The biography of the Sunbeam Mixmaster in Australian kitchens 1933 – 1970

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In 1933 this advertisement appeared in a Brisbane newspaper.

> The "Sunbeam Mixmaster" is the latest electrical labour-saving device, designed to aid busy cooks. Its primary use is that of mixing cake ingredients, but among the multitude of uses, the Mix Master will mix drinks and salad dressings, mash potatoes, beat eggs, and also extract Juice from fruit. To see this appliance at work is really interesting. Ask Chandlers to demonstrate.[1]

This is the earliest advertisement I found for an appliance that would come to revolutionise the Australian kitchen.

This article looks at the Mixmaster from 1933 to 1980. I use material found in Trove, the digitised repository of newspapers and magazines in Australia; a sample of advertisements for it in the Australian Women's Weekly from 1950 – 1970; and five instructional and recipe booklets that are unfortunately not dated but through a process of identifying significant dates in Australian history consonant with the manuals I suggest date from the 1950s to the 1970s.

1933 – 1948

The Mixmaster was released in America in 1930 by the Chicago Flexible Shaft Company where it acquired its brand name "Sunbeam". The model being sold in Australia was imported.[2] The selling point was as written in the advertisement that it was an electrical labour saving and time saving appliance. It also was promoted as saving 'the arm-aches of cooking'.[3] It saved electricity as it 'Uses no more current than an ordinary light bulb' and saved money as 'ingredients go much farther'.[4] It came 'Fitted with revolving juice extractor and mayonnaise oil dipper. Supplied complete with two Jade green mixing bowls - one three quarts capacity, one 1 quart'.[5]

It came with '14 practical kitchen aids, mixes all types of cake mixtures, scones, biscuits, puddings, and icing; it beats eggs, whips cream, blends and creams, mashed potatoes, makes mayonnaise, juices fruits, strains juices, mixes fruit, milk, and egg drinks, opens tins, polishes silver, minces meat, slices and shreds vegetables and fruit, peels potatoes, shells peas, cuts beans, grinds coffee, sifts flour, and sharpens knives. In short, it banishes drudgery'[6]

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[1] Cunning Devices That Work Wonders, Electricity – Handmaid of Modern Housewife, The Brisbane Courier 16 June 19

[2] O'Connel, Jan, 1948 Sunbeam Mixmaster Made in Australia. Australian Food Timeline

[3] The new Sunbeam Mixmaster, Anthony Horderns' The Sydney Morning Herald 10 November 1933 p.1

[4] It Beats Everything, Harris Scarfs The News 23 May 1934 p.9

[5] Sunbeam Mixmaster, Anthony Horderns' The Sydney Morning Herald 6 November 1934 p.1

[6] Robot Kitchen-maid, Around the Show The Argus 29 July 1938 p.13

It had '10 FULL-POWER SPEEDS— that will not slow down as the batter thickens or as you add ingredients making the mixture heavier'.[7]

In 1948 the first Australian assembled Mixmaster rolled out of the factory:

> A sample of the first post-war
> MIXMASTER
> is at Sandovers!
> It's the very latest American model
> .... but now made in Australia!
> ORDERS BOOKED
> for delivery in rotation
> There is only one
> MIXMASTER
> -The genuine "SUNBEAM"
> Price £20. Terms if desired.
> At the Electrical Dept. of
> SANDOVERS
> HAY STREET PERTH[8]

The Sunbeam Mixmaster and The Australian Women's Weekly. 1950 -

The Australian Women's Weekly was first published in 1933. Since that time its circulation had been growing. It would reach 800,000 by 1961. The 'Weekly became an important source of recipes and helped shape food trends in Australian homes'.[9] Taking out advertisements in the magazine guaranteed a product maximal exposure.

The earliest publication of an advertisement in the Weekly for the Sunbeam Mixmaster I found was in the 11 February 1950 edition. The recipe was given in a full-page colour advertisement from Cooper Engineering, a Division of Sunbeam Corporation of Chicago, U.S.A

The features of the Mixmaster it promoted were:

> Mixmaster does the tiring arm-work of cooking, baking, getting meals ... makes ingredients go further ... saves time and money.
> Mixmaster gives you higher, lighter, velvety-textured cakes . . .
> creamy-fluff mashed potatoes . . . smooth-as-silk icings, sauces . . .
> more juice from the same oranges.
> Mixmaster gives you even, scientific mixing with a wide range
> of powerful speeds-the "success secret" of deliciously prepared food.[10]

These were features promoted in all such further advertisements.

It also had a recipe.

> If you are one of the fortunate persons who own a Sunbeam MIXMASTER, try this simplified "Quick-whip," 3-minute cake making method and see how easily and quickly you can make a

[7] For Christmas – Give This Sunbeam Automatic Mixmaster, The Daily News 2 December 1937 p.2
[8] Sandovers, The West Australian 11 August 1948 p.10
[9] O'Connell, Jan,1933 Australian Women's Weekly founded, Australian Food Timeline
[10] 3 Minutes in the New Sunbeam Mixmaster, Australian Women's Weekly 11 February 1950 p.51

delicious, meltingly-tender cake. . .. It's the even MIXMASTER mixing that gives "1-bowl" cakes a uniformly finer, feather-light texture. And there's no "trick" to it with MIXMASTER to perform the 2 simple mixing operations (3 mins. in all).

INGREDIENTS: 2 cups self-raising, flour, 1 cup castor sugar, 1 cup brown sugar, 1 cup shortening (very soft), 1 cup milk, 1 egg, 1 teaspoon carb. soda, 2 tablespoons cocoa, 1 teaspoon vanilla, pinch salt.

METHOD: SIFT flour, salt, cocoa and soda into large bowl. ADD shortening, sugars, vanilla and milk, and beat on Speed 2 for 2 minutes. SCRAPE from sides and beaters. ADD egg and beat 1 minute on Speed 2. POUR into 2 greased 7" sandwich tins. BAKE in a moderate oven for 25-35 minutes. COOL ice and fill with your favourite
frosting.

There were no more recipes published in the advertisements. In 1951 the company advertised a Sunbeam Mixmaster Recipes and Instruction Book, the precursor to the booklets I have and discuss below.

The 1950 advertisement noted Clare Collins as heading A Sunbeam Advisory Bureau – Advisers Sunbeam Mixmaster owners to a better understanding of food mixing. Answers questions on good mixing and associated cookery problems. Supplies special recipes when required.[11] The Advisory Board is not mentioned from February 1953.

Advertisements like these were published regularly, each promoting the benefit to cooking from using one. In October 1950 the tag line was 'Every day is Ice Cream Day.[12]

In 1952 it told the homemaker 'You'll be proud of all the things you can do':

Beating Eggs for Sponges, Custards, Souffles, Omelettes and Scrambled Eggs.
Creaming Rutter and Sugar for all kinds of Cakes and Cookies.
Preparing Sandwich Fillings, sweet and savoury Pastries.
Mixing Steamed Pudding and Scone Doughs.
Blending all types of Mayonnaise and special Sauces.
Whipping Flummeries and Summer Sweets.
Mashing Potatoes and Creaming other Vegetables.
Juicing Oranges and other Citrus Fruits.
Pulping Pineapple, etc., for Pies and Fruit Salads.
Making butter (For Country Women).
Making Iee Cream, Candies, Marshmallows and Fudges
Beating Batters for Waffles, Pancakes and Pikelets.
Making Meringues
Whipping cream

FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS
Beating and mixing Fruit Cakes, Birthday Cakes, Christmas Pudding, Yeast Dough for Buns and a great variety of tempting and interesting dishes.[13]

[11] 3 Minutes in the New Sunbeam Mixmaster, Australian Women's Weekly 11 February 1950 p.51
[12] Every day is Ice Cream Day, Australian Women's Weekly 21 October 1950 p.65
[13] You'll be proud of all the things you can do, Australian Women's Weekly 11 June 1952 p.48

In 1956 the advertisement told the homemaker 'You want a Sunbeam Mixmaster. You need a Mixmaster. You must have a Mixmaster... and now you need not wait another day.[14]

And what's more it came in four colours - green, yellow, blue and coral.[15]

In May 1961 the advertisement urged 'Put a smile on her face this Mother's Day with a Sunbeam Mixmaster.'[16]

The advertisement in February 1962 pointed to cost savings:

> You save real money every week as soon as you stop paying high shop-prices for cakes, sponges, pies and pastries, scones, cookies, ice-creams and mayonnaise. The difference between those shop prices and the cost of making these family favourites in your own kitchen, with a Sunbeam Mixmaster's help, more than pays the small instalments that quickly buy your Mixmaster.[17]

Also, in 1962 it advertised two new features – Drink-Mix Blending Attachment and a Mincer Attachment, conspicuously reduced from the14 attachments of earlier models.

In 1966 it asked 'How many mixers can do all this ... Blends, Mixes, Mincers, Hand Mixes, Juices (each accompanied by a photograph showing the action in a blender) ... Only one ... Sunbeam!'[18]

In November 1969 the advertisement claimed '4 out of 5 women choose Sunbeam Mixmaster because it does so much more with its two bowls, its full range of attachments, its choice of 12 mixing speeds'.[19]

In the November 1970 issue of the Weekly Sunbeam advertised additional kitchen appliances - the Thinline Automatic Toaster, Coffee Percolator and Stainless-Steel Frying Pan.[20] By 1972 the kitchen was fully Sunbeamed with the addition of the Deep-fry Cooker and the 8 Speed Power Blender.[21]

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[14] 'You want a Sunbeam Mixmaster ... Australian Women's Weekly 31 October 1956 p.78
[15] 'You want a Sunbeam Mixmaster ... Australian Women's Weekly 31 October 1956 p.78
[16] Put a smile on her face this Mother's Day, Australian Women's Weekly 3 May 1961 p.15
[17] Sunbeam Mixmaster saves more than it costs, Australian Women's Weekly 10 February 1962 p.40
[18] How many mixers can do all this ... Australian Women's Weekly 16 November 1966 p.92
[19] How many mixers can do all this?, Australian Women's Weekly 2 November 1966 p.8
[20] It's hard to hide the lasting pleasure Sunbeam gives, Australian Women's Weekly 25 November 1970 p.25
[21] Sunbeam guide to great giving, Australian Women's Weekly 3 May 1972 p.29

Cooking demonstrations

From its earliest appearance in 1933 the Mixmaster was the subject of in-store cooking demonstrations and in other more general demonstrations. In 1933 Anthony Horderns advertised:

> THE NEW SUNBEAM MIXMASTER
> Price £8/10/
> See our dally demonstrations!
> New easy way to make foods doubly delicious.
> Beats everything electrically. Ends
> the arm-aches of cooking!
> Electrical-Second Floor
> Free delivery city and suburbs only.[22]

In 1950 Live Wire newspaper reported:

> Cookery Demonstration
> Last Thursday in the Centre Hall, a demonstration of Namco pressure cookers and Sunbeam Mixmasters ... Mrs Nicholson, of the Yallourn General Store, demonstrated the Mixmaster with several cream puddings and other items which were afterwards handed round to an appreciative audience. Some of the ladies brought their own ingredients and a bowl and were shown how to use the Mixmaster under the instructions of the demonstrator.[23]

In 1960 the Port Lincoln Times reported:

> Next Thursday and Friday, November 24 and 25, the people of Port Lincoln and surrounding districts will be able to learn for themselves how easy Sunbeam electrical appliances are to use. Mr. Leo Crowhurst, manager of J. Craven & Co. Ltd., has arranged for cooking demonstrations to be given by Sunbeam Home Economist, Dorothy Deslandes ... Among the products Miss Deslandes will be using will be the famous Sunbeam Mixmaster.[24]

Recipes from Five Instruction and Recipe Books

I am interested here in looking at how the Recipe Books reflected a multiculinary Australian table.

Dating these is a combination of guess work and looking at significant dates in Australian history which are reflected in the pages of the manuals. One marker that gives some indication of the date is the introduction of Postcodes in Australia. Using this one of the booklets is after 1967 but before 1970 when Australia began metricating weights. Two of the books give weights ingredients in Imperial measures and in metrics. I think I can safely say both those were published after 1970. The remaining two I guess at through the photograph of the home kitchen featured in the manual and one looks to be in the 1950s the other in the 1960s.

The are from 74 to 230 recipes in a book. Two of the larger books said the recipes had been tested.

One of the later issues was almost totally given over to cakes, biscuits and desserts.

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[22] Anthony Horderns, The Sydney Morning Herald 10 November 1933 p.1

[23] Cookery Demonstration, Live Wire 9 August 1950 p.7

[24] Cookery Demonstration, Port Lincoln Times 17 November 1960 p.4

The others had recipes ranging across Soups, Sauces, Vegetables, Salad Dressings, Entrees, Batters, Scones and Loaves, Yeast Cookery, Pastries, Cookies, Cakes, Frostings, Desserts. Candies, and Preserves.

Continental / International Recipes

> 'The increasing number of European arrivals have opened up a new avenue in food preparation. Already there are many interesting sauces and other ingredients available in our grocery stores which will provide piquant and different dishes. Here are some recipes which can help you to introduce something new and exciting to your family'.

This I take it refers to the influx of European migrants post-World War 2. Maria Kozslik Donovan published *Continental Cookery in Australia* in 1955.[25]

Two of the Sunbeam books had a separate section for Continental recipes. One had an International section. Dishes here included Hungarian Goulash, Italian Minestrone, Poulet Napolitaine Ravioli, Dobosch Torte, Wiener Schnitzel, Baba Um Ram, and Parisian Cake.

Continental and International dishes are spread across the other booklets – Spanish Paella, Hungarian Coffee Cake, Danish Pastries, French Onion Soup, Jamaican Chocolate Pie, Italian Lasagne, Swiss Rolls, and Lamb Moussaka.

Chinese Cooking

> 'The increased popularity of Oriental foods in Australia can be assessed by the many Oriental restaurants seen in every City and Town. You too can prepare these interesting foods at home – some of the flavourings, may be omitted, but naturally the final flavour of the food is affected. We advise you, therefore, to use the following recipes as given'.

Chinese cuisine had been at the Australian table for a long time. Chinese cookery books had been published: Roy Gheechoun published *Cooking the Chinese Way* in 1948[26]; Yep Yung Hee published *Chinese Recipes for Home Cooking* in 1951[27]; Mrs. Mai Ling Wong published *Mrs Mai Ling Wong's Authentic Chinese Cookery* c1966.[28]

Two of the Sunbeam Recipe Books had a section on Chinese Cooking. Dishes included: Fried Noodles & Chicken, Fried Rice, Oriental Meatballs, Sweet and Sour Sauce, Tempura, Sukiyaki, Chicken and Almonds, Lobster Chop Suey, Chinese Brown Sauce, Chow Suey, and Prawn Foo Young,

Recipes used soy sauce, oyster sauce, Chinese cabbage, bamboo shoots, and green ginger. Unlike later cookery books Sunbeam doesn't reassure the housewife that these are readily available in Chinese groceries.

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[25] Donovan, Maria Kozslik, *Continental Cookery in Australia* William Heinemann Ltd, Melbourne, 1955

[26] Gheechoun, Roy, *Cooking the Chinese Way*, W.D. Joynt, Melbourne, 1948

[27] Yep Yung Hee, *Chinese Recipes for Home Cooking* Associated General Publications Sydney 1951

[28] Wong, Mrs. Mai Ling, *Mrs Mai Ling Wong's Authentic Chinese Cookery* Southdown Press 1966

American Recipes
Two had sections for American Recipes. Recipes here included Lobster Americana, Prawn Jambalaya, Central Plaza Dressing, Waldorf Salad, Arroz Y Queso Mexicano, and Chili Con Carne.

South and South East Asian Recipes
These were few and far between - Mulligatawny, Indian Rissole, Sweet Curry. This was out of step with other published cookery books. Maria Kozslik Donvan published *The Far Eastern Epicure* in1961.[29] Alec Robeau published *Cooking the Indonesian Way* in 1970.[30] Charmaine Solomon published *South East Asian Cookery Book* in 1972.[31]

Summation

This article has explored the world of the Sunbeam Mixer. It began with the introduction of an imported model in 1993 and went on to look at aspects of the appliance assembled in Australia since 1949. The Mixmaster was one of the kitchen appliances that Sunbeam would roll out in ensuing years. I looked in particular at advertisements for it in the Australian Women's Weekly, whose large readership gave Sunbeam a way of entering Australian kitchens. I noted that there were cooking demonstration featuring the Mixmaster over the period I have surveyed in this article. I looked at five Sunbeam Recipe Books from c1050 – c1970 to see how consonant they were with recipes in the wider field of Australian cookbooks. In two of the cuisines - Continental/International and Chinese there were similarities, not so with South And South Asian cuisines.

[29] Donovan, Maria Kozslik, The Far Eastern Epicure William Heinemann Ltd, Melbourne, 1961
[30] Robeau, Alec, *Cooking the Indonesian Way*, Reed 1970
[31] Solomon, Charmaine, *South East Asian Cookery Book* Reed 1972