



History of breakfast



Eating breakfast began in the Neolithic (late Stone Age) era, when large stones were used to grind grains to make a sort of porridge. Porridge was also a staple of Roman Soldiers' diets – they called it **pulmentus**.

During the middle ages, barley and hops were used to make beer which was served up in the morning to hungry peasants alongside oatcakes or porridge.

Breakfast as we know it began in the early 19th century, when some middle-class men started to work regular hours in offices – prior to that people would often work for a few hours, then eat a meal at about 10am. Wives or kitchen staff would often serve these 19th century commuters a two-course meal that would often begin with a bowl of porridge. This would be followed by a full English breakfast: toast and eggs with bacon or fish. This style of meal wasn't referred to as the 'full English' until the First World War when lighter breakfasts grew in popularity.

Eating breakfast had become a more elaborate act by the 19th century, at least in well-off households. In the 1861 Book of Household Management, Isabella Beeton suggested a daily breakfast buffet that included a cold joint of meat, game pies, broiled mackerel, sausages, bacon and eggs, muffins, toast, marmalade, butter, jam, coffee and tea.

Towards the end of the 1800s, there was a backlash against these kinds of lavish diets. Groups like the 7th Day Adventists protested that meat-based breakfasts were leading to ill health! Over the next few decades, pioneers like John Kellogg, W.K. Kellogg, Henry Perky and C.W. Post developed ready to eat breakfast cereals that would go on to become extremely popular and varied. At the turn of the 20th century, other cereals, such as muesli were being invented in Europe. Breakfast cereals found success when rationing made bacon and eggs scarce during the war. Also, as women entered the workforce, they no longer had the time to cook a full meal in the morning and cereals allowed children to prepare their own breakfast.

The range of breakfast foods on offer became more and more varied. Now, however, despite the choice available, fewer and fewer people take the time to have breakfast.

The word 'dinner' actually means breakfast as it comes from the Latin word 'disjejunare', which literally means 'break the fast'.

- Around 7000 B.C. - The first cereals (wheat and barley) are cultivated in the Middle East.
- Around 100 A.D. - Roman soldiers add porridge to their diets.
- 1463 - First use of the word 'breakfast' in English.
- 1500s - First shipments of coffee to Venice.
- 1892 - Henry Perky invents Shredded Wheat.
- 1894 - John Harvey Kellogg and W.K. Kellogg invent the Corn Flake