



By: Janet Clarkson

# Maize, and nothing but Maize

By the mid-nineteenth century America was well and truly aware of the value of maize as a crop, and marketing of products derived from it had already begun.

The usefulness of cornstarch (cornflour) for thickening gravy and sauces, and for making light cookies and cakes had been promoted for some time, and in 1864 with the American Civil War dragging on, the manufacturers of one brand of cornflour managed to promote the use of their product as a patriotic duty.

A great exhibition was held in Philadelphia in the first week of June in 1864 in aid of the Sanitary Commission. The Commission had been formed at the beginning of the war in 1861 to improve conditions in Union Army camps and provide medical and hospital care – for which of course it

constantly needed funds. The fair's 'great, indeed sole aim ... is to do good to the sick and wounded of our gallant army; and though the feeling which will prompt all who contribute is that of gratitude to our soldiers, the occasion may be used, incidentally, to bring before the public eye, the varied manufactures of our country ...'

The manufacturer of one brand of cornstarch called Maizena, had a restaurant concession at the fair, and all the items on their bill of fare were made with this product. The menu does not specify whether or not other starches were used in addition to the cornflour, but if they did not, then this would make a fine gluten-free dessert menu for today.

The *Scientific American* magazine had run an article about this new product in 1858, and for the benefit of their 'lady readers', they included the following recipe:

## Maizena Cake.

- Maizena Half Pound.
- Sugar Two Cups.
- Butter Half Cup.
- Eggs Three.
- Cream Tartar ~Teaspoonful.
- Soda ~Teaspoonful.

Dissolved in one-third of a tea cup of milk. Mix thoroughly, place in patty-pans, and bake immediately in a quick oven, from ten to fifteen minutes. The cake improves by age, if kept in a dry place.

By the end of the century the potential value of the crop as an export item was being exploited at every opportunity. During the lead-up to the great Columbian Exhibition in Chicago in 1893, there was a huge public relations campaign to encourage the participation of overseas exhibitors.

The aim of the exhibition was to celebrate the discovery of the New World by Columbus, and what better way than by promoting one of his most useful finds – maize? American representatives in Europe gave a 'Maize Banquet' in Copenhagen in which almost every dish, sweet or savoury contained maize in one form or another.

The banquet raised a great deal of interest and was widely reported in the American newspapers. The aim of course was not simply to raise awareness of the exposition but also to specifically seek foreign markets for maize products (keeping the industry firmly on American soil).

## DURYEY'S MAIZENA BILL OF FARE

### MAIZENA ICE CREAMS

Maizena ... Vanilla	15c	Maizena ... Pineapple	15c
Maizena ... Chocolate	15c	Maizena ... Strawberry	15c
Maizena ... Orange	15c	Maizena ... Lemon	15c

### MAIZENA PUDDINGS

Maizena ... Cup Lemon Pudding	20c	Maizena ... Prince Albert Pudding	25c
Maizena ... " Orange Pudding	20c	Maizena ... Plum	15c

### MAIZENA SPONGES AND CUSTARDS.

Maizena ... Strawberry Sponge	20c	Maizena ... Baked Custard	20c
Maizena ... Lemon	20c	Maizena ... Boiled "	20c
Maizena ... Orange	20c	Maizena ... Floating Island	25c
Maizena ... Charlotte Russe	25c	Maizena ... Charlotte Fruit	20c

### MAIZENA BLANC-MANGE AND JELLIES

Maizena ... Blanc-Mange and Syrup	20c	Maizena ... Wine Jelly	20c
Maizena ... " Plain	15c	Maizena ... Orange Jelly	20c

### MAIZENA FONDANTS

Maizena ... Chocolate	10c	Maizena ... Strawberry	10c
Maizena ... Lemon	10c	Maizena ... Orange	10c

### MAIZENA PASTRY AND CAKES

Maizena ... Sponge Cake	5c	Maizena ... Meringues	25c
Maizena ... Sultana "	5c	Maizena ... Cream Tarts	25c
Maizena ... Pound "	5c	Maizena ... Wine Cake	15c
Maizena ... Croquettes	5c	Maizena ... Chocolate Meringues	25
Maizena ... Cream Puffs	10c	Maizena ... Tipsey Cake	15c
Maizena ... Spanish Puffs	10c	Maizena ... Meringue Tarts	25c
Maizena ... Omelette Comfits	15c	Maizena ... Pies	15c



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