



Capt. Earl J. Gaylord, '32, Mess Officer, and other fighting men tell of strange foods consumed in the South Pacific

Iowa State Men Describe Food In South Pacific

Gertrud Ortgies presents food experiences as told by men returned from distant Pacific area

STUDENTS from Iowa State who have returned from fighting in other parts of the world give enlightening accounts of the unusual foods which comprised their daily diet.

Gerald Rabourn, recently discharged from the United States Coast Guard Reserve, recounts some experiences while in the Virgin Islands.

"The town, Charlotte Amalie, on St. Thomas Island, where I was stationed, is inhabited mostly by natives who speak English. The people are lazy, their principal occupation being fishing. The native women carry everything on their heads.

"All the water used in the Virgin Islands is caught from the roof tops into reservoirs. There are no wells. They use shutters instead of windows because the frequent hurricanes would shatter the glass. Though the humidity is high and the temperature ranges from 60 in winter to 100 in summer, the trade winds keep it cool and comfortable.

There are few restaurants in Charlotte Amalie. The food is expensive and not palatable. The average meal costs a dollar and consists of a main dish which is a mixture of rice, potatoes and meat, and a salad of chopped greens. They serve a light bread which is baked in long loaves. The dessert is usually cake made from fine imported flours and the beverage is coffee or pepsi-cola. The islands have few cows, so milk, cheese, cream and butter are scarce. Lobsters are occasionally served as a main dish.

"Because there is little agriculture, the inhabitants have few vegetables. All meat, including poultry, is imported. Coconuts and bananas are abundant. Sliced bananas fried in deep fat resemble potato chips and are served with beverages."

Wylsie R. Platts, who was in the Pacific 22 months as a Marine, liked New Zealand. The island is beautiful and green and the climate is ideal.

"For forty cents I could buy an excellent meal. The steaks they served were huge. We could have all the milk, butter and cheese we wanted. The delicious bread baked by the women included a variety of white, brown, nut and prune. There were many vegetables and for dessert we had cakes and pastries. Tea was the beverage served at every meal.

"New Zealand is important for its dairying, but the people do not drink milk or eat butter, cheese or beef. They used to ship it all to England, but now they sell it to the Americans. Women 18 years old have false teeth because they do not get enough calcium in their diet.

"On the Marshall Islands, Eniwetok and Kwajalean, we used to catch clams and mussels and eat them raw. The pure white mussels in the larger clams were about 2½ inches in diameter and 8 inches long. They had a taste similar to dried codfish.

"Coconuts and bananas grew all over. The natives make flour and paste out of the coconut and drink the coconut milk. They break up baked coconut shells and use them for chewing tobacco. The shells turn the teeth an ugly blue.

"They cannot grow vegetables in the sand so they eat 'palm cabbage' which grows in the top of a palm tree. It looks and tastes like artichokes or brussel sprouts and is eaten either raw or cooked.

"In Samoa the inhabitants make tortillas out of the flour and use a coconut paste for butter. They eat pork and drink goat's milk. Many root vegetables and tropical fruits, including tangerines, lemons and pineapples are grown on the island.

"We found papayas and avocados in the New Hebrides and the Fiji Islands. The papayas have a bright orange flesh and are sweet. The avocados are 6 or 8 inches long and 5 inches in diameter.

"There are many gardens on the islands because the soil is good. The inhabitants specialize in root vegetables because it is too hot to grow them above the ground. I didn't see any bread, but they used tapioca made from the poisonous cassava root.

"Saipan, Guam and Tinian had lots of rice and green vegetables grew wild. Papayas, avocados and pineapples are abundant on these islands.

"We sleep in sand, eat sand and wear sand," writes Captain Lee Bagby, from Sharjah, Trucial Oman, Arabia. "We have excellent food—most of which comes from the States. Tonight we had chicken, Idaho potatoes, peas, fresh bread and butter, ice cream and fruit jello. In a hot place like this good food does more for morale than anything in the world.