

What would it have been like to eat at a barn raising meal?

Curious about what some the food tasted like at the barn raising meal? Found below are some simple recipes that you can try to make in class that would give you a flavor of what kind of food was eaten at a barn raising. Remember that early barn raisers used dairy products, fruits, vegetables, and meat from what they raised on their own farms. Very little was purchased from the general store in town. How is that different today?

Try some of these recipes and share with your classmates what you think about the taste, convenience, and the way that it is prepared.

Homemade Butter

Butter was one of the staples served at each meal. The dash churn , familiar to farm homes for centuries, consisted of a tall, narrow, nearly cylindrical stone or wood tub fitted with a wooden cover. The cream was agitated by a hand-operated vertical wooden plunger, stave, or dash. You can make this butter by using a mason jar, and heavy cream.

Measure about one cup of heavy cream and 1/8 teaspoon salt. Put in one quart jar, cover with lid and shake for about 10 minutes. After 10 minutes open the jar to let more air in, recap and continue. After some time you will see the butter separate from the rest of the liquid. The remaining liquid is buttermilk. When the butter is in one large chunk, drain off the buttermilk into another jar to use for homemade pancakes or biscuits. Refrigerate the butter and buttermilk until ready to use. This will yield about 3.4 ounces of butter.

Homemade Applesauce

Apples were a fruit that was plentiful and so the farm wives found many ways to use them in desserts for their families. One way to use apples was make homemade applesauce and serve it warm or over homemade ice cream as a special treat.

Preparation time: 45 minutes. If you want chunky applesauce, use a potato masher to mash the cooked apples. If you prefer smooth apple sauce, run the cooked apples through a food mill.

3 to 4 lbs of peeled, cored, and quartered apples.
1/4 cup of dark brown sugar
1 cup of water

3 inches of cinnamon stick
up to 1/2 cup of white sugar
1/2 teaspoon of salt

Put all ingredients into a large pot. Cover. Bring to boil. Lower heat and simmer for 20-30 minutes and remove from heat. Remove cinnamon sticks. Mash with potato masher.