Number #2 Victorian Era Food

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(It will be used in other class periods)

Source 1: http://www.victorianchildren.org/victorian-food/

**Victorian Food**

Victorian food and what was eaten varied hugely at the time between the rich and the poor and this was the same for children too. Rich children ate extremely well whereas as a generalisation the poor had limited choices and availability.

At the beginning of the Victorian Period the food of choice was that which was in season, available locally or had been pickled or preserved. With the advancements of the industrial revolution however and the invention of the railways and steam ships food began to be sent across the country and imported from overseas. The choices then began to increase. Refrigeration and the lack of it was still a problem which everyone in the Victorian era had to endure. Food was therefore bought locally and consumed within a small time frame. Things couldn’t be bought in bulk like they are today.

**At A Glance:**

1: Rich and Poor Children had vastly different lifestyles when it came to food. The rich children would dine on significant amounts of food and waste food too whereas the poor would have limited meals of low quality. A large quantity of the population were living on dripping, bread, tea and vegetables.

2: Street vendors within the Victorian times would sell a number of ‘different’ foods including Rice milk, Ginger beer and Sheeps trotters. Never a dull moment within the Victorian times!

3: The diet for those Victorians who were very poor was terrible. Potato pairings & rotten vegetables were sometimes the dish of the day and for children born into this background this was exceptionally difficult for growth.

**Common Victorian Food readily available**

1: With the start of school for children and industrialisation breakfast was seen as the most important meal of the day. Middle class breakfast was substantial with everyday consisting of bacon, eggs, ham, haddock, coffee, fruits and bread. Think of a modern day hotel breakfast.

2: Poor children had few food luxuries and ate poor food (see above). The rich however would be well fed every morning and would have extra luxuries accessible.

3: The diet within the Victorian era changed dramatically. Children typically ate what they were given by their parents so whatever was on the menu for the adults was available for the children.

4: Children living on farms would have a far better diet than those within the city. Vegetables could be stored all year round in a root cellar whereas in the city you had to consume what was in season.

Source 2: <http://listverse.com/2012/12/18/10-bizarre-dishes-on-victorian-dinner-tables/>

**Bizarre Dishes on Victorian Dinner Tables**

The Victorians didn’t just carve off steaks and chops from cows, pigs, sheep, etc., and dump what was left of the carcasses into a sausage grinder. Embracing the whole critter from snout to tail, they enjoyed offal and other bits that normally go into hot dogs. Brains, tripe, tongue, head, feet, tail, ears … you name it, a nineteenth century cook knew what to do with it.

Boiled Calf’s Head - This is exactly what it sounds like. A calf’s head was purchased from the butcher, who often left it up to the cook to clean off the hair and tidy it up before popping the head into a pan and boiling until tender. The tongue was removed, cut into slices, and arranged on a platter with the picked flesh. The eyeballs were cut in half and included—not as garnish, but a delicacy.

Calves’ Foot Jelly - Considered the proper food for invalids, this aspic-type dish was prepared with a calf’s head and calves feet boiled a long time and strained. The cooked calf’s brains were added, and the jelly clarified, and strained again into a mold or bowl and cooled. The unappetizing, grayish jelly was supposed to be congealed enough to slice. As a treat, you might arrange the brains and a few boiled egg slices on the bottom of the mold before you poured in the jelly.

Water Souchy - A soup of the “waste not, want not” variety. Essentially, one took a bunch of miscellaneous small fish, such as anything that might be left at the end of the fisherman’s day, and boiled them in water with parsley roots, a bit of wine, and some vinegar if available. The resulting soup was thin, green, and fishy. If freshwater fish were used, care had to be taken to avoid the soup tasting like mud. The fish weren’t boned, by the way, so a degree of caution when eating was required. An upscale version consisted of chunks of bigger fish cooked in much less water, and flavored with bouquet garni and leeks. More of a rustic stew.

Broxy - A meat for those who couldn’t afford better, broxy was the name given to diseased sheep that had dropped dead of an illness. The butchered animals were sold in lower class shops. Broxy was much cheaper than mutton, and eaten by the rural and urban poor. Having broxy for dinner meant rolling the dice against a worse outcome than an upset tummy or heartburn.

Slink - When cows or sheep are slaughtered, if they’re pregnant, they often spontaneously abort the fetus when they die, or the fetus is removed when the carcass is processed. Victorian butchers offered these aborted calves and lambs to their customers (and farmers to their families and employees) as slink veal or slink lamb, a protein for those who couldn’t afford better cuts of meat.

Nineteenth century diners weren’t quite as picky as us, and the cuisine reflected their all-inclusive tastes. What to eat didn’t mean choosing between a pizza delivered to the house or sticking frozen taquitos in the microwave. At mealtime, you usually found yourself at the table staring down at your dinner … and sometimes, dinner stared right back at you.