D. neither A nor B
- _____ 2. The seeds they brought grew well in America.
- A. false
 - B. true
- _____ 3. The Native Americans helped the colonists find food.
- A. false
 - B. true
- _____ 4. Native Americans taught the colonists to grow _____.
- A. lettuce
 - B. green beans
 - C. corn
 - D. celery
- _____ 5. Corn was used to feed animals.
- A. true
 - B. false
- _____ 6. _____ were corn cakes made to take along on a trip.
- A. trip cakes
 - B. vacation cakes
 - C. train cakes
 - D. journey cakes
- _____ 7. _____ colonists had a garden.
- A. nearly all
 - B. one hundred
 - C. few
 - D. no
- _____ 8. To the colonists, this word did not have anything to do with food.
- A. garden
 - B. journey cake
 - C. McDonald's
 - D. corn

