

Foods from around the world: finding out how and why some foods or dishes are part of our culture

ANZAC biscuits

- *Anzac biscuits* have long been associated with the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) ...
- The **biscuits** were sent by wives and women's groups to soldiers abroad in World War 1 because the ingredients do not spoil easily and the **biscuits** kept well during naval transportation.



Curry

Historically, the word "**curry**" was first used in British cuisine to denote dishes of meat (often leftover lamb) in a Western-style sauce flavoured with **curry** powder. It is a term the British used to describe all dishes flavoured with spices.

The word 'curry' doesn't exist in Indian culture as each spiced dish has its own name to describe its flavour and spices eg: Balti is a medium spiced dish made with fresh tomatoes, garlic and ginger. Jalfrezi is a hot dish made with lots of onions and korma is a mild dish made with cream or yoghurt. There are many types of 'curries' and they can be made with different meats, fish or vegetables.

One of the most popular British curries is Chicken Tikka Masala which was actually meant to be invented in Birmingham by an Indian chef who had to improvise and produce a curry dish for a customer using what was in his cupboard – a tin of tomato soup, yoghurt and spices!



Sandwich

The word sandwich is meant to originate from the Earl of Sandwich, who in 1762, was too busy gambling to stop and eat a meal. He asked for a piece of meat to be held between 2 pieces of bread to stop his cards becoming greasy.... therefore creating the sandwich! His friends ordered the 'same as Sandwich' and the rest is history!

The most popular sandwich in Britain is meant to be the cheese and ham but other fashionable fillings include avocado and chicken and smoked salmon and cream cheese. The type of bread used now is more varied from white sliced to bagels to wraps.



Spaghetti Bolognese

The town of Bologna in Italy denies this popular British dish actually exists. The Italians eat a slow cooked meat based sauce they call Ragu (similar to the Bolognese) but traditionally they would never eat it with spaghetti pasta. They would choose to eat the ragu with tagliatelle or a tube pasta like rigatoni or penne.



Staple Foods

These are foods which make up a **large proportion of a diet**, are easy to grow or make and eaten throughout the year (not seasonal) They are usually vegetable or plant based as these are traditionally easier and cheaper to access but it depends on where you are in the world. For example, the Eskimo's staple foods would include fish and whale meat whereas in China it would be rice or noodles.

In the UK the traditional staple foods would be **potatoes and bread** which are both filling, energy giving (complex carbohydrates), easy and cheap to grow or make and can be eaten throughout the year.

In the last century, there have been so many changes in the UK diet due to several factors such as **immigration, transportation and technology** to name a few, that popular staple foods now include rice, pasta, noodles and maize based foods like tortillas. Other staple foods are also becoming more popular like sweet potatoes and quinoa.



Bread

The earliest **bread** was made in or around 8000BC. It is one of the main and earliest forms of food for mankind

Basic bread is made from flour (crushed grains) and water to form a dough, and then baked. It is thought to originate from Egypt and can be seen drawn in hieroglyphs on the walls of ancient Egyptian tombs.

A lot of breads contain a raising agent, usually **yeast**, which produces carbon dioxide bubbles which then push the dough up and forms a spongy, soft texture.

Yeast needs **4 main things** to be activated and grow:

- **Food** (energy from flour or sugar)
 - **Moisture** – water or milk
- **Warmth** (the optimum temp is 38C but yeast will start to die at 55C and above.
- **Time** – yeast will start to produce CO2 within 20 mins. For most recipes, dough needs to be left to rise for 1 hour to 'double in size'



Dried yeast is very popular with bakers

Pasta

Most of us think of **pasta** as a culturally Italian food, however it is likely to be the descendent of ancient Asian noodles. A common belief about **pasta** is that it was brought to Italy from China by Marco Polo during the 13th century.

Pasta is a type of noodle that's traditionally made from flour, water or eggs. It is formed into different noodle shapes and then cooked in boiling water. There are approximately **350** different types of pasta around the world! For example, due to its shape, farfalle pasta is often called "butterfly" or "bowtie" pasta. Cooks use different shapes and sizes of pasta for different purposes. The Italians choose the shape of the pasta according to the type of sauce – long skinny pasta like spaghetti with creamy sauces and long flat pasta with rich, meaty sauces. Pasta can be coloured – usually red with tomato, green with spinach and black with squid ink!

