

FORT TICONDEROGA

1774 Soldiers Mess at Home!



Feeds 3-4

- 1/4 lb. of bacon (slab or pre-sliced)
 - 2 cups of black-eyed peas, white navy beans, or similar beans
 - 1 onion
 - 3 carrots or parsnips
 - 1-2 other root vegetables: turnips, radishes, or greens (optional)
 - Salt to taste
1. If starting with dried beans, rinse 2 cups of dried beans and soak overnight.
 2. Dice up the bacon and the onion and add both to a 2-quart soup pot on medium heat.
 3. Allow the bacon grease to fill the bottom of the pan and the onions to brown slightly while stirring periodically.
 4. Wash or peel the carrots or parsnips and any other vegetables. Dice them and add to the pot.

5. Drain off the beans and add them to the pot.
6. Add 1 quart of water to the pot, stirring up all grease and browning from the bottom of the pot.
7. Keep at a low boil for 20-30 minutes, or until the diced vegetables soften. Add water if the beans take up all the broth.
8. Lower heat and allow pot to simmer until beans become tender and their skins split and start to fall away.
9. Salt to taste. When the broth thickens slightly, the stew is ready to serve.

Historical Background

The British army kept a peacetime garrison of soldiers at Fort Ticonderoga from 1763 to 1775. This accounts for the longest period in Fort Ticonderoga's history. The wives and children of the British soldiers often followed them on campaign; and during times of peace, they lived together. By the time the Americans captured Fort Ticonderoga on May 10, 1775, there were 29 soldiers from the 26th Regiment of Foot and 24 women and children, under the command of Captain William Delaplace. British soldiers consumed three meals a day: breakfast, dinner, and supper. Dinner, the midday meal, was the largest meal of the day and consisted of meat such as salted pork, beef, or fish as well as peas, vegetables, rice, and bread. Soldiers in the British Army in North America received rations each day or each week. Every day a soldier paid 2 ½ pence from their wages which entitled them to:

Flour or bread 1 ½ pounds
Beef 1 pound
or Pork ½ pound
Peas ¼ pint
Butter 1 ounce
Rice 1 ounce

To provide more variety and nutrition in their diet, soldiers and their families grew gardens and tended livestock at Fort Ticonderoga. There were six acres of gardens where soldiers and their families grew root vegetables and a variety of greens. Sheep, steers, and cows provided fresh meat and milk for the soldiers and their families too. Soldiers also bought food from local farmers along Lake Champlain at a market set up just outside Fort Ticonderoga. Dinner was a big deal and 'Messes,' of 5 to 8 soldiers and their wives dined together at one o'clock each day. Everyone would dress up for the occasion, like a fine meal today. We hope that you have a fine meal and enjoy your Soldier's Mess at Home!