Food in Kansas

A cookbook for young Kansans with historical and nutritional information
This cookbook was originally produced in 1986 with funds from the Nutrition Education and Training Program/School Food Service Section/Kansas State Department of Education and was prepared by the Kansas Historical Society.

Acknowledgements (1986)

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Acknowledgements (2012)

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Food in Kansas

From Indian jerky made of dried buffalo meat to fast food hamburgers that began in Wichita, eating in Kansas has changed. Ways of getting, preparing, and preserving food in the past have been different from those of today, but we still use many of the same foods. This cookbook, contains recipes from different times in the Kansas past. As you use this book you will learn about the history of Kansas, a great food producing state.

Good nutrition has always been necessary to human life. People have known for a long time that what they ate was important to their health. Not until the 20th century, however, has nutrition become a science. We are still learning exactly how food nourishes the body.

E. V. McCullom, a Kansas farm boy who grew up to discover vitamin A, did experiments that showed how some foods affect health. McCullom also gave much of his time to telling people about nutrition and health. In the spirit of E. V. McCullom, we hope you will enjoy the recipes in this book as you learn about food, health, and history.

This cookbook was originally produced in 1986 with funds from the Nutrition Education and Training Program, School Food Service Section, Kansas State Department of Education, and was prepared by the Kansas Historical Society. It is now out of print. This online version has undated photographs and graphics.
Food Choice Guidelines for Recipes

Each of the twenty recipes from different periods in Kansas history has been evaluated for present-day healthy eating. These healthy eating concepts are stressed for each recipe: (1) frequency of eating each food, (2) nutrients provided in the food, (3) fiber contained in the food. Foods from the recipes are described as “anytime,” “sometimes,” or “fewtimes.”

Anytime foods are (1) tasty, (2) dense in four or more nutrients, (3) dense in fiber.
Sometimes foods are (1) tasty, (2) dense in four or more nutrients or fiber.
Few times foods are (1) tasty, but not dense in four or more nutrients or fiber.

Each recipe was mathematically calculated for six nutrients and fiber. There are also many other nutrients in foods. The following are the ones shown for the recipes in this cookbook:

Iron: A nutrient in foods that helps build strong blood.
Protein: A nutrient that helps build muscles and helps with growth.
Vitamin A: A nutrient in food that helps keep throats healthy.
Vitamin C: A nutrient in foods that helps heal cuts.
Vitamin B: (Thiamin, Riboflavin, and Niacin): Nutrients that unlock food energy.
Calcium: A nutrient in dairy products that builds strong bones and teeth.
Fiber: Part of plant foods that cannot be digested. Fiber helps sweep waste out of the body.

To find out which nutrients are in each food made with the recipes in this cookbook, look at the bottom of the recipe pages. A “yes” indicates the food is dense in that nutrient. “Yes*” indicates the food is an extra-dense source of that nutrient.

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Food of the Plains Indians

Early peoples used these bone tools to plant and harvest crops on the plains.
The outside part of the buffalo horn was heated and shaped into dippers and spoons. A buffalo horn spoon can be seen at the Kansas Museum of History.

Clay pots were used to store dried corn and beans and were also used for cooking. After Indian traders came to the plains, iron and brass pots were used for cooking. This pot is in an exhibit at the Kansas Museum of History.
Jerky

 Millions of buffalo once lived in Kansas. Plains Indians hunted the buffalo for food. Sometimes they ate part of the meat raw. Most often, meat was roasted or boiled in water over a fire. All meat from the hunt could not be eaten at once. Indians learned to preserve the meat by cutting it in strips and drying it. This long lasting food was called jerky.

 Other people learned from the Indians how to prepare jerky. Settlers often used salt to make jerky. Sarah Cummins was a girl in 1845 when her family traveled across Kansas in a wagon. She ate buffalo meat and wrote this about making jerky:

 To prepare this dried or jerked meat the newly dressed meat is first dipped into a solution of strong brine [See Glossary] then hung over a frame of small poles and allowed to drain. A fire of hardwood now supplies the drying curing smoke.

 Beef Jerky

 You need:
 2-1/2 pounds of lean beef chuck or shank
 Salt
 Pepper

 Do this:
 Slice meat into thin strips. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Pound raw meat with hammer. Turn meat over and pound on the other side.
 Turn oven to a low heat, about 120 degrees, and leave door partly open for moisture to escape. Cover bottom rack of oven with aluminum foil. Spread meat strips on wire rack above. (Strips can be hung over the wires one by one.) Leave in the oven for 4 or 5 hours. Turn meat over and leave for another 4 to 5 hours on 120 degrees. When the jerky shrivels up and turns black, it is done. The strips will bend without snapping when they come from the oven. Turn off oven and remove meat when cool. Store in a closed jar.

Food Choice Guidelines: Jerky is a “sometimes” food.

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**Pemmican**

Making pemmican was another way of preserving food. Trail foods of campers today use the same idea as Indian pemmican.

Pemmican was dried meat pounded fine. Buffalo, elk, deer, and antelope meat were used. Fat was mixed with it. Sometimes berries were added. This recipe is from the 1800s.

*Cut the buffalo’s flesh into large lumps, then into thin slices. Hang up in the sun or over a fire and dry. When it is thoroughly dry, place upon rawhides spread out upon the ground. Pound until the meat is reduced to a pulp. Then place pulp into a strong container. Pour boiled tallow, boiled separately, over pulp. Stir together and thoroughly mix until dry pulp is soldered down into a hard, solid mass by the melted fat poured slowly over it. Then, after mixture cools, place in airtight container.*

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Indians ate more than buffalo. For hundreds of years before explorers from Europe and America came into this land, native peoples cultivated gardens along river bottoms. These Indians often cooked the vegetables they grew with meat from the buffalo they hunted. Thomas Say, a scientist exploring Kansas, wrote of eating corn soup prepared by the Kansa Indians in 1820:

_They commonly placed before us a sort of soup composed of maize . . . boiled in water, and enriched with a few slices of bison meat, grease and some beans, and to suit it to our palates it was generally seasoned with rock salt which is procured near the Arkansas river._

### Corn and Bean Soup

**You need:**
- 1-1/2 cups dried kidney beans (or one can kidney beans)
- 1/2 cup hominy (hominy is kernels of corn with the outer skin removed)
- 1/2 cup maize/corn kernels (canned or frozen corn may be used today)
- 1/2 pound smoked ham (this is a substitution for the piece of bison meat the Indians would have used)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 small onion, sliced
- Water

**Do this:**
- Wash dried beans. Cover beans with water and soak overnight. Drain water.
- Put beans and ham in a saucepan with enough water to reach about 2 inches above beans. Cook for 1/2 hour with a lid on the pan. Add hominy and stir. Cook for 15 minutes. Add corn, stir. Slice onion to make rings. Push out the rings of the onion and lay on top of mixture. Cook for about 20 minutes. Stir well. Cook for 1-1/2 hours more with pan covered. Serves 6-8.

### Food Choice Guidelines: Corn and Bean Soup is a “sometimes” food.

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**Pumpkin Mat**

Pumpkins were one of the garden vegetables grown along river banks by Indians like the Pawnee and Wichita. These people wove strips of pumpkin into mats for storage. Pieces of the mats were torn off as needed to flavor soups and other dishes. The Kiowa and Comanche traded buffalo meat to the Pawnee and Wichita Indians for pumpkin mats.

You need:
3-4 medium sized pumpkins

Do this:
1. Cut off pumpkin at both ends so you can get seeds out. **SAVE THE SEEDS AND PLANT IN YOUR SPRING GARDEN.**

2. Peel the pumpkin, using a sharp knife. (Make a sawing motion starting at the top of the pumpkin and ending at the bottom.) Repeat until entire pumpkin is peeled.

3. Make a long spiral strip approximately 1 inch wide (don’t worry if it breaks) or slice pumpkin crosswise and slit rings to hang. Hang strips to dry for one to two days (longer indoors).

4. Place dried strips on hard surface and pound flat with smooth side of wooden mallet. Place half of strips in a row, close together.

5. Weave, using remaining strips, by lifting every other strip. To start another piece, simply overlap and continue to weave. When the mat is completed, secure by tucking ends under to conceal. When the mat is woven, pound it lightly. It will dry in a week. When dry, your mat will measure about 14 by 16 inches.

Food Choice Guidelines: Pumpkin is an “anytime” food. (Nutritional information is based on canned pumpkin.)

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Woven pumpkin mats hang on a wood drying rack in the Wichita Indian exhibit at the Kansas Museum of History.
Foods of Early Settlers
1850 – 1870

When Kansas was opened to settlement in 1854, people from states settled earlier arrived to make new homes. They came with pots and pans and with ideas of what foods they liked and how these foods were cooked. Some settlers brought cookstoves. Others cooked in the fireplace. Some had tin plates and cups. Others had carefully packed fine china to bring to Kansas. Most were farmers who planted corn and garden vegetables. Settlers also hunted wild game and gathered wild fruits, nuts, and greens. Almost everyone ate corn bread and corn cakes. Food was not always plentiful. Eugene Ware, an early settler, wrote in 1867:

*The county is at present poorly supplied. A little bacon and corn is all there is to eat. I attended a fourth of July celebration at Oswego. There was corn bread, pone, ala Missourienne, and jonnycake. There were corn dodgers and flapjacks, mush and milk, fried mush, and mush and molasses, and also corn pie, made of corn and dough crusts and a thin seam of molasses between them.*

*Place setting is used at Kansas missions and in pioneer homes. Tin plate and tin cup, fork, knife, and spoon from the collections of the Kansas Historical Society.*
Children learned to cook by watching their mothers. Recipes were not written down, or if written, measurements were not exact. A pioneer recipe for johnnycake was “3 handfuls corn meal, 1 handful flour, pinch of salt and boiling water to make a smooth batter. Bake on an iron skillet until brown.” When Miriam Davis Colt came to Kansas in 1856, she wrote about food:

It is the same simple dishes, right over and over again: hominy, johnny cake, Graham pudding, some white bread, now and then stewed apple, a little rice, and tea occasionally for the old people.

Modern version of Johnnycake

You need:
1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon sugar
1-1/2 cups white or yellow cornmeal
3 eggs
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 cup skim milk
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup vegetable shortening
Additional vegetable shortening

Do this:
Sift 1-1/2 cups flour with 1-1/2 cups white or yellow corn meal, 1 teaspoon baking powder, and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Set aside. With an electric beater or wooden spoon, beat 1/2 cup vegetable shortening with 1 tablespoon sugar until smooth. Add 3 eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add dry ingredients alternately with 1 cup milk. Beat well until smooth. Heat a large griddle or large iron skillet. Grease with vegetable shortening. With a large kitchen spoon, drop the batter onto the griddle to make cakes, 1/4 inch thick and about 4 inches wide. Brown on one side, then on the other side. Johnnycakes may be eaten with meat and gravy or with syrup for breakfast. Serves 4-6.

Food Choice Guidelines: Johnnycake is a “sometimes” food.

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Popcorn

Popcorn is another food of the Indians that has been enjoyed for over five thousand years. Today Kansas is one of the top ten popcorn producing states. Americans eat an average of forty-two quarts of popped corn per person in a year. Popcorn was a treat for early Kansas settlers as well. Sarah Everett wrote in 1860:

I have done up my supper work browned and ground coffee for breakfast and popped some corn for the children.

You need:
Popcorn, ready to pop, oil, if needed, butter, if desired.

Do this:
There are four ways to make popcorn:
1. If you have a fireplace, it’s fun to use a wire popper over the fire. Do not put in too much corn at once. Shake the popper constantly, near, but not on, the fire until the corn has popped.

2. You can pop corn in a frying pan. Use 2 tablespoons of oil in the pan; add 1/4 to 1/2 cup of corn, depending upon the size of the pan. Cover the pan and shake over low heat until the corn is all popped.

3. The electric popper gives excellent results, but is not as much fun as one of the do-it-yourself methods that early settlers used.

4. Pop corn in a hot air popper (no oil is used).

1 cup of popping corn will make 5 to 8 cups of popped corn.

Food Choice Guidelines: Popcorn is an “anytime” food if no butter or oil is used in the popping or afterward. (popcorn is a “sometimes” food if popped in oil or if butter is added.)

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Plums

From her farm near Osawatomie, Kansas, in 1862, Sarah Everett wrote:

_There has been an unusual amount of wild fruit in the woods here this season – I dried a flour sack two thirds full of plums after they were stewed and the pits taken out – have besides now about 4 gallons of plum sauce._

Sun Dried Plums

You need:
Small plums, gathered wild or bought at the store.

Do this:
Split the fruit to remove the pits. Spread the fruit on a clean cloth. (You could stretch a clean cloth on frames and set on a sawhorse outside.) Take the drying fruit inside each evening before dew falls. Repeat daily sun drying for three days to a week or until the fruit can be squeezed without any juice appearing. To store for later use, pack the plums in glass jars that have been sterilized by boiling, and leaving only a little air space in the jar. Cover with the jar lids and store in a cool, dark place. The dried plums can be eaten as a snack.

Cooked Dried Plums

Do this:
Cover the dried plums with water in a saucepan. Cook over a low heat for about 20 minutes or until the plums are tender.

To make plum sauce, cook the fruit as described above. When tender, add 1/4 cup of sugar and mash the fruit with a potato masher, or use a blender to make a thick sauce that can be used as a topping for ice cream or cake.

Early settlers did not use much white sugar, which was both scarce and expensive. Molasses and honey were used as sweeteners.

Food Choice Guidelines: Plums are an “anytime” food.

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Gingerbread

Hannah Ropes wrote a book, *Six Months in Kansas*. On her ride into Lawrence in 1855 in a crowded cart, filled with people and baskets of food, the odor in the air was of “gingerbread, of bread and butter, of cheese and dried beef.”

Gingerbread was one of the first cakes baked in New England when settlers came to America. This cake-like bread had been baked in England for a long time. This recipe for gingerbread was printed in Topeka, Kansas, in 1929 in the *Household Magazine* and is similar to gingerbread baked in the early settlement period of Kansas history, 1854-64.

### Gingerbread

**You need:**

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<td>1 cup</td>
<td>brown sugar</td>
<td>3/4 cup</td>
<td>molasses</td>
<td>3 cups flour</td>
<td>2 eggs</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/4 cups melted shortening</td>
<td>1 teaspoon ginger</td>
<td>1 teaspoon soda</td>
<td>1/4 teaspoon salt</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 teaspoon cinnamon</td>
<td>1 cup sour milk (you can put 1 tablespoon clear vinegar in sweet milk to make sour milk instantly)</td>
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**Do this:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Beat eggs with an eggbeater until light, add brown sugar and stir well. Add the melted shortening and molasses. Sift the flour, soda, cinnamon, ginger, and salt together. Add part of the flour, then part of the milk, then add more flour and more milk, stirring after each addition until all is used. Pour the thick mixture into two 9 inch square pans.

Bake for 30 minutes. You can test for doneness by poking a toothpick gently into the middle of the gingerbread. If the toothpick comes out clean, the gingerbread is done. If the toothpick has dough clinging to it, bake 5 minutes longer and then test again.

In the early settlement days gingerbread was baked in heavy pans in a wood burning stove. Today you can use any cake pans, including disposable foil pans, and you can set the oven to an exact temperature. Be sure to grease and flour pans.

This recipe will make enough for 24 people to have a piece. You will need over an hour to mix and bake this gingerbread.

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**Food Choice Guidelines: Gingerbread is a “few times” food.**

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Foods of Soldiers and Officers in the 1860s

In a letter of April 23, 1867, Capt. Albert Barnitz in a camp near Fort Hays, Kansas, wrote about food. Barnitz was a captain in Lt. Col. George Custer's cavalry during the Indian Wars.

We are very poorly provided with the comforts of life. . . . The evening after we started my cook made the discovery that my box of provisions – canned fruit, butter, baker's bread, &c &c, had by mistake been put into the wrong wagon, and was left behind! I was fortunate enough to be invited to mess with a brother officer of the squadron – whose bill of fare however was not very choice – consisting mainly of hard bread and bacon, with an occasional can of preserved meats (chicken or turkey) and green peas. However, we managed to subsist in some fashion on buffalo meat and some other game as the country afforded.

Samuel Reader, a Topeka man who was a soldier during the Civil War, made this drawing (Kansas Historical Society).
Hardtack and Deficiency Disease

Some of the soldiers in the 1860s in Kansas who had only hardtack, bacon, and coffee to eat for weeks at a time were afflicted with scurvy, a disease caused by dietary deficiency. Capt. Barnitz wrote in May 1867:

*The scurvy is very bad at camp now, not less than 75 cases being reported and all for want of a proper diet, and the men are perfectly crazy for canned fruits or fresh vegetables.*

Nutrition: Vitamin C was the deficient nutrient in this diet.

Soldiers often soaked hardtack in water, then fried it with bacon.
Hardtack

As recently as World War I, hardtack was the staple food of traveling armies, who called it “sheet-iron,” “tooth-dullers,” “crown-breakers,” or “worm castles.” Soldiers dipped the hardtack in hot coffee to soften it. Soaked in water or coffee, hardtack was easier to eat.

All modern crackers are dimpled in the manner of hardtack, which was pricked with nail holes to keep it compact and breakable.

Hardtack

You need:
3 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
3 teaspoons salt
2-quart bowl
rolling pin and breadboard
eight-penny nail
baking sheet

Do this:
Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In the bowl mix 3 cups of flour with the salt. Add 1 cup of water and stir until dough becomes too stiff to stir. Knead dough in bowl with hand, adding more flour to make it very dry. Press, pull, and roll the dough into a rectangle that can be divided into 3-inch squares of 1/2-inch thickness. Use a table knife to cut dough into squares. Holding each square in hand, punch 16 holes through it with the nail, being careful not to hurt yourself. Place dough squares on ungreased baking sheets and bake for 30 minutes until crisp and lightly browned. Cool before storing in a closed container. Makes 12 pieces hardtack.

Food Choice Guidelines: Hardtack is a “sometimes” food.

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Kansas Historical Society ©2011
An Officers’ Dinner

Supplying food to soldiers at far western forts and to men on the march was a big problem. The mule-drawn army wagons moved slowly, and sometimes men were without enough food. At established forts in eastern Kansas supplying food was easier. Sometimes the menus were very complete and the food expertly cooked.

Rebecca Richmond went with the Custers to an officers’ dinner at Fort Leavenworth in 1870. She wrote down all the foods but said she ate only a little of each course:

Menu

The first course consisted of soup,
the second of fish;
the third of turkey and oysters with a great variety of vegetables,
the fourth of birds and veal, with jellies and pickles
the fifth of ham and salad;
the sixth of Charlotte Rusee, Ice Cream, Blanc-mange and cake concluding with nuts, oranges and coffee.
The Custers Dining

George Armstrong Custer and his wife Elizabeth having breakfast in camp in Ellis County, Kansas, in 1869 (Kansas Historical Society).
Charlotte Russe

About 150 years ago white sugar became easier to buy. From Queen Victoria in England to some settlers in the new state of Kansas, people began to eat more sweets. Charlotte russe was a popular dessert invented by a French cook. It was served at a fancy dinner party at Fort Leavenworth in 1870 and a wedding breakfast at the White House in 1874 and was a popular dessert elsewhere.

Charlotte Russe

You need:
1 cup milk
1 envelope unflavored gelatin
2 tablespoons cold water
4 egg yolks
1/2 cup sugar

1/4 teaspoon salt
Grated rind of 1 lemon
1/4 cup lemon juice
Ladyfingers or sponge cake
1 cup heavy cream

Do this:
Heat milk but do not boil. Sprinkle gelatin over the cold water to soften. Mix together egg yolks, sugar, and salt. Pour hot milk, a little at a time, over the yolk mixture, beating hard at the same time. Return to pan and cook over a low heat, stirring constantly, until mixture is smooth and slightly thickened. Remove from heat, add gelatin, and stir until dissolved. Stir in lemon rind and juice, then refrigerate until cold and slightly thickened but not set. Line a 1-quart mold or bowl with ladyfingers, placing some on the bottom and the remainder upright around the sides. (Some of the ladyfingers may have to be cut to make them fit.) Beat heavy cream until it holds a shape, fold gently into gelatin mixture, and pour into mold. Chill 2 to 3 hours or until firm. Remove from refrigerator. Gently loosen the edges with a knife. Put a plate on the mold and carefully turn upside down. Remove mold. If you do not have a mold, you can hollow out a sponge cake and pour the cream mixture in it. Allow at least 2 hours for preparation.

Food Choice Guidelines: Charlotte russe is a “sometimes” food.

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Cowboys and Chuckwagons in the 1870s

After the Civil War, thousands of longhorn cattle roamed the Texas plains. About the same time, railroad tracks were laid across the state of Kansas. Joseph McCoy had the idea of driving the cattle north to Abilene and then shipping them on railroad cars to big cities for slaughtering. The idea caught on, and cowboys drove thousands of cattle to Kansas. On the trail a special way of cooking was invented. The cook rode ahead with the chuck wagon to prepare a hot meal for the cowboys. Biscuits were baked in a Dutch oven over a campfire and eaten with this stew that the cowboy cooks invented.

Son-of-a-Gun Stew

You need:

- 1/4 pound salt pork, cut into slivers
- 1 pound beef, cut in cubes
- 1 beef heart, about 3/4 pound
- 1 large carrot, thinly sliced
- 2 medium onions, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1-1/2 cups tomato juice

(This stew was made with whatever ingredients were at hand.)

Do this:


Often a young calf was killed and all parts used. Sweetbreads are glands from a calf. Veal is meat of a milk-fed calf. You may prefer only to imagine cowboy stew and make the stew on the next page.

Food Choice Guidelines: Son-of-a-Gun stew is a “sometimes” food.

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Ranch Stew

For a more recent stew, try this recipe.

You need:
- 5 pounds round steak, cut in pieces
- 2 pounds carrots, scraped and cut up
- 1 tablespoon salt

4 pounds potatoes, peeled and cut up
2 large onions, cut in pieces
1 teaspoon pepper

Do this:
Brown meat in its own fat in a large kettle. Add 2-1/2 quarts (10 cups) water. Cover and simmer 2 to 2 ½ hours, or until meat is tender. Add vegetables during the last 30 minutes and continue to simmer until tender but not mushy. Season to taste. (A crock pot can be used.)

Makes 10 to 12 generous portions or 20 to 22 small portions.

Food Choice Guidelines: Ranch stew is a “sometimes” food.
Cowboy Beans

You need:
1 pound dried pinto beans
2-1/2 cups cold water
1/2 pound lean salt pork, cut up
1 red chili pepper
1 medium onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
1 can tomato paste, 6 oz.
1-1/2 tablespoons chili powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cumin seed
1/2 teaspoon marjoram

Do this:
Wash and pick over beans; put in mixing bowl. Cover beans with cold water and soak overnight. Next morning put beans and water into Dutch oven and bring to a boil; reduce heat. Cover and simmer 1 hour. Stir in remaining ingredients; cover and simmer 3 hours or until tender. Add more water if necessary. Serves 8.

Chuck wagon cooks were often Black or Mexican. They liked to add chili peppers and other seasonings of their food traditions.

Items found on chuckwagon:
flour sugar
dried fruit coffee beans
pinto beans plates
cups cutlery
“possible drawer” salt
lard baking soda
vinegar tobacco
sourdough keg matches
molasses coffeepot
skillets Dutch ovens

Food Choice Guidelines: Cowboy beans seasoned with meat are an “anytime” food.

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Foods of Settlers from Europe in the 1880s

Germans were the most numerous immigrants to come to Kansas. Some had already lived in other parts of the United States for a time, while others came directly from Germany. Some, like the Mennonites, were German but came to Kansas from Russia, where they had lived for about two hundred years. They all brought special recipes and ways of preserving food to their homes in Kansas.

*Cabbage field on the Doty farm in Finney county, Kansas, about 1893 (Kansas Historical Society).*
Sauerkraut

Kraut (cabbage preserved by salting) is probably the best known of the foods associated with the Germans. After salting, the cabbage ferments, which preserves it for winter use. Sauerkraut was made in huge quantities. Try making sauerkraut with this recipe from the *Melting Pot of Mennonite Cookery*. North Newton: Kansas: Bethel College Women’s Association, second edition, 1975.

You need:
2 heads cabbage
2 tablespoons salt, noniodized

Do this:
Wash cabbage heads and take off outer leaves; save. Slice cabbage very fine into a large bowl. Sprinkle on salt. Pound until juicy. Pack into fruit jars, pressing down so that juice covers cabbage. Cover kraut with a cabbage leaf. Loosely put the lids on the jars and allow the cabbage to ferment. After the kraut has fermented, seal the jars. To make certain kraut does not spoil, the jars should be boiled for 15 minutes in a water bath, then tightly sealed.

Jars with zinc lids are very good for this. A stone crock with a wooden lid may be used instead of jars. Sauerkraut is ready for serving in 3 to 4 weeks

Food Choice Guidelines: Sauerkraut is an “anytime” food.

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German Pfeffernuesse

A Lawrence woman who was about ten years old in 1900 remembered:

Immediately after Thanksgiving, activity really got under way. Mother started baking Christmas Cookies—Honey Lebkuchen, Springle, Pfeffernuesse, and “S” cookies—all were German recipes from Grandma Jaedicke’s cookbook written in German and later translated into English for future grandchildren.

The pfeffernuesse were little hard, round, spiced cookies. If you can not pronounce the German name, call these cookies peppernuts. Many recipes called for pepper though this one does not.

You need:
1 cup sugar
1 1/4 cups shortening
1 cup light molasses
6-8 cups flour
1 egg
3 teaspoons soda dissolved in 1 tablespoon vinegar
1 teaspoon allspice
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon ginger
1 teaspoon cardamon (see Glossary)
1/3 teaspoon salt

Do this:
Combine sugar, shortening and molasses; bring to a boil. Remove from heat and add 2 cups flour and then cool. Add egg, soda, and spices to sugar and shortening. Add 4 to 6 cups flour as needed. Roll in long roll about the size of a nickel. Slice in ½ -inch pieces. (Cut slices into ¼ -inch pieces if you like a very firm cookie.) Bake at 350 degrees for 12 minutes on a lightly greased baking sheet. Dough may be frozen or kept in refrigerator for several weeks. After baking, cookies may be kept in airtight containers for several weeks.

Food Choice Guidelines: Pfeffernuesse are a “few times” food.

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Watermelon

Watermelon parties have always been popular in Kansas. A newspaper in Anthony, Kansas, reported in August 1899:

A big fat melon weighing 50 pounds, with an interior as rosy as the dawn and sweet as honey can be bought for a dime, and will give comfort and that full, restful feeling to four big men or eight boys.

Food Choice Guidelines: Watermelon is an “anytime” food.

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Mennonite Watermelon Pickles

Mennonites are admired for their hard work and excellent crops. Early Mennonites in Kansas were reported to be especially fond of watermelon. The women, who wished to make use of all parts of a food, pickled the watermelon rind.

Watermelon Pickles

**You need:**
- 2 pounds watermelon rind, peeled, soaked in salted water
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon whole cloves
- 1 teaspoon whole allspice
- 2 pounds sugar
- 1 pint vinegar
- 1 pint water

**Do this:**
Peel outside green skin from rind and cut rind into 2-inch pieces. Soak rind overnight in salted water, using 1/4 cup salt to each quart of water. Drain off saltwater, put rind into deep pot; add clear water to cover and cook until tender. Drain, set aside rind and boil the rest of the ingredients in the pot for 5 minutes, stirring until sugar dissolves. Add drained rind to this pickling solution and boil over high heat until rind becomes almost clear. Cool. Remove spices from syrup with slotted spoon. Pack pickles and syrup in clean glass jars, sterilized in boiling water, and seal immediately with warm canning lids and rings and boil gently for 15 minutes in a water bath. Then tighten lids.

Food Choice Guidelines: Watermelon pickles are a “few times” food.
Swedish Settlers

Settlers from Sweden and other Scandinavian countries began coming to Kansas about 1869. In the early days their food was wild game like buffalo, turkeys, prairie chickens, goose, quail and rabbits and the corn and garden vegetables they grew. They purchased coffee, sugar, and flour at local stores.

As settlers prospered, they wanted to make the dishes of their homeland. At holiday times they prepared special foods. One of the recipes still enjoyed by people of Swedish descent is fruit soup.

Swedish pioneers in Greeley County, Kansas (Kansas Historical Society).
Swedish Fruit Soup

Frukt Soppa

You need:
- 1/2 pound prunes, pitted and cut in small pieces
- 1/4 pound dried apricots, cut in small pieces
- 1 cup seeded raisins
- 1 orange, peeled and sliced crosswise
- 1 lemon, peeled and sliced crosswise
- 1 cup water
- 4 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 stick cinnamon
- 3 apples, peeled and diced
- 1 can dark sweet cherries, drained—save juice

Do this:
Soak overnight fruits, tapioca, sugar, cinnamon, orange, and lemon in enough water to cover. In the morning add diced apples and 1 cup water and cook until fruit is soft, 20-25 minutes. Add canned fruit last (1 pint canned apricots may be used in place of the dried apricots). If a thinner soup is desired, add juice saved from cherries. Serve hot or chilled. Makes 10 cups and serves 10-20 depending on size of serving.

Food Choice Guidelines: Swedish fruit soup is a “sometimes” food.

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Fred Harvey and Food on the Railroad

Fred Harvey brought good food to the railroad towns and railroad cars. When he could not find a good meal in the towns along the western railroad, he decided to take over a lunchroom in the Santa Fe depot in Topeka in 1876. He improved the food in a short time. Travelers looked forward to eating in the Harvey Houses he opened and in the dining cars that he operated on the trains. Harvey paid close attention to buying high quality foods, and he employed skilled cooks. Waiters served the meals with style.

Cooks in the kitchen of a Santa Fe train about 1954 (Kansas Historical Society).
Beef Rolls

You need:
- 4 8-ounce pieces of beefsteak
- 4 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons catsup
- 4 slices bacon
- 4 slices onion cut in half
- 1 large dill pickle, cut in fourths
- 2 beef bouillon cubes dissolved in 2 cups of water

Do this:
With a meat cleaver, pound the steaks until they are flat. On each steak place a slice of bacon, an onion slice, and a pickle slice. Roll the steak around the onion and pickle and tie together with a piece of clean string. Spread the flour on a plate and roll the tied steak in it. In a heavy pan with a lid melt the butter or margarine and brown the floured beef rolls and remove them to a plate. Add 1 tablespoon flour to the butter or margarine still in the pan and mix together. Add the beef broth, made from beef bouillon, and stir this mixture over low heat until slightly thickened. Then put the browned beef rolls back in the pan, cover, and cook over low heat for 40 minutes. Remove string before serving. Be sure to serve this main dish nicely as Fred Harvey would have done.

Food Choice Guidelines: Beef rolls are a “few times” food.

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Foods on Kansas Farms

Food became very plentiful in Kansas as towns, cities, and farms became well established. By about 1900 most people could enjoy an abundance of food. During the holiday seasons families came together for special meals.

Group at James Best’s dinner table at Dorrance on December 21, 1912 (Kansas Historical Society).
Pancakes were a staple on every breakfast table in the farm country of Kansas where I lived as a child. Mama mixed her pancake batter in a large earthenware crock, enough to serve the six hired men who ate at our table, our family of seven children, my grandmother and Cassie, our hired girl.

### Pancakes

**You need:**
- 4 cups flour
- 2 tablespoons baking powder
- 2-1/2 teaspoons salt
- 6 tablespoons sugar
- 4 eggs
- 4 cups milk
- 10 tablespoons melted butter, margarine, or bacon drippings

**Do this:**
Sift flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar together. Beat the eggs in a separate bowl. Add milk to eggs and the melted butter, margarine, or bacon drippings. Stir into the flour mixture until all is mixed. Heat a heavy pan or a griddle and lightly grease. Pour about 1/3 cup of the pancake batter onto the griddle. When bubbles appear in the batter, turn the pancake over with a long handled spatula. Serve warm with syrup or jelly. Serves 12.

The Dickinson family ate these pancakes with sorghum molasses, homemade butter, and fried sausage.

### Food Choice Guidelines: Pancakes are a “sometimes” food.

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Baking Powder Biscuits

Biscuits were eaten morning, noon, and night at some farm homes. Maude Dickinson wrote:

*Biscuits came to our table by the dozen. They were baked in big black sheet-iron pans which entirely filled top and bottom racks in the range oven. On rare occasions when Mama didn’t have time to heat the oven, she would make what she called skillet biscuits for breakfast.*

*On a lightly greased heavy skillet, she let each biscuit brown about 5 minutes on each side. They were exceptionally tasty with butter and sorghum molasses.*

**Baking Powder Biscuits**

**You need:**
- 2 cups sifted flour
- 2-1/4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1-1/8 teaspoons salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 2/3 to 3/4 cup skim milk

**Do this:**
Combine and sift dry ingredients together. (Sugar may be omitted, though Mama thought it added to the flavor and made the biscuits brown better.) Cut shortening in or blend with the finger tips. Add milk to make a soft dough. Knead lightly about 6 or 8 times on a flour-sprinkled board. Roll to 1/2 to 3/4 inch thick and cut with floured cutter. Place biscuits on ungreased baking sheet. Bake in a hot 450 degree oven about 12 or 15 minutes or until browned to suit. 18 to 20 1-1/2 inch biscuits.

The main meal of the day was usually eaten at noon and was called “dinner.” Schoolchildren took filling food to school in the days long before “hot” lunches were served at school.

**Food Choice Guidelines:** Biscuits are a “few times” food.

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Cabbage Salad or Cole Slaw

Maude Dickinson wrote that:

*Cabbage, serves as what we called cole slaw, was the green salad of farm meals,
The cooked dressing was exactly right on shredded cabbage, fresh and sweet
from the garden.*

An early Kansas cookbook had a recipe for cabbage and dressing called “Kansas Salad.” This recipe of 1874 did not give exact measurements but called for “a teacup sweet cream,” and “a little salt and vinegar.” After 1900 cookbooks began to use more exact measurements.

**Coleslaw**

*You need:*
2 tablespoons vinegar 1 tablespoon margarine
1 tablespoon sugar 1 egg, beaten
½ teaspoon salt 2 tablespoons cream
⅛ teaspoon pepper 3 cups finely shredded cabbage
⅛ teaspoon dry mustard

*Do this:*
Put vinegar, sugar, salt, pepper, mustard, and butter into a saucepan and heat to the boiling point. Add a few tablespoons of the hot mixture to beaten egg, then stir egg mixture into hot mixture and cook and stir until mixture thickens and boils. Remove from heat. Add cream and beat. Pour over cabbage and stir well. Chill. Serve to 4 or more.

**Food Choice Guidelines: Cabbage salad is an “anytime” food.**

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Apple Sauce

The best time to make applesauce is in the fall, when the apples have just ripened on the trees. If you live near an apple orchard, sometimes you can pick your own.

There are many different kinds of apples, each with its own fancy name, such as Delicious, Baldwin, Jonathan, Northern Spy, Rome Beauty, Rambo, and lots of others. McIntosh apples are very good and usually easy to find.

Applesauce

You need:
1 pound of apples for every cup of applesauce

Do this:
Peel apples and cut into 4 pieces. Put the pieces with seeds and core removed into a big pan or an electric skillet. Cook the apples over medium heat, stirring from time to time, until they are soft. If the mixture seems too dry or the apples start to stick, you can add a little water, but fresh apples will usually have enough juice of their own. Mash the apples with a potato masher. Taste the applesauce and add a little honey or sugar. You can also add a little lemon juice to bring out the flavor. Then sprinkle on a bit of cinnamon and nutmeg. Stir it all up and eat it, either warm or cooled.

Food Choice Guidelines: Applesauce is a “sometimes” food.

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Life on Kansas Farms

Children help with milking on a farm near Manhattan in 1903 (Kansas Historical Society).
Apple Picking

Apple-picking time in the early 1900s in Leavenworth County, one of the state's leading apple-producing areas.
Dinner Pail

Maude Dickinson recalled her Brown County school days:

Sausage between two large well-buttered slices of bread was our main sandwich, though in winter we also had home-cured dried beef. In fall and spring we took buttered bread and fried chicken almost daily. Hard-boiled eggs were a common part of this dinner-pail fare. The food was fairly well scrambled sometimes, after we had carried the dinner pails the mile and a quarter to school.
Fast Food Hamburgers Began in Kansas in 1921

Hamburgers are not as American as popcorn, though hamburgers are America’s favorite food today. But the fast food hamburger chains that have now spread to many parts of the world did begin in Kansas in 1921.

The idea of hamburger meat goes much further back in time. Eating raw chopped meat began with the Tartars of Russia. German sailors at Russian seaports took the idea back to Hamburg, Germany. In this city, whose name became the name of the food, the meat was shaped into patties and cooked. German immigrants to the United States brought their love of “hamburger” steak.

Not until 1904, at a big fair in St. Louis, Missouri, did the hamburger meet the bun. Soon buns were baked especially for the hamburger, and our idea of hamburgers was born. In 1921, a fast-food store, the White Castle, was opened in Wichita, Kansas. The hamburgers were made and cooked on an assembly line in clean surroundings. People who were just beginning to own their own cars at this time could drive to the hamburger stand for a fast meal. The White Castle hamburgers were 2 and 1/2 inches square, not round.

You can make your own hamburgers in a very short time following the recipe below.

**8 Small Hamburgers**

**You need:**
1 pound hamburger meat (the weight is marked on the package at the grocery store today).
8 small buns purchased

**Do this:**
With clean hands, divide the meat into 8 equal parts, which will weigh about 2 ounces each. Shape into 8 round patties about 3 inches in diameter. Cook in a skillet until the patties are browned on both sides. Drain the patties on paper towels. Warm the buns and spread with mustard if you like. Add sliced tomatoes, pickles and chopped lettuce.

Food Choice Guidelines: Hamburgers with buns are a “sometimes” food.

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Gene McInturff sold hamburgers from this street-stand in Hutchinson, Kansas, from about 1907 to 1931 (Kansas Historical Society).
More about “anytime,” “sometimes,” and “few times” foods

A new way of deciding what foods to select is to ask yourself three questions. Does the food taste good? Is the food dense in four or more nutrients? Is it dense in fiber? A group of dietitians at Kansas State University have categorized food into “anytime,” “sometimes,” and “few times” groups as a guide to food selection.

How Are Nutrient Dense Foods Determined?

Whether a food is nutrient dense is determined by comparing the percentage of each nutrient in the food to the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA). From this comparison, the Index of Nutrient quality can be determined. The Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) are levels of essential nutrients needed by healthy persons as determined by the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council. The Index of Nutrient Quality (INQ) expresses the relationship between the extent to which a food meets the RDA and the extent to which it meets the body’s need for energy.

Nutrient dense foods must provide at least 2 percent of the RDA and have an INQ of at least 1.0. To be an excellent source of a nutrient, that food must provide 10% or more of the RDA plus have an INQ of 1.5 or higher. Since 2 percent of the RDA is such a small amount, foods containing very few calories will be dense in some nutrients even though very little of that nutrient is present. Excellent sources of nutrients are indicated by an asterisk (*) on the nutrient charts in this cookbook.

A food might be classified into more than one category depending on how it is prepared or processed. This example will help you understand these food guidelines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orange</th>
<th>100% Orange Juice</th>
<th>Orange Drink</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“anytime” food</td>
<td>“sometimes” food</td>
<td>“few times” food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dense in four nutrients</td>
<td>dense in four nutrients</td>
<td>not dense in four nutrients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fiber dense</td>
<td>not fiber dense</td>
<td>not fiber dense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tastes good</td>
<td>tastes good</td>
<td>tastes good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this cookbook, both nutrient and fiber content are shown for each recipe. If a particular recipe is dense in iron, protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C or calcium, the chart states “yes” below that nutrient. Vitamin B is actually more than one vitamin so the B vitamins are indicated on the chart by listing “R,” “T” or “N” to identify them individually – “R” for riboflavin, “T” for thiamin, and “N” for niacin. In addition to those mentioned in this book, other foods that are good sources of these nutrients are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrient</th>
<th>Good Food Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iron</td>
<td>beef, raisins, whole grains, enriched cereals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
<td>meats, eggs, dairy products, dry beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin A</td>
<td>apricots, cheese, deep green and orange vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin C</td>
<td>fruits, potatoes, tomatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium</td>
<td>dairy products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin B₁ (Thiamin)</td>
<td>pork, whole grain breads and cereals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin B₂ (Riboflavin)</td>
<td>dairy products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin B₃ (Niacin)</td>
<td>meat, poultry, fish, peanuts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Glossary**

**Allspice** – The berry of the allspice tree.

**Baking powder** – A mixture of chemicals that gives off carbon dioxide when mixed with a liquid and heated, causing bread or cake to rise. Baking powder is a mix of baking soda and cornstarch.

**Balanced meals** – Meals that each day provide all the calories, protein, carbohydrates, fat, vitamins, and minerals that the human body needs.

**Batter** – A mixture of flour, liquid, and eggs that may be poured or dropped from a spoon.

**Brine** – Water in which enough salt is dissolved so that an egg will float.

**Calories** – Amount of energy in food.

**Cardamon** – One of many spices that originated in Asia.

**Cloves** – The dried flower bud of a tropical tree.

**Deficiency disease** – A disease caused by not getting enough of a necessary nutrient.

**Diet** – The kind and amount of food regularly consumed.

**Dressed meat** – Meat from which the hide and entrails have been removed.

**Fermentation** – The action of an organic substance that produces a chemical change in food. Bubbles or foam are often a sign of this activity.

**Ginger** – A spice from the dried root of a plant.

**Hardtack** – A hard biscuit or bread made of flour and water and baked to a very hard consistency. Hardtack was used by sailors, settlers, soldiers, and miners as a long lasting food.

**Hominy** – Indians made a lye solution of wood ashes and water to make hominy. After the outer part of the corn kernel soaked off, the corn was washed several times to remove the lye.

**Ingredient** – A single part of a mixture.
Jerky – Meat cut into thin strips and dried by the sun or by smoking or other low heat to make a hard, dried, preserved meat. The word does not come from the Indians’ and settlers’ “jerking” the strips of meat but from an attempt to pronounce the Spanish word charquis, which was an attempt to pronounce the South American Indian word ch’arki.

Johnnycakes – Pancakes made of cornmeal and cooked until crusty outside and soft inside.

Molasses – The syrup from raw sugar.

Nutmeg – Seed of the fruit of an evergreen, grown in Indonesia, used for thousands of years as a spice to season food.

Nutrients – Chemicals found in food and needed in certain amounts to help keep the body healthy.

Nutrition – The nourishment of the body; also the scientific study of how the body is nourished.

Pemmican – A concentrated food of the Indians.

Pickle – To use vinegar or fermentation to preserve foods.

Preserve – To prevent decay of food by canning, pickling, smoking, or drying.

Protein – A complex chemical compound made up of amino acids which helps build strong muscles.

Scurvy – Disease caused by the lack of vitamin C in which the gums become spongy and bleed; there is a bleeding under the skin and the victim becomes weak.

Spices – The dried parts of certain plants, such as the roots, leaves, seeds, or bark, that give flavor to foods.

Tapioca – starch preparation used as a thickening agent in food.

Utensil – A useful tool or instrument, especially one used in the kitchen.
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Historical quotations in the text are from the following:


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