

Appledorian recipes

Traditionally in Appledore people ate what they could find locally and that meant making use of what the sea provide. And if the sea didn't provide they had to make creative use of leftovers or go without. Fish, mussels, cockles and seaweed (laver) featured heavily on the menu, but people also ate pigs reared in their own sties, rabbits and vegetables they grew themselves. Little was wasted. In a world threatened by food shortages and global warming there is a lesson here for us all.

Although some of the dishes described below were made elsewhere in Devon the recipes given here seem to be uniquely Appledorian and were passed down through the generations ... We would be grateful for any additions or corrections. Please either write to Appledore Recipes, Appledore Book Festival, Festival Office, Appledore Library, the Quay, Appledore, or e-mail: info@appledorebookfestival.co.uk

Acknowledgements

Carole Bain and her books What's Cooking in an Appledore Kitchen published by the North Devon Museums Trust and sold by the Appledore Maritime Museum.

Appledore Bake

This was the traditional way to prepare a Sunday roast in Appledore. People used their local baker's oven to cook the meal and so saved on fuel – perhaps this custom could be revived in our era of spiralling fuel bills and global warming!

Ingredients

Meat – traditionally this was a brisket of beef but it could be pork or whatever was available.
Parsley or chopped onion
Potatoes

Method

Half-fill a large dish with water and add the parsley and chopped onion
Halve the potatoes (if large) and place in the water (the tops of the potatoes should be out of the water)
Lay the meat over the potatoes
Cook slowly until the meat is ready. The meat juices will give the potatoes a delicious flavour
Add salt and white pepper to taste.

Another name for Appledore bake is “schooner on the rocks” or “boily-bake”. It's said that all the ships in the Bristol Channel had this dish on the go – constantly replacing potatoes as they were eaten. The captains would often give meat to ships that had run out of supplies.

Hog's pudding

This is a traditional Devon dish rather like haggis, but the method and ingredients provided seem to be distinctively Appledorian. A pig's head or shoulder of pork cooked in water with pig's trotters. The meat mixture was minced and washed groats (barley seed) added. The mixture was left to set. Many older Appledorians remember “Mammy Kift” selling hogs pudding on Saturdays on the Quay in the 1950's – and although she sometimes had one or two left over it was a good idea to order yours the week before.

Heel taps

These were potatoes sliced thinly – about 6 mm thick, dipped in batter and deep-fried and they could be bought from chip shops in the village. Today's health-conscious cooks might use vegetable oil for this, but traditionally beef dripping was used.

Laver (seaweed)

Laver is harvested when it was black in the winter months (the months with an “r”). It has to be washed over seven times to remove grit and shells.

Thus far there seems to be general agreement – but Appledore cooks seem to have differed in the amount of cooking and their methods used for cooking laver. Some suggest careful mincing and cooking slowly for an hour in a cupful of vinegar and a little salt, stirring at intervals. Others cook

their laver for 5-6 hours without any vinegar or water. Another variant was to cook the laver on a flat tray after first removing any grit or shells.

All this was tremendously hard work and most people today buy their laver ready prepared from a fishmonger or butchers and simply heat it up with a little bacon or vinegar. (Note to vegetarians the bacon was traditional but not essential.)

Laver was traditionally served with bacon, a fried egg and fried bread to make a tasty and sustaining breakfast - ideal for an early start on the salmon boats. Another traditional way to serve laver was to spread it on a thin slice of buttered toast.

Cut-rounds

In Appledore the traditional Devon cream tea wasn't served on scones – people used a special bread roll called a cut-round. The cut-round was sold in Scott's Model Bakery in Bideford and seems to have been an ordinary bread roll but baked closely together on a tray so that the rolls melded together and had to be cut round by the baker. This modern recipe for bread rolls has been judged to be very close to the original.

260 ml Milk
3 tbsp Water
60 ml butter, melted
3 tbsp Sugar
1 tsp Salt
250g Plain Flour
250g Strong bread flour
2½ tsp yeast

Method

1. Put the flours, salt, sugar and yeast into a bowl.
2. Melt the butter.
3. Mix the butter, water and milk with the flour mixture to make a firm dough.
4. Knead the dough on a floured board for 10 minutes.
5. Divide the dough into 10 and shape each piece into a round bun with a flat top.
6. Place the buns close together on a greased baking sheet and cover with a tea towel in a warm place.
7. When the buns are doubled in size bake in a medium oven for 15-20 minutes until golden.
7. Cut round the buns and serve with cream and jam.

Nubbies

These were small hard cakes – and once again to save fuel you cooked them in a cooling oven after lunch. They would be in ready in time for tea!

Ingredients

226g self-raising flour
113g fat – traditionally a mixture of margarine and lard was used although modern cooks can use just margarine.
113g sugar
A handful of dried fruit such as sultanas
One egg
Milk

Method

1. Rub the margarine into the flour to make crumbs.
2. Stir in the dried fruit.
3. Add the egg and enough milk to make a stiff dough. Form into about ten small cakes and place them in greased small muffin tins or on a greased muffin tray.
4. Place in a cool oven and cook slowly.

Nubbies are best enjoyed warm (with jam and butter if you happen to have a sweet tooth). In any case they should be eaten as soon as possible as they don't keep well.

