

AUSTRALIAN HISTORY MUSEUM

Auger Stove Door

AHM003459



Goldfields Kitchens

Initially the goldfield camps were somewhat temporary, with tents making up the main dwelling type, and some more solid structures for important trades such as the publican, the blacksmith, the apothecary, the barber, the surgeon, and the wash house/ laundry. During this time the goldfield camps were not the place for women and children, with only a few present, due to the high risk of disease. After the first wave of the gold rush some gold-mining communities became more settled and proper dwellings were established. We also start to see the development of towns and impressive civic buildings, due to the wealth discovered and then invested within the local area.

As such the initial cooking on the goldfields would have been done outdoors over a camp fire and meals would have been very basic. As living conditions became more permanent we begin to see the emergence of hearths for cooking inside miners' huts. The other alternative was restaurants and food stalls; large gold-mining camps, such as Ballarat and Bendigo, provided several options for miners who did not want to cook for themselves.

The kitchen in colonial Australia could be found in cottages and larger houses and they usually contained a fireplace that would hold the cast iron stove. Food would be prepared on a wooden table and cooked in the stove's oven compartment/s or boiled in large pots on top. The kitchen was the heart of domestic chores in the 19th century. Here you would boil water for your laundry, heat irons and produce food. Depending on the status of the family the kitchen was either the place for the women of the house or their maid/s.

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