

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Food in the Coal Patch

Adapted from explorepahistory.com



Eckley Miners' Village Museum  
Eckley, Pennsylvania

## Introduction:

People came to work in the mines from many different countries. They often brought their own ethnic traditions, including how to prepare food. Over time these different traditions mixed together through activities like recipe exchanging. People who had relatives that were miners now have a diversity of recipes across many different types of cultures. What miners would eat not only had to do with what country they came from, but also how much money they had. Hard times at the mine meant less work for the miner and less money to spend on things like food. Events like the Great Depression or even mine strikes meant a lot of families would go hungry. Many families would survive on what they grew in the garden.

A very important part of a miner's diet was lunch. Miners typically carried a lunch bucket down into the mines. These buckets were made of two parts; an upper part for food and a lower part that stored liquid. Lunch in the mine differed greatly depending on the cultural background of the miner. It was an important job for the wife to make a hearty lunch so miners were strong enough to make it through the day. In some coal patch towns, it was tradition for miners to save a small piece of bread or cake from his lunch for his children. The lingering taste of the mines on the bread or cake would make for an interesting treat!

## Questions:

1. Where did many families get their food?
2. What could affect the amount of food a family had?
3. Why was lunch such an important meal?

## Extra Credit:

Talk to your parents at home about recipes that have been passed down in your family. What are some ethnic foods in your family?