Scurvy Dog Dinner

on board HM Bark Endeavour
Wednesday 1 November 2006

Entree

Barley Gruel - *made with Pearl Barley, raisins, raw sugar, 5 pints water, 1 pint Goats milk, 1/2 pint Portuguese white wine.*

Main Course

Salted Beef Pot Roast - *corned silverside cooked in a flavoursome spiced broth with root vegetables. Served with wilted Warrigal greens and sauerkraut (perfect for combating scurvy). Presented with horseradish cream and a white sauce.*

Desert

Apple Pie - *courtesy of Mr Joseph Banks's American dried apples which he took with him on the trip served with custard, courtesy of the chickens and goat on board.*

A special dinner to mark the launch of
Mrs Cook's Book of Recipes - for mariners in distant seas
by John Dunmore

Catering by Redpepper Catering - email redpeppercatering@tpg.com.au

The Scurvy Dog Dinner – HM Bark Endeavour 1 Nov 2006

Barley Gruel

I made this gruel at home and served it at the dinner.

10 oz Pearl Barley
4 table spoons raisins
3 tablespoons raw sugar
5 pints water
1 pint Goats Milk
1/2 pint Portuguese white wine

Soak Barley overnight in half the water. Next day bring to a boil and simmer until very tender. Add water as needed. Mix to a paste by either rub through a coarse sieve, or grind in a mortar and pestle (use a blender - its easier and quicker).
Add the rest of the water, the raisins and sugar bring back to a simmer. Add the goat milk until it is the (right) consistancy, of thin porridge. Add the white wine simmer for a few minutes more. Serve warm to room temperature.

Notes: Gruel is basically porridge. Oat Gruel was the most common but it was different to the porridge we have today. Oat Gruel was finely sieved and the end result is almost jelly like. It does however taste much the same. I therefore decided to make the Barley gruel as most people will not be familiar with its use, except of course in soups and the current trendy dish starting to appear in Sydney restaurants, Barley Risotto.
As noted in Mrs Cook's recipe Barley gruel was not sieved but Pearl Barley was added to water and made into a "fine paste". This is hard to achieve, though it depends on what is meant by a "paste". In most 18th century recipes normally a paste is a mix of ground grain (or in other words roughly ground flour) and water. After trying different methods such as a mortar and pestle I decided this was too time consuming and soaked the barley overnight, cooked it until tender then used a blender and ended up with a similar effect. Mrs Cook does not add the raisins and the milk was optional in her recipe but I found the barley gruel just made with water to be a bit insipid, as well, with a splash of wine, the gruel had a very slight sour aftertaste. Adding the milk smoothed out this sourness and I felt that since this is a special occasion we could add the raisins. I did try adding Mace (the dried "skins" from nutmeg, which has a slighter but coarser nutmeg taste) as Mrs Cook does for the oatmeal gruel but nutmeg and barley just did not seem to work together. The wine I have used is a Portuguese wine similar to what would have been available in Cooks time, it is a slightly sweet wine not dry like most modern Australian wines. But in Cook's time the wine would have been oxidized but still have the sweetness.
No doubt this gruel is very healthy but I still found that barley was not as great as oats in terms of flavour. Only by adding a dollop of cream and fresh strawberries did it come anywhere near to being an interesting dish. Of course this was not an option available to most 18th century sailors.