

Australian Studies

Australian Icons

Suitable age group: 10 and older

These printable lessons will be added to as time goes along.



ANZAC Biscuits



During World War 1, the wives, mothers and girlfriends of the Australian soldiers were concerned about the nutritional value of the food being supplied to their men.

There was a problem. Any food they sent to the fighting men had to be carried in the ships of the Merchant Navy. Most of these were lucky to maintain a speed of ten knots (18.5 kilometres per hour). Most had no refrigerated facilities, so any food sent had to be able to remain edible for periods in excess of two months. A group of women came up with the answer -a biscuit with all the nutritional value possible. The basis was a Scottish recipe using rolled oats.

These oats were used extensively in Scotland, especially for a heavy porridge that helped counteract the extremely cold climate.

The ingredients they used were: rolled oats, sugar, plain flour, coconut, butter, golden syrup or treacle, bicarbonate of soda and boiling water. All these items did not readily spoil. At first the biscuits were called Soldiers' Biscuits, but after the landing on Gallipoli, they were renamed ANZAC Biscuits.

A point of interest is the lack of eggs to bind the ANZAC biscuit mixture together. Because of the war, many of the poultry farmers had joined the services, thus eggs were scarce. The binding agent for the biscuits was golden syrup or treacle. Eggs that were sent long distances were coated with a product called *ke peg* (like Vaseline) then packed in airtight containers filled with sand to cushion the eggs and keep out the air.

As the war drew on, many groups like the CWA (Country Women's Association), church groups, schools and other women's organisations devoted a great deal of time to the making of ANZAC biscuits. To ensure that the biscuits remained crisp, they were packed in used tins, such as Billy Tea tins. You can see some of these tins appearing in your supermarket as exact replicas of the ones of earlier years.

Look around. The tins were airtight, thus no moisture in the air was able to soak into the biscuits and make them soft. Most people would agree there is nothing worse than a soft biscuit.

During World War 2, with refrigeration in so many Merchant Navy Ships, the biscuits were not made to any great extent. It was now possible to send a greater variety of food, like fruit cake.

ANZAC biscuits are still made today. They can also be purchased from supermarkets and specialty biscuit shops. Around ANZAC Day, these biscuits are also often used by veterans' organisations to raise funds for the care and welfare of aged war veterans.

Anzac Biscuits Recipe (*Melt & Mix Method*)

Ingredients:

125 gm Butter
2 tablespoons Golden Syrup
1 Cup Coconut
2 teaspoons Bicarbonate Soda
1 Cup Flour
1 Cup Sugar
1 Cup Rolled Oats
2 tablespoons Boiling Water

Method:

1. Melt butter and Golden Syrup.
2. Dissolve soda in boiling water.
3. Add liquids to dry ingredients.
4. Place in teaspoon-size lumps on a greased baking tray.
5. Bake at 160 degrees Celsius for 18 - 20 mins.
6. Cool on cake cooler.

Merino Sheep

Does Australia have more people or more sheep?
What do you think?

In 2010 there were 22 million people living in Australia. And 110 million sheep! This means that for every person in Australia there are five sheep.

You might have about 25 people in your class. If there were schools for sheep there would be around 125 sheep in every class!

Sheep give us wool. Australia produces more wool than any other country in the world. Much of this wool is sold to other countries and this brings quite a bit of money into Australia; it's not surprising that people have said, "Australia rides on the sheep's back."

Merino sheep were brought here from England by John Macarthur in 1796 (more than 200 years ago). These sheep were originally from Spain. So, unlike koalas, kangaroos, wombats, echidnas and platypuses, sheep are not native to Australia.

Merino sheep have thick, fine fleece that is suitable for spinning and weaving into a fine fibre that is mainly used to make clothing. We also get meat from sheep.



Talk about or Write about

- 1) What clothing made of wool do you own?
- 2) What else, apart from clothing, is made of wool?
- 3) Why have some people said, "Australia rides on the sheep's back"?
- 4) What kinds of places would not be suitable for sheep farming?
- 5) Do you know what kind of meat we get from sheep?
- 6) Choose an Australian native animal from paragraph 5.
 - (a) In what ways is it different from a sheep?
 - (b) In what ways is it the same as a sheep?

