



Top 10 Facts about... Food on the SS Great Britain

1) Food for all the passengers and crew was made in the Galley, which is the ship's kitchen.



2) The ship carried live animals including pigs, sheep and poultry. The animals would be killed during the voyage to provide some of the passengers with fresh meat.

3) Food was often stored in barrels or tins. The ship had an icehouse to keep meat fresh for longer, but the fresh fruit and vegetables were often eaten at the beginning of a voyage before they went off.

4) The ship also carried a cow to provide fresh milk for the first-class passengers only.

5) First-class passengers were given a huge choice of food and drink. A menu for dinner on 6 July 1861 lists over 40 dishes for the first-class passengers to choose from!



6) There were four mealtimes for the first-class passengers: breakfast at 9am; lunch at 12pm; supper at 4pm; and dinner at 7:30pm. Their meals were eaten in the highly decorated first-class dining saloon.



7) Steerage passengers were organised in small groups known as a 'mess'. One person from the 'mess' would collect food from the galley and bring it back for the rest. They would then eat it at wooden benches in the steerage part of the ship.

8) Steerage passengers' diet was mainly salted meat and ship's biscuits. But they were also given other food including oatmeal, raisins, peas and treacle as part of their weekly ration.

9) Ship's biscuits are so hard that passengers would have to soak them in a warm drink for 15 minutes before they could be eaten. One passenger wrote in their diary "we can't all stomach the biscuits. Dreadful hard, take half an hour to eat one".

10) Crew and passengers sometimes caught fish and birds to eat. One time a porpoise was caught and eaten by some of the passengers!

