

Eating at Home in the Early Sixties

Everyone had breakfast. Some had porridge, others eggs and toast, some had cereal. 'Top of the milk' (single cream) was a treat and several days' worth might be saved up to have with tinned fruit on Sundays. Cereal boxes often contained plastic toys and there were puzzles printed on them. We also saved the tokens off jam and marmalade jars and sent off for 'Golly' brooches. Collecting was a widespread hobby - cards of animals, birds etc were often to be found in tea packets.

Most people had school dinners which were liked or loathed in equal measure.

The evening meal was a variant of meat and two veg. Stews, pies, mince with onions, occasionally fish. Some people ate all kinds of offal - liver, lambs' heart, sweetbreads - but most only ate liver, fried with onions and bacon.

On Sunday there was invariably a roast (most people said chicken was expensive and rarely featured).

Home-made cake featured, especially at tea-time. Fruit cake mostly, cream cakes were a special treat.

Recipe books included Mrs Beaton, Marguerite Patten, Rosemary Hume and Mary Berry. Some people could not recall any recipe books being used - mum cooked everything from memory!

Little use was made of 'convenience foods' until the mid-sixties when small flavoured yoghourts became popular, desserts could be made from 'Instant Whip' and the freezing compartment of the fridge might have contained a packet of fish fingers, a Birds Eye chicken pie and a bag of frozen peas.

Foods which rarely feature these days included: Bournvita (discontinued in UK in 2008), Horlicks and Horlicks tablets, evaporated and condensed milk, Bovril (served as a 'tea'), Spam luncheon meat, sandwich spread (chopped mixed veg in salad cream), Cadbury's Bar Six, Wagon wheels.

For a dinner party people might make melon boats, prawn cocktail or avocado pear for starters. The main course might be cheese fondue, stuffed peppers or spaghetti Bolognese. Dessert might be a strawberry cheesecake, crème caramel or soufflé.

This picture shows starters for a Sixties dinner party

