

Food & beverage history



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Translated from Swedish to English, by Google translator and Gunnar Björing.

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Box 558
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Food & beverage history, ISBN: 978-91-88109-12-5

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The major events in the human culinary history probably are:

- Every time someone came up with a new successful fishing or hunting method.
- Every time we adopted a new type of vegetarian foodstuff.
- The introduction of various technologies to collect and transport the raw materials, such as bowls/bags to pick and carry fruit in. Because it increased the efficiency in the collecting and to some extent protected the goods from vermin's.
- The use of knife-like objects to cut raw materials instead of, for example, ripping chunks of meat with our teeth.
- The use of fire to cook the ingredients, which made the food tastier (I think), more easy to chew and more easily digested.
- The introduction of pans, an innovation that enabled the cooking of stews, soups and porridge, et cetera.
- The finding that the taste of the food can be improved by mixing different ingredients, water and herbs.
- The invention of bread. It was important because it is easy to store the raw material (grain), it does not require very much tools to create bread on a hot stone surface, and bread can be easily stored and it can be eaten cold. In addition, no plates, cutlery etc. is needed to eat it (such tools came to the general public rather late in our history). Finally, bread is suitable as a complement to a variety of other things such as meat.
- The introduction of salt. Common salt is necessary for us otherwise our cells salt balance is jeopardized, most things are tastier with salt and salted raw materials are not destroyed as quickly as unsalted ones.
- The discovery that raw materials containing sugar can be converted to "refreshing" drinks if; they are mashed and in some cases mixed with water, provided that a fermentation process starts. The method was developed to wine, cider and beer, depending mainly on the raw materials used.

All of these innovations and discoveries were made long before the year 0 and it was certainly parallel in several parts of the world, more or less independent of influences from other cultures. Then, not so much happened during a very long time. That's because the alimentation for most ordinary people depended on a number of factors:

Energy shortages and undeveloped stoves

The food was heated with wood (maybe in some places also with coal) and the stoves that were available were ineffective (in Sweden we had fireplaces with the frying pan on top of the fire). Fireplaces are cosy and they provide light, but they are difficult to cook on, because the chefs have little control over the cooking temperature. Moreover, is not very fuel efficient because much of the heat does not get under the pan. The latter was particularly problematic in the regions¹ where there was a shortage of firewood. Especially when they did not have use of the heat to warm up their homes.

Lack of long-distance food transports

Both sea and land transport took a long time and their storage capacities were, compared to today's vehicles, small. Which resulted in that long-distance transport was only relevant for food that was well paid in relation to weight/volume, and had a long durability at room temperature. In other words, mainly spices, but also dried meat/fish, cereals and alcoholic beverages. Though it was only the very rich, who could afford to pay for long distance goods. Others had to make do with what was in the neighborhood.

Fear of trying new foods

In Sweden, for example, the rural population did not eat mushrooms, horse meat or crawfish right up to the 1900s. Although there were plenty of edible mushrooms in the forests in the autumn, and it was easily stored when dried, there were plenty of horses, and there is plenty of meat on a slaughtered horse, and many Swedish rivers and lakes were full of crayfish.

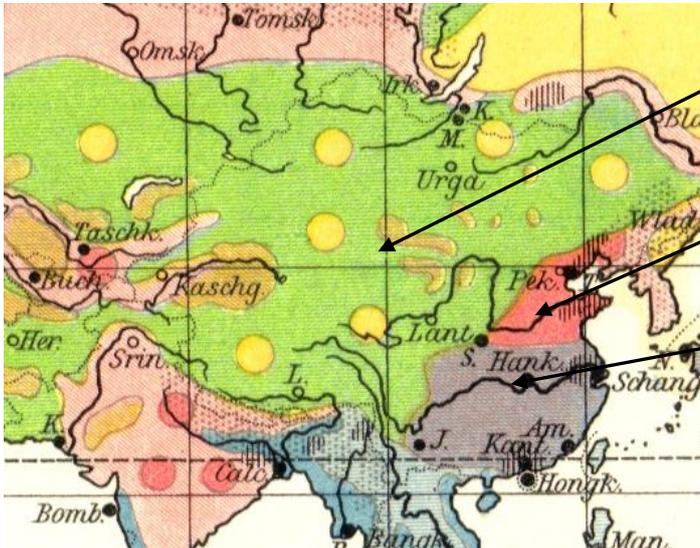
Poor storage facilities

In Northern Europe, we rely on to harvest once a year. While in southern Europe and elsewhere in the world the farmers could reap some foods several times per year. This limitation meant that we either consumed all of the harvest for a short period after it (fresh fruit, etc.), focus on growing things that can be stored for long periods (cereals can tolerate long storage as long as its dry) or to preserve² the harvest (most of the other foods). And as knows preservation methods characterize the taste quite much, each in its own way.

Hard work

It was important, therefore, with high energy content and that there was enough protein and fat in the food³.

- Eastern China, for example, has long been very densely populated. One effect of this was the lack of fuel (wood). This meant that it was a great advantage if the food had a short heat treatment time, which probably contributed greatly to that the food often is cooked shredded, the vegetables (apart from rice) and meat are fried or boiled in oil instead of boiled in water or heated in the oven, and that Chinese food often has no browning. They could also not afford to use the productive farm land for cattle grazing, so they had neither dairy products and beef or mutton. In contrast, they held pigs because pigs could be fed with kitchen waste.



 Hunting, fishing and ranching with cattle, sheep, horses and farming of vegetables.

 Rice, sugar, tea and vegetables, pigs + fishing in the coastal areas.

 Wheat, durra, corn, soy, vegetables, pigs + fishing in the coastal areas.

- Fish, pork, meat and vegetables can be dried in the sun. Fish, pork and meat can also be preserved through storing in salt and/or by smoking.
- The energy in the Swedish diet came largely from animal products, see for example the content of a daily ration for a Swedish soldier in 1866 (more about the diet later). Note that the energetic content resemble pretty well to modern dietary guidelines, in terms of both energy and the energy components distribution.

Amount (in old units)	Unit	Approx. Weight in grams	Type	Similar modern product	Energy/day (MJ/day)	Fat (g/day)	Carbons (g/day)	Proteins (g/day)
117	ort	497	Dry ryebredd	Rebred with approx. 5% fibres	5,0	8,0	229,2	35,3
25	ort	106	Cumin cheese	Cheese 31% fat	1,6	32,9	1,5	27,8
50	ort	213	Smoked ham	Smoked ham	3,5	79,7	0,0	32,7
2	Cubic inch	25	Vodka	Vodka 40% alcohol	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,0
Total weight (g)		841	Total daily energy (MJ/day)		10,3			
Distribution between the energy types (%)						27	52	21

Nowadays the Swedish national food administration recommends (Svenska näringsrekommendationer, Livsmedelsverket, 2005) that an active man between 31-60 years should consume 13.3 MJ energy/day. Out of that 50-60% should come from carbohydrates and proteins 10-20%.

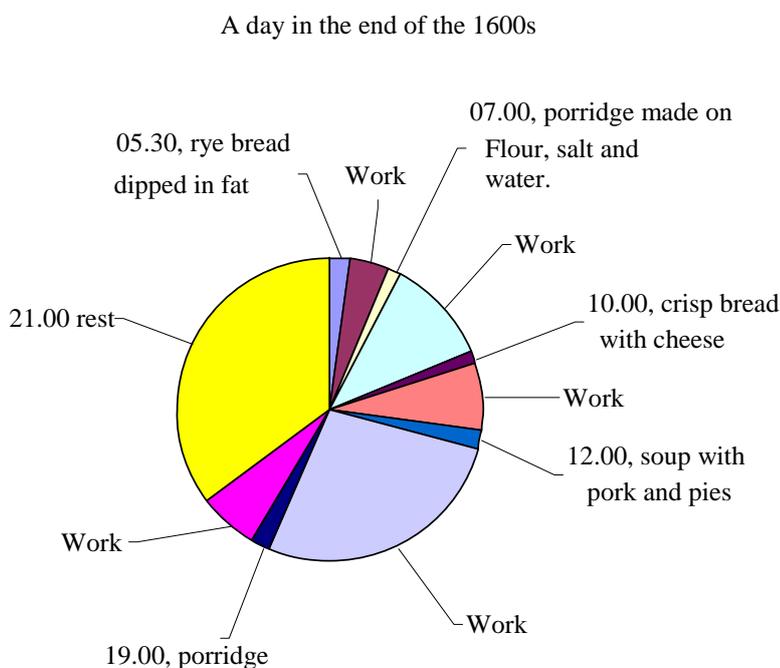
There is a big difference between what ordinary people in Sweden eats today and what their counterparts eat for not so long ago. The same probably applies to many of the other, nowadays, rich countries. When and how did the change take place?

In 1573, even the most powerful person in Sweden (King Erik XIV) and his guardian had, according to the state accounts (Eli F. Heckscher, Sveriges ekonomiska historia, Bonnier, Stockholm, 1935), a diet that must have been extremely monotonous, since they foods listed are (per person per day):

- 3 kg cereals (reasonably largely consumed in the form of beer),
- 460 g of hops (in the form of beer),
- 76 g butter,
- 50 g of salt (= very much, suggesting that the salt was used for salting meat, pork and fish. Moreover the large amount of salt explains the large amount of beer),
- 290 g of salt beef and pork,
- 150 g of fresh meat,
- 370 g of salt fish,
- 93 g of dried fish.

Already in 1640 we imported, however, a lot of the herbs we use today (table 1) and the animals that were consumed were virtually the same. And many of the drinks available today was present/manufactured/imported even then, like water, milk, spririts⁴, beer, cider, wine, and probably also different juices. What then has been added are primarily: coffee⁵, chocolate⁶, sodas⁷, orange juice, assorted spirits, and a number of variants on milk such as "light vanilla yogurt."

The largest differences in the raw materials for the food are that today's most common "stomach filling" food: pasta and potatoes⁸ were completely missing in the 1600s, as well as many vegetables, for example, tomatoes⁹ and fruits (table 2). Rice however was available, but it was unusual. Ordinary people had in the 1600s a daily routine and a diet that perhaps looked something like this (my guesses based on various sources):



The beverages were water or a sweetened malt beverage with low alcohol content. Milk was not used as a beverage since the farmers made butter and cheese out of it. Beer was only consumed at special occasions.

Probably the conditions were rather the same over large parts of the world, but with other commodities and a larger proportion of fresh vegetables in areas with warmer and more even climates.

4. In Sweden, many made their own vodka. The technique we learned in the late 1500s and 150 years later the technology was well spread across the Swedish countryside (an inventory of a number of farms in a region about in 1750 showed that 60% of the farmers had their own equipment). Cooking vodka was, however, not such a waste that it was later claimed to be. Since the leftovers in the boiler when the liquid was boiled away became popular and nutritious animal feed.
5. Coffee came to Europe from the Arab world in 1517 and it was introduced in Western Europe in 1669 by the Ottoman ambassador in Paris.



In Sweden the use appears to spread, at least in the bourgeoisie, around 1770. Since from 1769 to 1770 the import of coffee beans increased from 65.361 units to 507.719 units (Historisk statistik för Sverige, del 3 Utrikeshandel 1732-1970, Statistiska Centralbyrån (SCB), 1972, Stockholm).

Anyway it took a long time before the use was spread over the Swedish countryside. A woman born in the early 1890: s remembered¹⁰ that her mother said that the first time she saw coffee was in the beginning of the 1880: ies, when a stranger came with coffee beans to an old woman in the neighborhood. He asked her to boil them till he came back the same afternoon. She, who had never seen coffee beans, boiled them the whole day in the same way as one boils dried pies. But anyway they were still hard (and at that time they probably tasted awful).

Table 3. Coffee import and inhabitants according to SCB.

	1861	1881	1901
Imported amount coffee (kg)	6 740 000	12 341 000	30 971 000
Inhabitants (persons)	3 917 339	4 572 245	5 175 228
Kg/pers. and year	1.72	2.70	5.98

Why did they choose to use some of the very little money they earned, on coffee beans, despite that it does not fill the stomach and it takes time to get used to it's bitter taste?

A reasonable explanation is that the use came in handy with the big movements against alcohol consumption during the latter part of the century.

6. Around 1530, the Spanish had knocked out the two dominant cultures in Latin America (Aztecs and Incas). From there, they took with them for instance: corn, peanuts, chilies and cocoa beans. To the New World the Spaniards brought "in return" horses, sheep, cows, pigs, dogs, chickens, wheat, sugarcane, onions, citrus fruits and bananas. Of cocoa beans was initially only done a chocolate drink, and in the 1600s the use came to Sweden. Even in the 1800's were still drinking chocolate made from cakes with the cocoa butter still remaining. It was therefore a very bold drink and it probably looked pretty un-tasty as the fat does not dissolve in the drink. Instead it is floating on top. But in 1828 f the Dutchman van Houten found out a method to squeeze out the fat and make a powder (cocoa) of the rest, which paved the way for both the modern cocoa drink and chocolate bars. The latter was first produced in the mid 1800's and in 1875 the milk chocolate came.
7. Carbon dioxide was discovered in the 1700s by Joseph Black. 1741 the Englishman William Brownrigg invented carbonated water (soda). In 1886 the American chemist Pemberton created the soft drink Coca-Cola.

8. During the 1500s the potatoes spread from South America to North America, then to Spain and from there to Europe. 1655 it was first cultivated in Sweden (in the botanical gardens of Uppsala). But first in 1724 a Swedish entrepreneur (Jonas Alströmer), who has been in the UK and probably got inspired by their potato fields, began making larger growing trials. The Swedish rulers liked and encouraged this, since they realized that it would reduce imports of cereals (it is often enough to harvest a few potato plants to feed one person) and thereby significantly reduce the trade deficit. Thus, a number of attempts were made to introduce potatoes on a wide scale. Though the peasants were un-interested because the fields at that time, were divided on so many owners that it was customary, or more or less necessary, that all cultivated the same thing at the same time. Additionally potatoes were harvested later than cereals which meant that they could not send out cattle to graze on the remains until much later in the fall. In addition, people thought that it was not particularly appealing to eat potatoes, and it could not, as the grain be stored in the farm barns, because potatoes do not tolerate temperatures below 0 ° C. Finally, the authorities were not good at getting potatoes from abroad. Over time, however, the popularity of potatoes increased. 1820 the potato harvest was more than five times as large as in 1802nd. One explanation is that it was found to be suitable as a raw material for vodka production, which enabled farmers to a greater extent sell the excess seeds. A clear proof of this is that from about 1820 Sweden began to export grain. A milestone in the introduction of potatoes as staple food in Swedish homes was also the massive construction of food cellars from 1827, when a large area reform took place, which led to that the small land plots were merged into larger units, all the buildings were moved and new ones were built on everyone's new estate. And the food cellars offered first class storage capabilities of onions, potatoes, beets and other vegetables. In my uncle's cellar, for example, his annual potato harvest remained fine and good until the next harvest the year after (which is impressive considering that a bag of potatoes do not survive more than, like, a month in a refrigerator).

9. Tomatoes came from America with the Spanish. But it was not until 1847 that it was mentioned in a Swedish cook book. And it took until the 1900s before we dared eating them raw. Tomato mash on the other hand, was imported already in the mid 1800s and ketchup was invented, in USA, 1876.



Table 1. Plants/plant parts used as flavouring of food, their probable area of origin, and if they occurred in Swedish import statistics in the 1640th.

	Probably origin from	Imported volume/weight 1640 (old measures)	Measure
Anise	Eastern Mediterranean	31 025	pundh
Basil	Mediterranean, India		
Fenugreek	Mediterranean & Asia		
Cayenne pepper	South America		
Chilies	South America		
Lemon grass	South East Asia		
Cocos	Asia and Polynesia		
Dill	Asia		
Dragon	Russia		
Juniper	Grows wild in Sweden		
Fennel	Mediterranean		
Turmeric	South East Asia		
Ginger	Asia	11 820	pundh
Caper	Mediterranean	3 566	pundh
Cinnamon	Asia	1 808	pundh
Cardamom	India & South East Asia	334	pundh
Coriander	Asia	320	pundh
Allspice	West Indies		
Caraway	Grows wild in Sweden	1 315	pundh
Cloves	South East Asia	660	pundh
Savory	Mediterranean		
Chervil	Europa & North Amerika		
Bay leaves	Mediterranean		
Lingonberries	Grows wild in Sweden		
Marjoram	Mediterranean		
Nutmeg	South East Asia	701	pundh
Mint	Mediterranean and Western Asia		
Oregano	Europe & South America		
Paprika	Central America		
Parsley	Mediterranean & USA	0	tunnor
Pepper		15 115	pundh
Horse reddish	Easter Russia	4 606	bundt
Piri-piri	Central America/Africa		
Rose pepper	Brazil		
Rosemary	Mediterranean & USA		
Saffron	Iran	132	pundh
Sage	Mediterranean & Eastern Europe		
Mustard seeds	Mediterranean		
Sugar	Grows wild in Sweden as honey	55 554	pundh
Cumin	Mediterranean & Orient		
Thyme	Mediterranean & Eastern Europe		
Garlic	South East Asia	0	knippor

Table 2. Fruits, grains and such, their probable area of origin, how long they have been grown on a large scale in Europe, and if they occurred in Swedish import statistics during 1640.

	Probably stems from	Cultivated in Europe since	Imported volume/weight (old measures)	Measure
Oranges	Southern China	1400s		
Apricot	Central Asia	Before 0?	13	tt
Pineapples	Brazil	-		
Eggplant	East Indies, tropical Africa and Egypt	700's		
Avocado	Northern South America	-		
Banana	Asia	-		
Cauliflower	Syria, Turkey and Egypt	The Middle Ages		
Broccoli	Mediterranean	Before 0		
Brussels sprout	Belgium	1400s		
Beans	Probably Central America	1500s		
Cashews	America	-		
Lemon	North India	1000's		
Dates	North Africa	?		
Figs	Turkey	?	307	fjårdingar
Grapefruit	North America	1910		
Chives	China	The Middle Ages		
Yellow onion	Asia	The Middle Ages	64 760	refuer
Cucumber	India	?		
Oats	Mediterranean	Before 0		
Millet	Asia	Before 0		
Peanuts	South America	-	0	pundh
Barley	Asia	Before 0		
Artichokes	?	Before 0		
Turnip	Siberia or northern Europe	Before 0		
Cherries	Asia	Before 0		
Mangos	Asia	-		
Corn	Mid & South America	?		
Almond	North Africa and West Asia	Before 0	12 985	pundh
Melon	Africa	?		
Carrot	Mediterranean	Before 0	9	tunnor
Olives	Mediterranean	Before 0	775	kannor
Parsnips	Southern and central Europe and southw	Before 0	3	tunnor
Papaya	Middle America	-		
Paprika	Mid & South America	1500s		
Peach	China	Before 0		
Plums	Asia	Before 0		
Leeks	Mediterranean	Before 0		
Potato	South America	1500s		
Pears	Several origins	Before 0	203	tunnor
Rice	Asia	1400s	25 299	pundh
Rye	Asia	Before 0	7 295	tunnor
Beetroot	?	?		
Satsumas	Japan	?		
Asparagus	Mediterranean	Before 0		
Spinach	Orient	At the beginning of our era		
Tomato	South America	1500s		
Grapes	Asia	Before 0		
Cabbage	Asia	The Roman Empire	186	skåck
Peas	Eastern Mediterranean, Iran, Afghanistan	Before 0		
Wheat	Asia	Before 0	140	tunnor
Cocoa	Mid & South America	-		
Soybeans	East Asia	?		
Apple	Several origins	Before 0	5 703	tunnor

Dag = och Spisnings = Ordning för

Stockholmske Galeys Esquadren, på *Siu Man* i *Patlaget*, enligt *Hans Kongl. Maj:ts Gådige förordnande* under d. 21. April, och d. 4. Maji 1741.

Måndagen	Tisdagen	Onsdagen	Torsdagen	Fredagen	Lördagen	Söndagen
Middag { Erter $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. Hafregryn $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. Glåst 3 marker. Afton { Korngryn $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ quarter sött win, som blandas med watten.	Middag { Erter $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. Hafregryn $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. Salt fiodt 8 marker. Korngryn $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. Smör $\frac{1}{2}$ mark.	Middag { Erter $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. Hafregryn $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. Glåst 3 marker. Afton { Korngryn $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ quarter sött win, som blandas med watten.	Middag { Erter $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. Hafregryn $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. Salt fiodt 8 marker. Afton { Korngryn $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. Sött win 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ quarter, som blandas med watten.	Middag { Erter $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. Hafregryn $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. Salt fiodt 8 marker. Afton { Korngryn $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. Smör $\frac{1}{2}$ mark. Sill 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ mark.	Middag { Erter $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. Hafregryn $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. Glåst 3 marker. Afton { Korngryn $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. Sött win 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ quarter, som blandas med watten.	Middag { Erter $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. Hafregryn $\frac{1}{2}$ Fanna. Salt fiodt 8 marker. Glåst 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ mark. Afton { Sill 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ mark. Hollenskt Ost 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ mark. eller Hällenskt Ost 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ mark.

The king order concerning the alimention in the Swedish navy per weekday under the period 21 April to 4 May 1741st. The foods offered were peas, oatmeal, barley, salt, grease, butter, herring, pork, and possibly a few more that I can not decipher.

*Udvalde deas priser på Proviant och Lagerhåll för 20. 18. Kompani. Drott. Regementets Ma-
ten år 1866, efter de nämnda ortens för närvarande gällande wares värden*

Lagerhåll för 8 dagar		
10 tt 64 ort Torr Rågbröd	2 10 öre per tt	1 06 40
64 Kubiktom Cäster	2 40 - per Fanna	25 60
64 de Korngryn	2 45 - per de	22 80
32 Kubikl. Kotte	2 30 - per tt	7 20
10 26 ort Salt de	2 25 - per de	21 50
66 ort Salt Flåsk	2 25 - per de	14 70
52 ort Skramming	2 10 - per de	10 80
24 ort Koksalt	2 02 - per de	4 85
16 Kubiktom Brännvin	1 87 - 60 öre per Fanna	29 92
100 Fanna Kåberd	2 6 87 - per Fanna	6 68
Huskid gör per portion med Brännvin 43,86 öre eller i jernna Ordet 44 öre utan de 40,76 öre eller i jernna Ordet 40 öre		
Lagerhåll 1 1/2 25 Öre per portion		
Lagerhåll för 2 dagar		
2 tt 66 ort Torr Rågbröd	2 10 öre per tt	25 50
52 ort Hollands Kummin ost	2 30 - per de	15 00
1 tt Råkt Flåsk	2 50 - per de	5 00
6 Kubiktom Brännvin	2 10 60 öre per Fanna	12 60
Huskid gör per portion med Brännvin 52,80 öre eller i jernna Ordet 53 öre utan de 47,80 öre eller i jernna Ordet 48 öre		
Lagerhåll per dag 1 1/2 25 Öre per portion		
Lagerhåll för 2 dagar		
1 tt 33 ort Torr Rågbröd		
8 Kubiktom Cäster		
8 de Korngryn		
37 ort 50 Korn Salt Kotte		
15 ort 75 Korn Salt de		
8 ort 25 Korn Salt Flåsk		
6 ort 50 Korn Skramming		
3 ort Koksalt		
2 Kubiktom Brännvin		
100 de Fanna Kåberd		
Lagerhåll per dag 1 1/2 25 Öre per portion		
1 tt 33 ort Torr Rågbröd		
15 ort Hollands Kummin ost		
52 ort Råkt Flåsk		
3 Kubiktom Brännvin		

Extract from a randomly selected list of food costs for a military unit in Sweden, written in September 1866. There the following food consumption per person and day was listed for an 8 days camp.

For every day it was required

- 1 tt 33 ort dry rye bread
- 8 cubic inch pies
- 8 dito barley
- 37 ort 50 korn fresh meat
- 15 ort 75 korn salted meat
- 8 ort 25 korn salted pork
- 6 ort 50 korn herring
- 3 ort salt
- 2 cubic inch vodka

The camp also included two days without cooking facilities, with the following food:

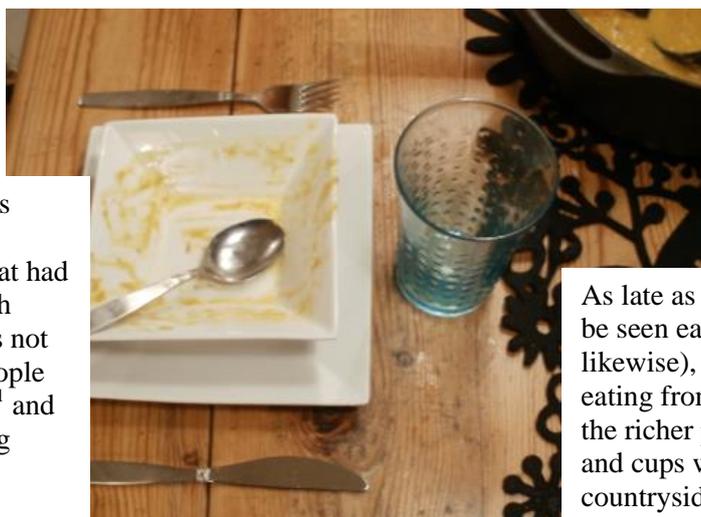
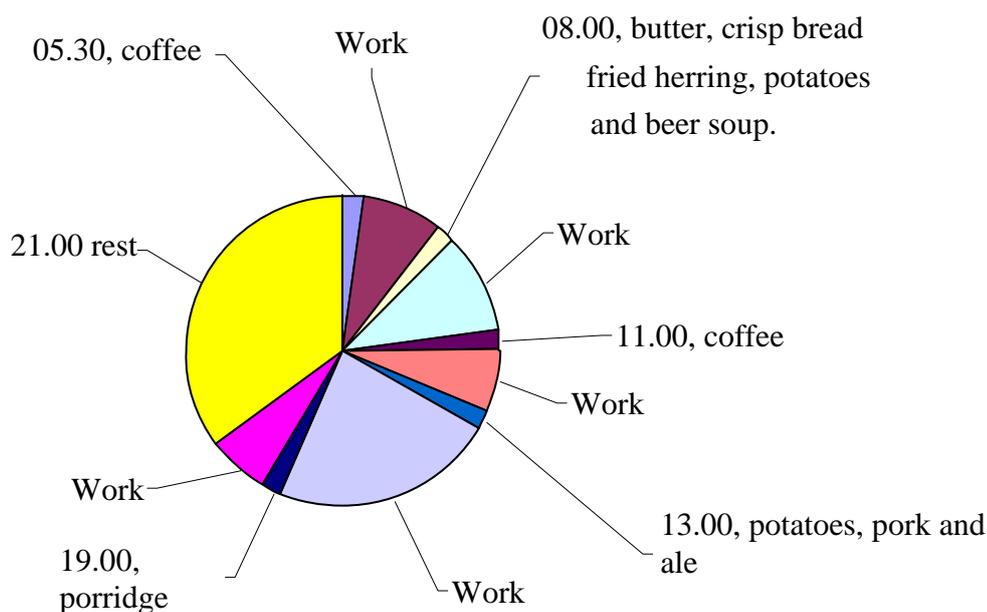
Dry food per person and day

- 1 tt 33 ort dry rye bread
- 25 ort Dutch cumin cheese
- 50 ort smoked pork
- 2 cubic inch vodka

In a protocol from the same unit written eleven years earlier the same food was listed. Besides that cheese, smoked pork and vodka was missing and rye flour was added. Which indicates that the variation was pretty small?

One tt= 84 ort, 1 ort = 4,25 grams = 100 korn.

A day in the end of the 1800s¹⁰



Glasses were spread in the 1890s¹¹, but in the beginning they were only used at special occasions.

The cutlery used was knives and wooden spoons. The fork, that had been used by the rich since the 1600s, was not used by ordinary people until the late 1800s¹¹ and then also only during special occasions.

As late as the late 1800s, ordinary people could be seen eating directly from the pot (soup and likewise), but many appears also to have been eating from wooden plates or clay ones. While the richer people had tin plates. Porcelain plates and cups were spread over the Swedish countryside in the 1870s¹¹.

¹⁰ Answers to the Nordic Museum's list of questions about food preparation and eating habits from 1928. Written by Anna Sjöbom who was born in Dalarna in the late 1800s (but also reporters from other parts of Sweden describes similar things). According to her, they baked once in spring and once in autumn. The baking lasted two and a half days. The first two days they baked hard bread and the third they baked the soft bread and when it was finished, a part of the soft bread was given away to the rest of the village. Furthermore, the neighbours would during the whole time baking was going on, have fresh bread. But then when it was baked in one of the other farms they got back the gifts. The finest bread, which would be eaten at celebrations, was baked from pure rye flour, but the ordinary bread was made of mixed grain. Wheat did not grow in the area, so those who wanted to bake wheat bread had to buy grain, which made wheat bread unusual. In addition, they every day made a variety of porridge-like dishes cooked in cream or water, flour and salt. And more filling dishes like barley cooked in pork broth and then fried in lard. They apparently also that ate rice pudding, but only at Christmas. The beer soup mentioned above was cooked through that a beverage similar to beer and water was boiled and then thickened with milk and flour, then pieces of bread was poured into the pot and everything was boiled.

¹¹ From one of the replies on a nation wide interview study made by reporters on a mission from Nordiska museet (The Nordic Museum in Stockholm) in 1941 regarding when industrial products began to show up on the country side.

The instruction from 1923 for field kitchens in the Swedish military (Kokinstruktion, PA Nordstedt & Söner, Stockholm, 1923), counted 60 about dishes. More than 10 of these were "soups", about the same number were fruit soups, 10 were porridge or similar things, 20 were meat dishes (beef stews, stuffed cabbage, dill meat, steak, patents steak, patents buns, minced meat beef, roast beef, veal, cutlets, meatballs, fried pork, pork and potatoes, fragile sausage, hash, potato mash with salted meat, stew with boiled meat), two fish and 6 were flour dishes. As the stomach filling component to combine with the above was suggested: boiled potatoes, mashed potatoes, fried potatoes, stewed carrots, stewed broad beans, creamed peas, browned turnips, beans, pie mash and cabbage mash.

The instructions indicate that the diets differed quite a bit from the current ones. The today still fairly common dishes are meat soup, pea soup, rice pudding, pancake, black pudding and some meat dishes. In addition, noted that rice and pasta still were missing in the military alimentation besides in the form of desserts (apple rice and rice pudding). Although both rice and pasta are very suitable foods in a camp, because they are dry and therefore easy to store in the field, and a portion of pasta/rice generally is less bulky and lighter than a serving of potatoes.

Thus sometime after 1923 today's dishes were introduced in to our kitchens. The supermarkets advertising in the newspapers suggests that started in the 1930s (see the chapter The developments in Sweden during the 1900s), when advertising of rice and pasta began to be seen. But why did so much happened in the food sector after 1930?

Energy shortages and undeveloped stoves

Until the 1860s, we mainly cooked our food in the fireplaces. Then iron stoves gradually came to use in rural areas (see also the chapter History of Technology). In larger cities, such as Stockholm, the gas net was built from the mid-1800s and about 1910 regular gas stoves came to use in homes. The new stoves meant that the environment in the kitchen got much better and it got much easier to cook, since the temperature could be kept even. In addition, these techniques improved the possibilities to bake cakes/buns, which went hand in hand with the growing coffee culture. Much later (in the 1950s) was the time for breakthrough for the electric stoves and they rather quickly out competed the iron stoves.

Lack of long-distance food transports

With the trucks and the modern cargo vessels (from 1920 and onwards) and the refrigeration technique, the transportation problems disappeared (see also how the means of transport development in the chapter History of Technology).

Fear of trying new foods

Increased travel outside the villages, the introduction of mass communication in the form of newspapers, radio, cinema and later television, and advertising about exciting food enticed us to try new products (see further the chapter The development in Sweden during the 1900s). A contributing factor was probably also that the young people from the 1930:s and onwards, due to industrialization and urbanization, to a greater extent than in the past could get their own households with their own diets independent of others (the master's) taste. Urbanization also meant that people had to buy their food, and for them it was more reasonable to try something new, like spaghetti, compared to those who farmed their own food (potatoes).

Poor storage facilities

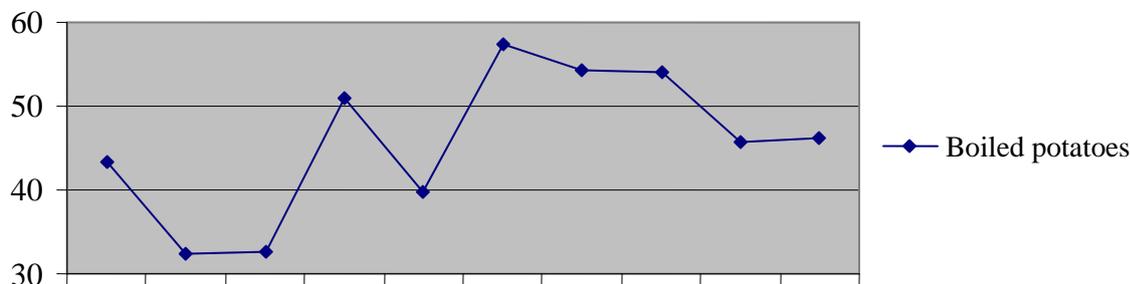
With the introduction of refrigerators, from the 1930s (see the chapter Prestige), the fresh goods did not need to be consumed within a few days. Instead, they had basically today's possibilities to vary the diet from day to day. Apart from that they had not yet freezers or frozen food (that became common in the 1960s) and that the range of "exotic" products were much more limited.

Hard work

Much of the hardest work tasks were gradually replaced with machines during the 1900s and people were freed to do physically easier tasks, such as industrial assembly and office work. Which probably meant that the interest in heavy food decreased?

The schools in Stockholm served, in spring 1958, some "modern" dishes like spaghetti Bolognese, even if only one time during the semester. Pasta was, however, also served in the form of stowed macaronis (2 times) and macaroni pudding (one time). Even cooked rice was actually on the menu (one time). During the period from 1958 to 1980, the incidence of rice/pasta raised up to 8-10% each, of all the dishes (chart 1). The nowadays so common seasonings ketchup and curry powder were seen in the menus from 1962.

Percentage of all meals.



School food in Stockholm

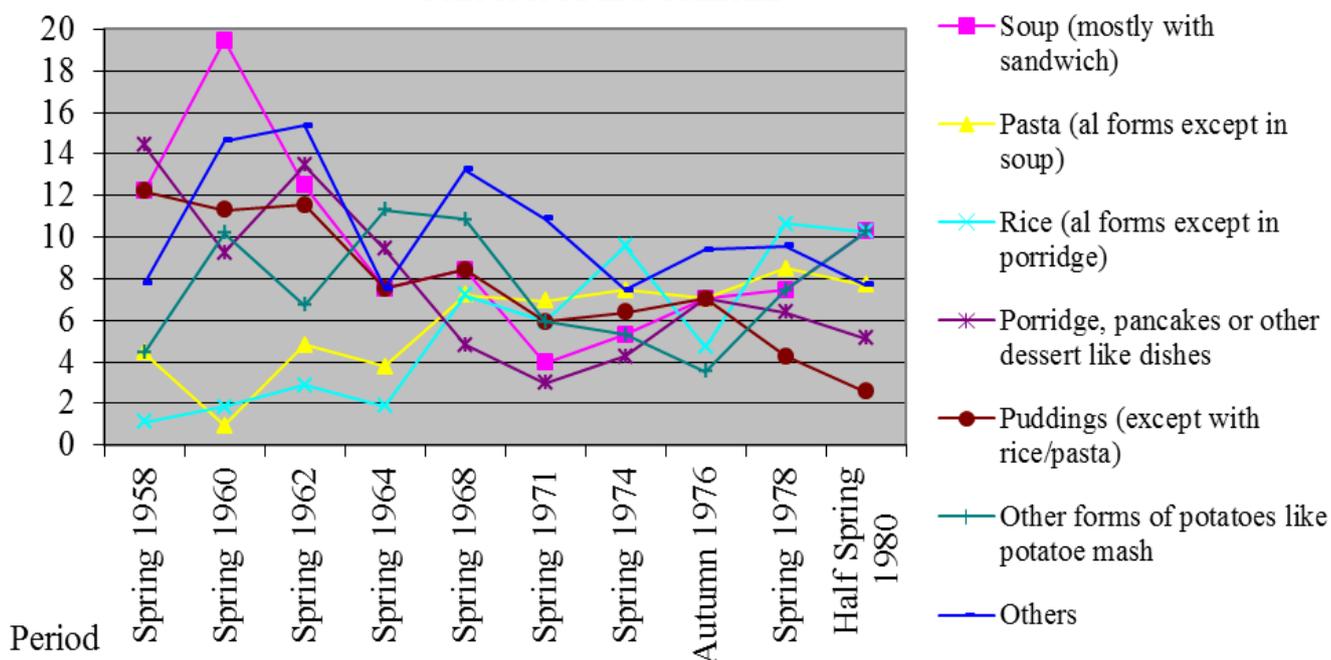
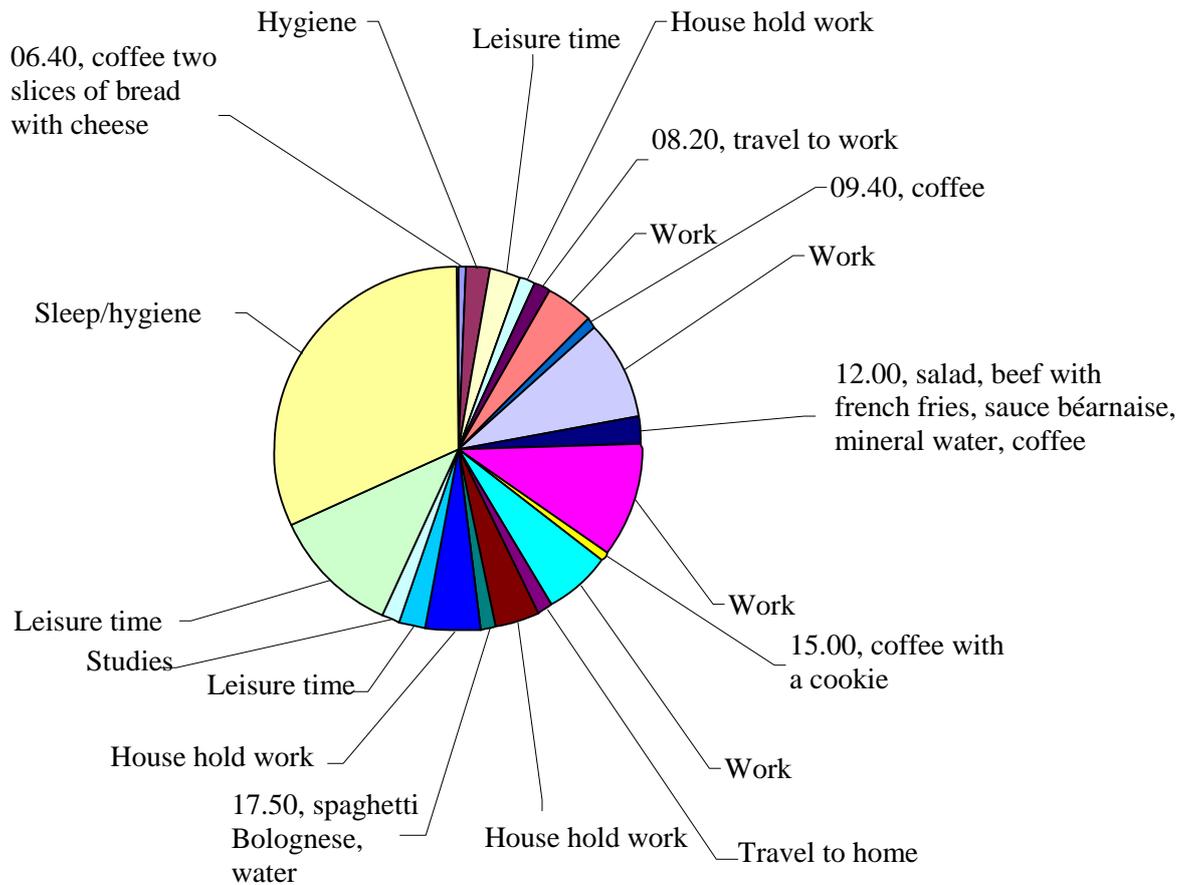


Chart 1a. Percentage of all dishes served with boiled potatoes.

Chart 1b. The distribution between pasta, rice, soups (often pea soup with pork), "sweet" dishes such as porridge/pancake/puddings, other forms of potatoes (mashed potatoes, etc.), and the rest (dishes like sailor steak). Data from old school menus for the public elementary schools in Stockholm.

In 2011, it was, at least in the schools using the studied menu, about as usual to serve rice dishes (19%) or pasta ones (25%) as dishes with boiled potatoes (21%). In addition, a lot of international influences could be seen, and only 10 of the approximately 150 dishes were recognizable from, for example, 1978 years school menu.

A day in the end of the 1900s



The distribution of time between different activities is based on Swedish men's average use of time during an average weekday in the late 1900s, according to Statistics Sweden (Rapport 91 Välfärd och ojämlikhet I ett 20-årsperspektiv, SCB (Statistics Sweden), Stockholm, 1997, table 5.1 about the average time for different activities/day). The report states that men did not use more than a total of 62 minutes a day for meals, which to me sounds a bit unlikely. Because in my experience most people eat breakfast, drink coffee in the morning as well as in the afternoon, have lunch and dinner.