



## ***WILLIAMSBURG, February 6, 1772***

“ I have just opened *TAVERN* opposite to the Raleigh at the sign of the KING’s ARMS...  
and shall be much obliged to the Gentlemen who favour me with their company.”

— ***JANE VOBÉ***



**M**rs. Jane Vobe’s advertisement in the February 6, 1772, issue of the *Virginia Gazette* alerted readers that she had relocated her business to a prime location near the Capitol. Her tavern was reputed to be “where all the best people resorted.” The King’s Arms was a common tavern name in England and the colonies. By the 1770s, Parliament was out of favor with some colonists, but most Virginians remained loyal to the king. The tavern’s name shifted with the political climate. Known as “Mrs. Vobe’s” during the Revolution, it later became the Eagle Tavern.

The King’s Arms and other Williamsburg taverns served as local gathering places where customers met to discuss business, politics, news, and gossip over drinks and meals. Taverns were, in this respect, unofficial public buildings. Before and during the Revolution, Williamsburg taverns, including the Raleigh and Wetherburn’s, provided rooms for the politicians who debated independence and later operated the provisional government of Virginia. During this period Mrs. Vobe and other tavern keepers supplied food, drink, and lodging to the American troops.

The change of government had little effect on tavern operations. Like its colonial predecessor, the state required tavern keepers to apply for annual licenses and set maximum prices for food, drink, and lodging. The rates had to be posted in each tavern’s public room. Artifacts found on the site and sketches of the tavern drawn on late 18th-century insurance policies assisted in the reconstruction of the tavern and the adjoining Purdie House to the east, which contains some of the dining rooms.

Reproduction chairs, tables, and serving pieces represent a deliberate mix of furniture styles popular with the Virginia gentry. The royal coat of arms on the dinnerware was fashionable in the colonies before the Revolution. Other accessories—the pewter candlesticks with glasses, pewter sugar and salt dishes, brass sconces, and maps and framed prints—correspond to items listed in inventories of taverns patronized by affluent customers.

Today’s menu items are inspired by 18th-century recipes—with adaptations for 21st-century tastes and methods. Some of the more unusual names come straight from colonial cookery books.





# Evening Bill of Fare

## Soupes

### Peanut Soupe 9.5

TAKE clear butter onions shred fine carrots and celery, stew them with your peanuts...when they are enough pass through a sieve...send to table with cream whipped to stand having pepper and nutmeg beat fine...  
(A King's Arms Tradition)

### Soupe Another Way 9.5

*Proper rules to be observed in making Soups and Broths*  
In the first place, take great care that your soup-pots and covers are kept very clean inside and out...Lastly, for all brown and white soups cut the crust of a French roll in round or square pieces, and crisp them before the fire  
(The Art of English Cookery, Richard Briggs, 1788)

## Second Courses

### To Make a Fine Sallet 13

...are commonly made of lettuces of any sort all pick'd and wash'd; some candied nuts and pippins as you please...these are eaten with Spanish vinegar dressing poured over and is very good with cheese  
(A King's Arms original, inspired by: The Cook's and Confectioner's Dictionary, John Nott, 1723)

### To Serve Good Hams 18

RUB with sugar and let it lie till night... then beat fine a pound of common salt and lie three weeks... dry with wood smoke... Sent to table with cheese, good chutney and bread toasted on the grid iron  
(Inspired by: The Lady's Assistant, Charlotte Mason, 1777)

### Crab Croquettes 18

TAKE some great flakes of the crab according to the quantity to be made and some bread, pepper and salt, sweet herbs shred fine. Mix in some eggs, shape the farce like a small egg and roll in fine crumb of a penny loaf...set on a frying pan full of lard, it must be boiling hot  
(Inspired by: The Lady's Assistant, Charlotte Mason, 1777)

### To Stew Black Eye Peas 13

SOAK your cow pea's and put them in your pot with sweet herbs, a young onion and spring water. When they are enough add tomatoes, roasted squash and hearty greens...put in your dish with pumpkin seeds fry'd and seasoned with pepper beat fine and salt to your taste  
(A King's Arms Original, Ivey Boyd, 2023)

## Made Dishes

*All MADE dishes are sent to table with Warm Sally Lunn bread, a corner dish of seasonal relishes, butter, garden offerings dressed according to the appropriate rules of garden stuffs.*  
*I am kindly obliged to offer soupes or sallet and dessert to the below Bills of Fare for a tariff of 17.*  
— JANE VOB

### Mrs. Vobe's Prime Rib of Beef 72

*Served with your choice of soupe or sallet and dessert*  
BEEF should be kept for some time before it is dressed... when you have spitted it put it to the fire and baste well while it is roasting and sprinkle with salt... put in a hot dish and garnish with horseradish

### Cornish Hen's Made Like a Ham 35

Take well fed Cornish Hens and season them pepper and salt then hang them in your chimney... broil them over a clear fire then laying them next to the fire... shred a shallot, a little thyme, and parsley, put these into strong gravy with cranberries stewed in sugar  
(A King's Arms Original, Ivey Boyd, 2024)

### To Roast Ducks 49

WHEN they are trussed put a little pepper and salt inside them, spit them, and put them down before a brisk fire... put them in a hot dish with a good gravy  
(The English Art of Cookery, Richard Briggs, 1788)

### An Onion Pye 30

PARE some potatoes...apples...onions and slice them... make a good crust. Lay in a layer of potatoes, a layer of onions, a layer of apple and layer of eggs until you have filled your pye, strewing seasoning between each layer. Close your pye and bake it an hour and a half  
(The Kitchen Garden Display'd – Dr. Lobb's, 1767)

### To Bake Salmon with Crab another Way 48

TAKE and earthen dish, put in your salmon and rub it with butter, sprinkle it over with a little pepper, salt, nutmeg and wine...bake it until it is done or of a fine brown, keep it hot by the fire and make a good sauce with lemon and butter and dill shred fine adding some great flakes of crab... boil'd with butter and good wine  
(Inspired by: The English art of Cookery, Richard Briggs, 1788)

### A Game Pye 52

TAKE your duck and be sure it is clean of feather, lay it in a pastry case with chibols, mushrooms, and venison... pour in strong gravy with port and claret...  
(A King's Arms Original, 2023)

### Beef Steaks 58

THE best beef steaks... should not be more than half an inch thick, when you gridiron be hot lay your steaks on it... let it broil till they look brown and turn... Sprinkle with pepper and salt  
(The London Art of Cookery, John Farley, 1787)

### To Stew a Shoat in the French Way 39

When your pork shanks are brown then place in a stew pan with claret, thyme, marjoram, savory, rosemary peppercorns and mace  
(Martha Washington Cookbook, origin prior to 1759)