

Cooking Gadgets

A kitchen from the past was filled with gadgets. There were ones that could crush food into a fine powder, while others helped slice pieces off. The gadgets used in a kitchen of the past were nothing like the gadgets used today. There were no electric stoves or microwaves. All food was cooked over or in the hearth or fireplace, and when stoves did become popular, they were fired by coal. Some gadgets that were commonly found in kitchens of the past were: a mortar and pestle, sugar cutters, apple presses, spice mills and butter churns.

A mortar and pestle did the same job as a spice mill, it just took more work. A spice mill was attached to the wall and the spice was put in through the top of the mill. Using the lever attached to the mill, someone would turn the handle and the finely ground spices would fall out of the bottom into a bowl. A mortar and pestle was a hand held saw mill. It was most commonly used to crush grains that were then poured into flour. The pestle would grind the grains into the hard surface of the mortar until they became fine.

Sugar cutters were needed in homes to break off pieces of sugar. Before bags of sugar, sugar was shaped into cones and was very hard. In order for someone to be able to use the sugar, they would have cut a chunk off of the cone. Cutting the sugar was not always the easiest because the sugar was very hard.



These kitchen gadgets are all on display in the kitchen of the Fultz House Museum.

Preserving Food

Some foods were preserved to prevent decomposition. This was done by lowering the foods temperature. When the food was submerged in cold water or ice, its temperature would drop, helping its preservation. This is only one way to preserve food. Nowadays, preserving is normally referred to when consisting of making jam or jelly. In early settler's kitchens, preserving was one of the most useful ways to keep food fresh for longer periods of time.

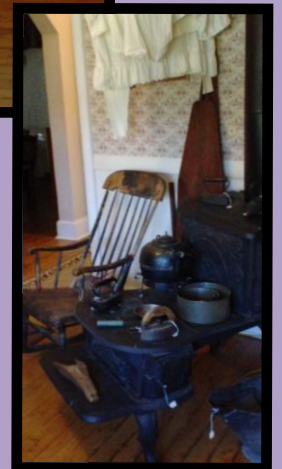
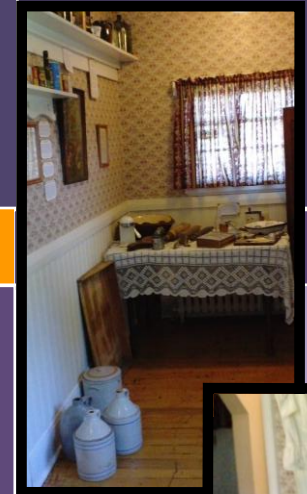
People have been drying foods as early as 12 000 B.C. by placing it out in the sun. This technique is still popular today, although the motives behind it have changed. Vegetables and fruit would dry naturally. Settlers would lay pieces of fruit and vegetable out in the sun and they would dry out because of the heat. Other foods that were dried were herbs and fish.

Canning and preserving were two other ways food was preserved. A settler would preserve food when they wanted to either slow or stop the foods decomposition. Some common things a settler would preserve were berries, fruit, and vegetables. The berries and fruit would be turned into either jam or jelly and the vegetables would be pickled. When a settler canned food they would lock the food in an air tight container. This also lengthened the shelf life of the preserved food to one to five years.



This berry picking bag is on display in the summer kitchen of the Fultz House Museum.

Prepping for Food in Old Sackville Kitchens



These pictures are of the kitchen in the Fultz House Museum.

FULTZ HOUSE MUSEUM

Preparing Food

For years, food has been prepared many different ways. Overtime, the tasks of preparing food has become easier, but there are some things that will never change. The Sackville kitchens of yesteryear saw food prepared many different ways. Coring, cutting, chopping and paring were some of the ways to name a few.

The earliest recording of an apple corer dates back as far as the 1200's. Known as either apple scoops or corers, these tools have been around for centuries. A gadget that was very useful in a kitchen was the apple peeler. This gadget could do two jobs at once, as it would core the apple and then peel it. What was so intriguing about the apple peeler was that it could remove an apple peel in one piece.

The apple parer has fascinated people for years. It is a lot like the apple peeler but does not have the ability to core apples. There are many different types of apple parers. Some are more rare than others. Today, apple parers have become obsolete and have been replaced with handheld apple peelers.

Most food was cut or chopped before it was made. To prepare the food to be cut or chopped it was first rinsed with some water. Then the food was cut into pieces to be cooked.

Holding and Handling



This tea kettle and holder can be found in the kitchen of the Fultz House Museum.



How food is handled is very important. It was also important to have something to place a hot pot or pan on when it needed to be taken off of the heat. When a pot of soup was heated on the stove for dinner, there needed to be somewhere for it to sit on the table. The most popular choice was a trivet. A trivet, to some, is also known as a stand. A trivet is a three or four-legged stand that holds a pot, pan or kettle off of the surface so the bottom will not damage the counter or table.

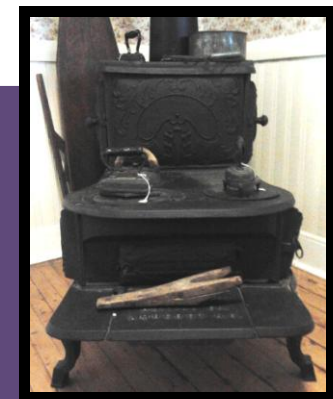
Pot holders were one of the cheapest items kept in a kitchen. Since a pot holder could be knitted or sewn, there was no need to spend a lot of money by going out and buying one. Pot holders even had common colours. The most common colours found in a pot holder would have been: red, white and green.

Containers were very popular in households too. Most households would use containers such as jars and baskets to store any leftover food or food that was to be prepared later. For example, when berry picking, a bag would have been used to put the berries in while in the field, but once it was brought home, the berries would have been transferred to a basket until they were either eaten, preserved or put into a meal.

Cooking

Before stoves, food was cooked over the fireplace, and before that, women would cook their food over a hearth. A hearth is a stone lined fireplace that can sometimes contain an oven. A hearth was the main part of a home, used for heating and cooking. A hearth and a fireplace were very similar, except a fireplace did not contain an oven. The oven of a hearth was off to the side, and had a door. In it were coals that were heated to bake bread, pies, and other sweets. The hearth itself was an open fire. A pot would be hung above the fire to cook food in and the fire would heat the pot.

After hearths and fireplaces, stoves were placed in the home. Stoves started out as coal stoves, and eventually turned electric. A coal stove would have had a pipe leading to the outside of the house so the smoke would not spread through the home. In the back compartment of the stove any foods that needed to be baked such as bread or cakes were placed there. The front part of the stove was slightly lower than the back part and had four burners.



This stove is on display in the kitchen of the Fultz House Museum.