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Dining in Regency Elegance: Dishes Enjoyed by Jane Austen

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Desserts

Desserts were the grand finale to dinners; the most fashionable sweet endings were ices, but the following were also well-known dishes.

Quince Paste

Using quince pears, the cook made a jelly and then added sugar until it became a fine, moldable candy.



Cheesecake

The consistency of the cheese was much different from the modern cheesecake we enjoy now. This classic dessert was topped with fruit or almonds.

“At Devizes we had comfortable rooms and a good dinner, to which we sat down about five; amongst other things we had asparagus and a lobster, which made me wish for you, and some cheesecakes...”

Jane to Cassandra, 1799

Good Manners

Meals were a great opportunity to show one's wealth, good breeding, and taste. Knowing the proper etiquette for a formal dinner was necessary to stay in good standing with the rest of society. Here are some:

- Courses could number anywhere from 2 to 20, so pace yourself!
- Gentlemen always offer to serve the ladies next to them.
- Always eat as quietly as possible. Slurping soup is especially undignified.
- Use appropriate silverware.

Beverages

Aside from tea, these were other popular drinks during the Regency.

Spruce Beer

Similar in the making to root beer, we know Jane made this herself from her letters.

Negus

This was a popular punch made for balls which consisted of wine, nutmeg, lemon juice, hot water, and sugar.

Café Au Lait

Whether for breakfast or an afternoon pick-me-up, coffee was a popular drink of the Regency.

Dining in Regency Elegance

Dishes Enjoyed by Jane Austen

By Lindsey Puterbaugh



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Tea-time

This most British of meals started before lunch was a common practice. The foods here go best with British tea, like Earl Grey.

Sandwichs

Popularized in the late Eighteenth Century by the Earl of Sandwich, a sandwich could be served for lunch as well as snacks at tea-time. Common sandwiches of the time consisted of cucumber, cheese, or meat.



White Soup

This is the same soup Mr. Bingley had served at his Netherfield Ball, and consists of veal broth, egg yolks, ground almonds, and cream. This is a temperamental soup, not easy to keep from congealing; therefore, serving it tells of the high skill level of the chef which Mr. Bingley hired to serve his guests.



Dinner Entree's

Regency dinners were often very heavy and the pièce-de-resistance of the day. Cooking all day for a dinner was not uncommon, but ultimately worth the effort.

Beefsteak

Beef was, and still is, a staple of British cuisine. A contemporary way to cook steak was to fry it in butter, and serve it in gravy; finally, it was topped it with shallots or onions and garnished with parsley.



Partridges

While partridges may not have been shot at Longbourne in the novel, they were still often seen in Regency-style cooking. Stewed in bacon grease and gravy with vegetables and herbs, the bird would be juicy and flavorful.

Pork and Apples

After roasting the loin or neck of pork, the dish was dressed with applesauce and served; this was a sweet way to enjoy a rich meat.



"We sat down to dinner a little after five, and had some beef-steaks and a boiled fowl, but no oyster sauce."- Jane in a letter to her sister Cassandra, 1798

Boyle, Laura. "Regency Recipes." *The World of Jane Austen*. Last modified 2013. Accessed September 26, 2013.