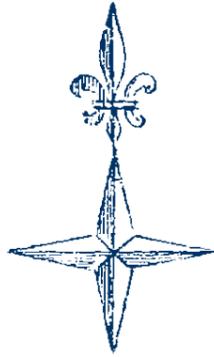


Food and rations aboard HMB Endeavour



Information reproduced from *'His Majesty's Bark Endeavour: the story of the ship and her people'*,

Angus & Robertson 1997, by Antonia Macarthur, courtesy of the author

'All meals were cooked on a huge iron stove called a firehearth (state-of-the-art in 1768). Wood was used as fuel. The firehearth sits on a stone hearth set on tin and sand to protect the deck.'

Food, called 'victuals', was rationed daily. Each sailor received approximately 450 grams of biscuit and a gallon of beer daily. Weekly rations were 2 kilograms of salt beef, 1 kilogram of salt pork, a litre of peas, 1.5 litres of oatmeal and wheat, 170 grams of butter and 340 grams of cheese.

All meals were cooked on a huge iron stove called a firehearth (state-of-the-art in 1768). Wood was used as fuel. The firehearth sits on a stone hearth set on tin and sand to protect the deck. The one-handed cook, John Thompson, and his mates cooked a hot breakfast and midday dinner for 94 people most days, for three years.

Most food was boiled in the large coppers and liquid was run out via taps. There was an open fire at the back for spit-roasting, and seamen could apply to use it if they caught a fish (or a juicy fat rat!). Three-legged pots were stood in the embers. There was a small oven on the port (left) side where fresh bread and pies were occasionally baked for the sick, the officers and the gentlemen. After the midday meal the fires were put out and the coppers were cleaned. A small open fire could be kept alight at the back to heat water for the captain, gentleman or surgeon. Most stores were kept in wooden barrels or casks, including water, beer, spirits, salted beef and pork, wheat, oatmeal and sauerkraut. They were stored in the hold.

A typical day's food :
6am Breakfast: hot porridge with potable soup (beef stock) and scurvy grass. Midday dinner : boiled salt meat, sauerkraut and vegetables when available. Three days a week pease pudding or dried fish or cheese



Hearth 1 and Hearth 2 – ANMM image

was substituted instead of meat, One pound of dry biscuit and a gallon of beer were issued daily. The evening meal was cold, anything a man saved from his dinner. In winter a cup of hot chocolate made with water was also offered. Once a week a boiled raisin pudding was added. Whenever possible they bought or traded for fresh food, shot birds and fished with nets.

60 sailors lived and ate on the lower deck mess deck. Six men messed at each table, sitting on seachests in which they stored their belongings. They could actually choose who they messed with, although the marines all messed together.

Every month each table elected a cook of the mess who took their rations to the ship's cook and then collected them and served the table. He cleaned the bowls and utensils and returned them to the mess shelves.



prevent the disease, as did potable soup, a preparation of dried vegetables, beef stock and malt. He also used a fruit juice concentrate called rob (a bit like jam). These foods were boiled up to try and preserve it for the voyage, thus eliminating most of the vitamin content.

Goats, sheep, pigs, chickens, ducks and geese were kept in pens at the stern on the upper deck. Live bullocks and sheep did not survive well and were killed quickly for fresh meat. Pigs fared better and bred during the voyage. The officers and gentlemen also brought their own special meat, fine wine and cheeses for the journey.

Food would quickly spoil and be infested with weevils, maggots, cockroaches and rat droppings. Biscuits would become stale and harden to the point of needing to soak in liquid before the sailors could chew them. Beer and water was often polluted from the oily casks and slime and algae. In some ports the water taken on board was brackish and polluted (eg Batavia) which could lead to illness.

Cook took on board fresh food and water at every port. Although this provided variety and a healthy addition to the rations, the men often grumbled. Some of them preferred their usual fare.

Cook was both fair (including all ship personnel equally in most rations) and strict (meting out punishment to those who did not eat all their required amounts). He often used reverse psychology to get the seamen to eat healthier food.

Some of the favourites from the ports included breadfruit, bananas, taro, pandanus nuts, and coconuts.



Cask of rum- ANMM collection



Ship's biscuit – ANMM collection

In the longer-term ports sets of trading guidelines were sometimes established:

A spike nail for a small pig; a hatchet for a hog; a small spike nail for a chicken; twenty coconuts or breadfruit for a forty-penny nail; ten for a white glass bead and six for an amber one. There were also fish, including stingrays, sea birds, turtles, shellfish (including oysters) and even kangaroo.

Drink:
Endeavour carried large supplies of water, beer, wine, brandy and rum. In usual conditions a seaman and officer could drink as much water as he wanted and his daily allowance of alcohol was one gallon of beer, or one and a half pints of wine watered down, or half a pint of spirits watered down. When *Endeavour* reached Madeira just one month into her journey Cook purchased 13650 litres (3000 gallons) of local wine, as it was known to keep well. Officers could keep extra supplies of alcohol. Pilfering from supplies was common and drunkenness tolerated unless on duty. A nanny goat who had already been around the world on *Dolphin* provided fresh milk (and cheese) for the officers and gentlemen, and sailors only when they were ill.

Food was always an important subject in Cook's extensive journal. and new foods and plants were well documented.

Possibly the most troubling issue relating to food was cannibalism among some of the tribes the crew encountered, eg the Maori in New Zealand. Fortunately no-one on the *Endeavour* met with this fate.



Ship's goat on a barrel- ANMM image



HMB ENDEAVOUR

