

Then and Now: Food Tour

Inquiry Questions

- Was life better in the past?
- Where is the past in the present?
- Were we more sustainable in the past?

Diggings (Map 12)

Miners on the diggings lived in tents when they arrived on the goldfields in the early 1850s. The tents did not have kitchens inside, so most cooking was done outside over a fire together. Miners did not have many pots and pans to cook with because they only bought the bare essentials with them to the diggings. Miners would usually have a plate and cup made from tin or enamel to eat and drink from. A billy or pot stand would be placed over the fire and used to hang the billy to boil water for tea, and the pots were used for cooking mutton (older sheep) or stews and damper. Miners didn't eat many vegetables, because they were expensive.

Q. Can you see where the miners cooked their food? Is it different to where you cook food? A. There are campfires with stands over them holding pots or billys.

Q. What can you see in the tents that the miners used to cook with? A. There are a range of pots, camp ovens, billys.

Q. What do you have in your house that you use to cook food? A. Focus on technology and electricity as an invention.

Butcher's Shambles (Down from Map 12)

Most miners in the 1850s ate damper (campfire bread) and mutton (older sheep). Mutton was readily available due to the millions of sheep farmed across Victoria since 1835. The butcher would cut up the meat to sell. He had to sell the meat very quickly because there was no refrigerator to store the meat. It was common for the meat to hang up outside at the Butcher's in the fresh air, resulting in flies crawling all over it and laying their eggs in it.

Q. What meat can you see hanging up? A. Mutton (older sheep). You can also ask the butcher if he is at his shop.

Q. Do you think the butcher's would have been a smelly place? Why? A. Yes, because the meat was just hanging up in the open air, flies would have been drawn to it.

Q. Where do we buy meat today? A. At the supermarket or the butcher's.

Wain's Cottage (Speedwell Street Map 74 - Opposite brick house)

This is a small timber cottage, lived in from the late 1850s. In the house you will notice that there is no plumbing or taps in the kitchen, which is located at the back of the house. At this time women would cook over an open fire, which would have been very warm in the summer, but cosy in the colder months. There was no electricity and no refrigeration. Instead, meat safes were used. A meat safe and was used to keep food cool – just like a fridge. It would be placed somewhere where there was a breeze and a damp cloth would be placed on top to help cool the contents. It is made with flywire so that the breeze can blow through and cool the contents. You would keep meat there so it wouldn't go off as fast. Women would also make their own butter using a butter churn and butter paddles. They would also make preserves and jams as well as pickle foods so that foods would last longer.

Q. Where do people get water from in this house? How would they heat up the water? A. They would need to take a bucket down to the creek to get water, and heat it up over the fire.

Q. Look around the kitchen. What can you see that is the same in your kitchen? What is different? A. Various answers could include: there are plates, jars, table etc. There is not oven, sink, fridge etc.

Grocers (Map 28)

This store was opened on the diggings in 1857. It sold a wide range of goods, from cheese, pickles and coffee to buckets and pots and other household items. They also sold flour, salt and sugar, which were very popular because they could not be made at home. If people could not afford to buy things at the grocers, they would have to go without or substitute with different foods.

Q. What different foods can you see in the window? A. There are multiple foods – rabbit meat, garlic, eggs, chestnuts, sugar, eels etc

Q. What do you have for lunch today? Can you buy those things in this shop? A. If students have any chocolate or lollies, they will be able to answer yes.

Q. Can you find the ingredients you need to make a cake?

Q. Do you notice any food hanging in the window which may have been introduced to the miners by Aboriginal people? A. Eels

SOVEREIGN HILL LEARNING



VISIT THE PRECINCTS

THE DIGGINGS

1851 - 1854: Daily life in a tent city, including housing, mining, business, law and order as gold seekers searched for a better life. **Why was gold so valuable, and how did it change peoples lives?**

SPEEDWELL STREET

1856 - 1861: Aligned to Main Street, highlighting the change in living conditions, business and technology that improved daily life. **How do we measure change? Were we more sustainable in the past?**

MAIN STREET

1855 - 1861: Ballarat as a town with the building of permanent structures and amenities to service the needs and wants of the community, economically and socially. **How did the gold rush shape modern Australia?**

STEAM, MINING INDUSTRY

1861 - 1914: Showcasing technology and innovation that contributed to the rapid development of Ballarat and the broader region. **How does technology shape and change lives?**

CHINESE VILLAGE

1857 - 1860: The cultural and social living conditions of Chinese immigrants within the larger narrative of the gold rush, exploring their struggles and successes. **Why do people risk everything in search for a better life?**

WADAWURRUNG CULTURAL

First Nations artists share their reflections of culture, history, and heritage. **What creates a sense of belonging and connection to the place you call home?**

VISITOR SERVICES

- Information
- Food & Drink
- Toilets
- All Gender Toilets
- First Aid Kit
- Beware of Horses
- Suggested Stroller & Wheelchair Route
- Emergency Evacuation Point
- Accessible Toilet
- Parenting Room
- Water Tap
- Post Office
- Gift Shop
- Ramps

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR OUR INTERACTIVE MAP



We acknowledge the First Nations of the land upon which Sovereign Hill and Narmbool sit, the Wadawurrung, and their ongoing connection to this land and pay respect to their culture and their Elders past, present and future.