

## **EATING AT SEA**

**By Richard Sorokin**

There is an old saying. You are what you eat. Food has always been a problem. Man, to survive must have a supply of food and the right variety or he will perish. This we now take for granted. We embark on large cruise ships and eat better than at home. We are able to preserve and store food like no one in the past.

In the early days of sailing food was a real limiting factor. Man had no way of preserving his food. He learned early that certain foods he could store. These were grains that were dried out in the field and smoked and dried meats and fish. Live stock was carried on board and slaughtered as needed. Most sailing trips hugged the shore and stopped at night to build a fire and eat. No fires were had on the vessels.

The next method of storing food was to salt it and put it in barrels of brine. This worked but required a strong appetite to meet the needs. Fruits and vegetables were almost impossible to store. Scurvy and other diseases resulted.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century canning solved some of the problem. Cans were not used at first, but glass (Mason) jars were popular. Food was put in the jars and then cooked for a length of time, killing off the bacteria, and allowing the food to exist in the sealed environment. This was a great improvement especially when metal cans took the place of the fragile glass jars. Still the diet was not great. All there were was dried, salted and canned foods available.

The greatest improvement was refrigeration, keeping the food cold. When I was a kid, not so long ago, we had an ice box. It was an insulated box that we put ice into and our food. It kept the food cold and we could keep food for a far longer time. We were not able to freeze our food yet. At the present we all have mechanical refrigeration. We can keep our food cold for a few days or freeze it indefinitely. Now at sea we can bring all types of food and preserve them for our needs. Refrigeration is a relatively new thing. Eating at sea, that once was a threat to your life, can now be a gourmet delight

Bon appetite!