



# History of San Francisco's Food



## In the Beginning...



Ever since the first human beings walked the earth, food was needed for survival. Throughout history, people have eaten foods that were found in their local region,

whether they were hunting for meat, gathering fruits and nuts, or growing crops. The history of San Francisco's food is an interesting one that starts way back in time.

## 5,000 Years Ago...



The original **inhabitants** or people that lived in the San Francisco area, were the **Ohlone** people. They are a Native

American tribe that has lived in the region for at least 5,000 years. Thousands of years ago, food was plentiful in the Bay Area. The Ohlone were able to feed their tribes by hunting animals like deer, rabbits and birds, as well as by fishing, and harvesting seafood like clams and mussels. They also gathered acorns that they ground and cooked into porridge or small cakes, and ate fruit, berries, roots, greens, wild vegetables, and seeds from native grasses.

## Missionary Meals



By 1776, the Spanish Missionaries had arrived in San Francisco and began building Mission Dolores and changing the Ohlone way of

life. At the time, San Francisco was a small **pueblo**, or town called **Yerba Buena**. Like the Ohlone, the missionaries ate foods that came from the local waters and land. But they also grew crops like corn, peas and

beans, and planted grape vines and fruit trees. The Missionaries raised animals or **livestock**, for food and other products like tallow, used to make soap and candles.

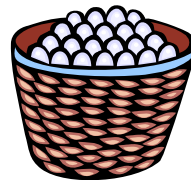
## Gold Rush Grub



In 1848, gold was discovered in the foothills east of San Francisco. The population of San Francisco quickly grew from 1,000 to 25,000 people! Many folks made a lot of money during the gold rush,

by providing goods and services the gold miners and their families needed when they arrived in San Francisco. Making sure there was plenty to eat became a big business!

## Pacific Egg Company



One business that came to life during the Gold Rush was the **Pacific Egg Company**. They sold eggs from the common murre

seabird that lived on the **Farallon Islands**, 27 miles off the coast of San Francisco. These large eggs tasted like chicken eggs, and were gathered from thousands of nests found on the rocky islands. Special egg shirts were designed with many little pockets in them. This allowed the collectors to safely carry the eggs back to San Francisco. Once there, they sold the eggs for a price that today equals \$4.50 per egg! From 1851 to the 1880's, the Pacific Egg Company sold about 14 million murre eggs. They took so many eggs that the seabird population almost disappeared from the islands! That's because with all the eggs taken away, there weren't enough eggs left to hatch into new baby birds.



## Bread and Chocolate



Some companies that started during the Gold Rush still remain in business today! One such company is the **Boudin Bakery**, which began baking its famous sourdough bread in 1849. Special wild yeasts floating in the San Francisco air got into the bread batter and created a unique, sour taste. Another company is **Ghirardelli Chocolate Company**, which began selling chocolate in 1852. Domingo Ghirardelli came to San Francisco from Italy so he could strike it rich as a gold miner. Although he failed at mining, Ghirardelli ended up making his fortune by selling chocolate to local residents instead.

The 1906 Earthquake



On April 18, 1906, a huge earthquake shook the San Francisco Bay Area. A big fire broke out and within days, 25,000 buildings were destroyed and 250,000 people became homeless. Camps were set up in Golden Gate Park and other open spaces throughout the city. Providing food and water to everybody was very important! Bakeries in nearby towns like Oakland and Berkeley baked loaves of bread 24 hours a day. Food was brought in from across the country to help the earthquake victims, although fresh vegetables were hard to come by. Thousands of people did what they could to make sure the earthquake victims had enough food to survive.

## Victory Gardens



In 1941, the United States entered the Second World War. In order to **conserve** or save the things needed to support the war effort, people were asked to grow **Victory Gardens**. These homegrown

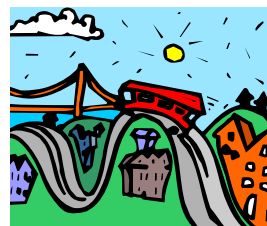
gardens helped feed families with fruits and vegetables, so that bigger farms could send their food to the soldiers fighting the war. The residents of San Francisco, just like others across the nation, grew their Victory Gardens with patriotism and pride. 250 Victory Gardens were planted in Golden Gate Park, and the lawn in front of City Hall was torn up to plant a Victory Garden too! In 2008, another Victory Garden was planted in front of City Hall to remind people that gardening at home is a great way to get healthy food that is locally grown.

## School Gardens and Urban Farms



Today, San Francisco has many **school gardens** where students learn about growing food. From strawberries to fava beans, students sample and enjoy the fresh tastes of the plants they have grown. San Francisco also has many **community gardens** and **urban farms** like **Aleman Farm** and **Double Rock Garden**. These gardens and farms have fruit orchards and vegetable beds that provide food to local neighborhoods. Volunteers can work on these farms to learn, and help grow food.

## Fresh Food for All



While San Francisco is famous for its delicious food, not all residents have **access**, or the easy ability to get, fresh and healthy foods. Some neighborhoods don't have enough markets that sell fruits and vegetables, and the residents of these communities must travel far to buy these healthy foods. Many people are working hard to support these neighborhoods by bringing in, or locally growing fresh fruits and vegetables so that all San Francisco residents can eat well and be healthy!