

## 'Out of Your Peanut Butter Jar' ... some notes on the uses of peanut butter

2040

I have become enamoured lately of having a peanut butter and banana smoothie on Saturday mornings at the Sydney Park Kiosk. Indulgent? Yes indeed. Delicious? Also, yes indeed. It's got my foodie self interested in the story of peanut butter in Australia. White bread, peanut butter and strawberry jam in hand - my other amour - I went looking.

### The peanut in Australia

Let's begin with brief culinary story of the peanut in Australia.

The earliest reference I found to peanuts in some form or other is in an advertisement for Peanut Oil in 1855.<sup>1</sup> Peanuts were in the manifest of the *What Cheer* in May 1857.<sup>2</sup> Peanuts are also listed in a notice of an auction sale in November 1857.<sup>3</sup> Peanut seeds were being sold in 1872 at the office of the *Bega Gazette*.<sup>4</sup> Also in 1872 the *Weekly Advertiser* noted:

THE PEA-NUT.—Great interest appears to have been awakened in reference to the cultivation of the Pea-nut. About fifty applications have been made to us for seed, the latest of which we regret our inability to comply with, our small stock having become exhausted.<sup>5</sup>

"... those who like peanuts—and all the children do," said *The Queenslander* in 1880, "—should put them in now; plant in rows, and about the same distance apart as for ginger; they like rather a light soil to which lime has been added or is natural."<sup>6</sup>

The earliest recipe using peanuts I found was this from 1882:

Pea-nut CAKES.—Pound one pint of roasted pea-nuts to a paste in a mortar; mix in one pint of light brown sugar and the whites of five eggs beaten to a stiff, broth; pat the mixture into small buttered pans, and bake the cake light brown in a moderate oven.<sup>7</sup>

More recipes followed: Peanut Candy<sup>8</sup>; Peanut Toffee<sup>9</sup>.

### Peanut Butter - the early years

In 1901 the *Sunday Times* published this in an article 'How to Economise':

Letters to 'Vivienne.'-

DOING WITHOUT THE BUTCHER:

I would like to give a little of my experience in housekeeping : — With reference to animal food, in the first place mankind was never intended by the Creator to be carnivorous. I have not used meat for years; my breadwinner is a smith, and works hard on a fruit, grain, nut, milk, egg,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Neatsfoot oil etc., *The Age* 24 September 1855 p.1

<sup>2</sup> Shipping Intelligence, *The Argus*, 25 May 1857 p.4

<sup>3</sup> Abstract of Sales by Auction This Day (Monday), *The Age* 9 November 1857 p.4

<sup>4</sup> 'Seeds! Seeds!', *The Bega Gazette and Eden District or Southern Coast Advertiser*, 26 July 1872 p.1

<sup>5</sup> 'The Pea-nut', *Weekly Examiner* 23 November 1872 p.18

<sup>6</sup> 'Field and Garden Reminders for September', *The Queenslander* 28 August 1880 p.1

<sup>7</sup> 'Pea-nut Cakes', *The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser* 25 August 1882 p.7

<sup>8</sup> 'Peanut Candy', *The Week* 13 October 1888 p.7

<sup>9</sup> 'Peanut Toffee', *The Australasian* 6 July 1895 p.38

and vegetable diet. ... Peanuts are very cheap, and can be made into nut butter with a proper mill.<sup>10</sup>

This is the earliest reference I found to peanut butter. But I found no recipe for it published until 1919

#### Peanut Butter

Put some shelled peanuts into a pan in a slow oven, leave the door slightly ajar, and allow to remain until they are so dry that the hulls will rub off. Put into a bag and knead with the hands until the husks are well loosened. Separate husks from nuts by turning from one dish to another. Grind the nuts through the mincing machine, and cook several hours in a double-boiler without any water. Add a little olive oil, and a little salt to the nuts, and then seal down in jars.<sup>11</sup>

The first recipe for using peanut butter I found was this in 1903:

Cream of Peanut Soup - Put half a pint of peanut butter into a quart of milk; add half a teaspoonful of salt, a dash of pepper, a tablespoonful of grated onion, a bay leaf, a teaspoonful of celery seed, or a little chopped celery tops. Cook this in a double boiler for ten minutes. Moisten one tablespoonful of cornstarch in a little cold milk, add it to the hot milk, and stir until smooth and thick. Strain through a fine sieve, and serve with squares of toasted whole wheat bread. Nuts are sufficiently oily without adding butter. Any nut or mixture of nuts may be used in the same manner.<sup>12</sup>

There were recipes for: Peanut Butter Scones<sup>13</sup>; Peanut Butter Fudge<sup>14</sup>; Peanut Butter Sausages<sup>15</sup>

Recipes were published specifically for those who did not eat meat and would also not eat butter.

Vegetarian Nutmeat may be made as follows: — Take one cup of peanut butter, one and a half cups hot water, three heaping tablespoonfuls of gluten, and one level teaspoonful of salt. Mix all well together and cook in a double boiler from four to five hours. A small onion grated fine and a teaspoonful of powdered sage may be added, if desired.<sup>16</sup>

Commercial makers of peanut butter targeted this market.

#### Rosella Peanut Butter

Vegetarians and others should try this nutritive food in sandwiches.<sup>17</sup>

#### ETA Peanut Butter

Meat in vegetable form.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> 'How to Economise', *Sunday Times*, 10 November 1901 p.10

<sup>11</sup> 'Peanut Butter' Housewives Exchange, *The Sun* 26 January 1919 p.15

<sup>12</sup> 'Cream of Peanut Soup' Cookery, *Clarence and Richmond Examiner* 24 November 1903 p.3

<sup>13</sup> 'Peanut Butter Scones', *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser* 29 January 1927 p.3

<sup>14</sup> 'Peanut Butter Fudge', *Observer* 15 February 1930 p.53

<sup>15</sup> 'Peanut Butter Sausages', *The Queenslander* 2 April 1931 p.49

<sup>16</sup> "Vegetarian" To Correspondents, *Chronicle* 29 July 1911 p.56

<sup>17</sup> 'Rosella Peanut Butter', *News* 18 May 1927 p.9

<sup>18</sup> 'ETA Peanut Butter', *News* 19 December 1927 p.9

### **Peanut Butter - some recipes from the middle decades**

In 1954 peanut butter got the imprimatur of the *Australian Women's Weekly* – 'Out of Your Peanut Butter Jar'. There were eight recipes including for Peanut Apple Crumble, Peanut Butter Cake, Peanut Butter Caramel Sauce, Caramel Butter Cookies and this one for a sweet Sandwich Filling:

Fruit and Honey: Combine ½ cup peanut butter, good ½ cup chopped raisins, small pinch salt, 1 tablespoon honey, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, pinch cinnamon. Mix well, add extra cup chopped raisins if liked.<sup>19</sup>

In 1955 the earliest recipe I found for sate was published:

Ingredients: Any kind of meat, soya bean sauce, onion. Cut meat in small pieces (about 1 in. square), thread three or four pieces on a small wood or steel skewer, dip in sauce to which finely chopped onion has been added, and grill over open fire, frequently dipping in sauce. Repeat dipping and grilling till the meat is well cooked. Sate is served hot with lettuce or cabbage and rice. Before eating put a special sauce on the sate made from mixing fried onions, peanut butter and soya bean sauce. Sate is also good with chilli sauce, made by frying chilli and tomatoes.<sup>20</sup>

The 'New Idea Cookbook' published in 1976 had recipes for Peanut Cookies and an unusual savory dish Peanut Burgers<sup>21</sup>:

#### Basic Seasoned Hamburger

500 g (1 lb) minced beef, chuck, round, or topside, 1 teaspoon seasoned salt, 1 teaspoon seasoned pepper.

Mix all ingredients in a mixing bowl, working lightly with a fork. Shape into 4 round patties. Fry, grill or barbecue as desired.

#### Peanut Burgers

Add ½ cup soft peanut butter to 1 quantity of seasoned hamburger. Fry, grill or barbecue as desired and serve in toasted, buttered hamburger buns.

In 1969 the *Australian Women's Weekly* published a two-page feature article 'Cooking with Peanut Butter'. In it were recipes for Sate Kambing and Sate Ajam both with a more familiar peanut butter sauce with sambal oelek, sugar and lemon.<sup>22</sup>

In 1983 Margaret Fulton published her *Encyclopedia of Food and Cookery*. She gave four recipes for peanut butter: to make Peanut butter; Peanut Butter Cookies; Peanut Butter Spice Cake; and Peanut Butter Chews.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> 'Out of Your Peanut Butter Jar', *Australian Women's Weekly* 24 November 1954 p. 37

<sup>20</sup> 'Skewer, dip, roast, and Serve Sate', *The Argus* 5 March 1955 p.9. The recipe was provided by Mrs. Roekmito, wife of the Indonesian military attache,

<sup>21</sup> 'New Idea Cookbook', Anne Marshall (ed.) Ure Smith 1976 p.101

<sup>22</sup> 'Sate Kambing' Cooking With Peanut Butter, *Australian Women's Weekly* 18 June 1969 p73

<sup>23</sup> 'Peanut Butter', *Encyclopedia of Food and Cookery*, Margaret Fulton 1983 pp.281-282

Peanut Butter Chews.

½ cup crunchy peanut butter; 3 tbsp honey; 1 tsp vanilla; ½ cup instant skim milk powder; pinch of salt; 3 tbsp icing sugar; ½ cup finely chopped unsalted peanuts.

Mix all ingredients, except chopped peanuts, kneading them together with your hands until well-blended. Roll mixture into 2.5 cm (1 in.) balls and coat them with peanuts. Store in refrigerator.

Fulton also gave recipes for Gado Gado<sup>24</sup> and Beef Satay<sup>25</sup> both of which use a Peanut Sauce with a base of peanut butter.

### **Peanut Butter – glimpses of uses for peanut butter 2024**

As is my custom, I asked my Facebook Friends ‘What’s your favourite thing to do with peanut butter?’ These are their answers.

Saté sauce

Make a big pot of Laksa

On toast with sliced banana

On toast with honey for breakfast; in sate sauce for other meals.

On toast or making gado gado.

On toast with chili sauce

On toast that has already been smeared with honey

Peanut butter with blue cheese on toast is the best

I think peanut butter on toast is pretty special but it has to be really good & fresh peanut butter on great bread.

Raisin toast banana, walnuts and peanut butter

On toast with guava jelly.

Must be crunchy. On toast and of course i make chocolate spiders using it

With Nutella on a Vita-Weet.

Give it away

Peanut butter chicken curry. Occasionally on an English muffin for breakfast.

Ghanaian Peanut soup

Sweet potato soup with chilli and peanut butter! Lashings of coriander on top

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<sup>24</sup> ‘Gado Gado’, *Encyclopedia of Food and Cookery*, Margaret Fulton 1983 p.281

<sup>25</sup> ‘Beef Satay’, *Encyclopedia of Food and Cookery*, Margaret Fulton 1983 p.281

Just Malden salt flakes on smooth peanut butter. Sometimes I like dried chilli flakes as well, but only sometimes.

Smother on cauliflower until it looks like a brain, top it with salt and paprika, then bake it.

Deliciousness

Nothing special for me, but I had a boyfriend who made a mean scrambled eggs with peanut butter & chilli.

Put it on celery

Peanut butter apple is pretty good!

Eat it on sliced apple. Or celery

Have it on bread with tomato and pepper

Cucumber Salad With Roasted Peanuts and Chile Recipe

Spoon out of the jar

Eat it out of the jar, with a spoon.

Eat it

Bin it

Chuck it out.

In the FOGO bin.

Use it in mouse traps, works a treat!

I've always liked to bathe in peanut butter, sometimes with a glass of Prosecco on the side of the bath and a good book. And a scented candle.

Me, I think the smoothie is the go.