

When all are nicely coloured (*dorée*, or golden), add mushroom juice, okra and *bouquet garni*. Let simmer gently on low heat (uncovered) for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally but gently (okra and lima bean pods should remain whole and intact); sauce should be consistent, neither thick nor runny. Remove from heat. Remove the *bouquet garni*, bind the sauce with lime juice, adjust the seasoning, garnish, and serve hot straight from a deep covered dish, accompanied traditionally with a side dish of plain white boiled rice or boiled green plantain.

NOTES

1. The equivalent dressed weight of turkey legs or of one whole chicken may be substituted.
2. In the United States, sour oranges can be found in some Caribbean or Oriental markets. In Europe they are known as Seville oranges. The only substitute (and not ideal) is cider or red-wine vinegar.
3. The Haitian marinade is used not like a brine, but only to spice the meat and improve its taste and tenderness.
4. Haitians know of no substitute for their *djonjon*, available at some Caribbean and American 'creole' markets and grocery stores, especially in Haitian neighbourhoods of New York, Miami, Chicago, Boston, etc. For an approximate taste (texture is irrelevant, as only the stock is used), try reconstituted dried black Chinese mushrooms, highly esteemed for their distinct, robust (dark, earthy) flavour. The best may be *fuh goo* (Chinese) which is, generally, very fragrant. Dried Japanese *shitakes*, smoky and woody but not as flavourful as *djonjon*, are probably too retiring in taste for the piquant character of Haitian cuisine, and for this dish. Haiti's habanero-style pepper (*Capsicum chinense* L.) is known locally as *piment bouc* (goat pepper), an unfortunate misnomer for an extremely fragrant pepper. The Mexican habanero or Jamaican Scotch bonnet may be substituted.
- 5.

A SURREPTITIOUS SNACK: THE EVOLUTION OF ELEVENSES

Jane Levi

Mid-morning snacks are common across the world, but **M**eleveneses is a peculiarly British phenomenon. First recorded as an 'elevenner' in 1823, this is a snack tradition that has evolved in form and content, but remained constantly placed – probably due to the tyranny of its name – in the late morning, between the first and second meal events of the day. Its emergence was dependent on the development of new meals and mealtimes in the nineteenth century, themselves a response to the growth of the middle class and continuing industrialization of Britain. The needs of employers influenced its content, with ale or beer being replaced one of the new hot drinks – coffee, chocolate, tea – and introducing a food element, usually something sweet like a cake or biscuit. Today, eleveneses is recognized as more of an indulgence than a nutritional necessity, but is marketed to us by food producers eager to sell more of their goods. It has never gained the status of a formal or public meal, and is commonly described as a snack most suitable for children or fictional characters. Nonetheless, its position as a widely recognized British tradition preserves it in the face of growing concerns about excessive and constant 'grazing'. In this essay I examine the origins and evolution of eleveneses in England in the context of the social developments that have marked its existence.

Eleveneses is a mid-morning snack, consumed around 11 o'clock, and is the only current meal or snack in the English language which is named for the time at which it is taken. Eleveneses have been known in England since the early nineteenth century, the name varying from elevenner (1823); elevens (1849); to eleveneses (1887). The *Oxford English Dictionary* records an 1823

description of an elevener, 'the interstitial *snack* between the *prime* and the next'. W. and H. Raynbird locate it more precisely in a commentary on agricultural workers in Suffolk in 1849: 'The name 'fourzes' and 'elevens', given to these short periods of rest and refreshment, show when taken.' Descriptions over the following hundred years continue to locate elevenses firmly within the world of work, whether agricultural, industrial or office-bound. As a result, early twentieth-century descriptions are often rather affected references to working-class habits made by a middle-class observer, such as T. Thurston's *Man in Black Hat* comment in 1930 on 'Charwomen...consuming what I am told they call their "elevenses"'.²² Post-Second World War (during which the ration allowed for only minimal elevenses and afternoon tea refreshment), it became more middle-class, with Ivor Brown describing elevenses as 'middle-class and particularized, usually coffee and a biscuit at the hour named' in 1947.²³

Generally understood as a peculiarly British phenomenon, like afternoon tea, the mid-morning snack is not unknown in other cultures. Spanish-speaking countries even share the English naming pattern, indulging in *las onces*, the term also, confusingly, used to describe afternoon tea in Latin American countries such as Chile and Mexico. Elevenses and *las onces* are both somewhat colloquial expressions. Whilst they are used and understood by most people in relaxed situations, they tend not to form part of standard language: for example *las onces* 'would not be used in a formal essay or letter, or on an occasion when the speaker wishes to impress'.²⁴

Although some mid-morning refreshment is taken in a number of countries, few of them have such a specific name for the event. Germany has a second breakfast (*das zweite Frühstück*). In Scotland the word 'elevenses' is considered specifically English and is not used. Instead, some regions describe elevenses as *forenoon*, something that takes place before the midday lunch, and most children will have a mid-morning *playpiece* at school.²⁵ In Italy, bakeries bring out *pizza bianca*, the simplest pizza, at around 11 a.m., and this too tends to be eagerly eaten by schoolchildren

and teenagers, although the event is not named.²⁶ Other Mediterranean countries beyond Spain have a firm tradition of afternoon snacking described by a common word – *merienda/merienda* (also exported to Mexico and the Philippines) – but appear not to have a word to describe similar activities in the morning, even though a coffee break of some sort will usually take place (such as the French *pause café*). In all instances, it is clear that both elevenses and the mid-morning snack fit into the definition of an additional or occasional 'food event', not given the status of a firm fixture in the daily programme of eating, and not providing the elements required to make a meal.²⁷

From antiquity to the eighteenth century, most people in Europe (other than labourers) ate only two main meals each day, usually called dinner and supper. Additional food events might take place, such as an early-morning drink, and the breakfast common amongst workers, but these were not deemed significant enough to be classed as meals, or even consistently recorded. As the working middle class emerged, a meal pattern to support a working life taking place largely outside the home developed. In England, this meant the innovation of lunch, followed by the introduction of afternoon tea. Gilly Lehmann explains this succinctly: 'breakfast began to move backwards as lunch became more substantial..., and it is this which finally led to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century distribution of meals with three main meals (including meat and hot dishes) and elevenses and afternoon tea (or less elegantly, tea-breaks) between.'²⁸ Workers required the additional and regular intake of energy provided by these snacks, and their employers needed to keep them productive through regularized pauses in work. As Jean-Louis Flandrin says, their 'meal schedules were closely linked to work schedules which in turn were dependent upon persistent economic constraints.'²⁹ The impact of industrialization on meal-times and snacks cannot be underestimated.

Initially there was resistance to the new meals, which, had it been successful, could have prevented the emergence of elevenses altogether. According to Arnold Palmer, men in particular

objected to each innovation, regarding both lunch and afternoon tea as feminized and unnecessary: 'luncheon was a fashionable invention, welcomed by the ladies but despised by gentlemen.'¹⁰ However, with an early breakfast (brought forward from 11 a.m. in the early eighteenth century to 8.30 a.m. by the late nineteenth century), lunch was eventually recognized as a practical response to changing work patterns and increased external activity, particularly in cities. It was adopted by working gentlemen such as solicitors, and became a status symbol (the working classes continued to dine early and not take lunch, and Palmer cites an example of a manager inferring higher status than his clerks by describing his own dinner as luncheon).¹¹ As the dinner hour grew later, afternoon hunger became a problem. 'English internal engines, designed for refuelling every four and a half hours, begin to labour when asked to run for six hours at a stretch. Once again wives and mothers took the situation in hand and found the remedy. They invented Afternoon Tea.'¹² Similarly, an earlier breakfast widened the gap in the first part of the day, making the emergence of elevenses inevitable.

The contents of elevenses have evolved over time. In a rare mention of the elevener in the USA, C. W. Janson's 1807 *Stranger in America* referred (disapprovingly) to drinking alcohol: 'I know of no custom more destructive than that in which is practiced by slingers and eleveners.' In 1865, W. White in the east of England commented 'I commonly has a drop [of ale] for my elevens; but I can manage a pint o' a ternoons besides.'¹³ The 'drop of ale' had long been traditional mid-morning refreshment. Benjamin Franklin observed the beer drinking pattern of his companions in a London printing-house in 1725, recording in his autobiography: 'My companion at press drank every day a pint before breakfast, a pint at breakfast...a pint between breakfast and dinner, a pint in the afternoon'.¹⁴ Despite the Americans' disapproval, the consumption of beer was defended stoutly against the new corruption of tea. Although by 1765 ninety per cent of families were estimated to drink tea twice a day, it was blamed as much as gin for the moral deterioration of the poor.¹⁵ As late as

1829 the Marchioness of Bath remained strongly critical of tea drinking as a suitable habit for the poor, 'proving' that home brewed beer would not only be significantly cheaper than tea (nearly £3 per year), but that it could do them only good, whereas tea 'besides being good for nothing, has badness in it because it is well known to produce want of sleep, in many cases, and in all cases to shake and weaken the nerves.'¹⁶

However, the Marchioness was swimming against the tide and, despite early objections, tea, coffee and chocolate all became fashionable, and then popular, drinks for consumption outside traditional mealtimes and the focus for new snacks and meals. The temperance movement of the nineteenth century and the employer-friendly licensing laws of the early twentieth century supported this change. Men of all classes had been able to refresh themselves in coffee houses since the late seventeenth century, and a pattern of regular refreshment between meals was readily formed. 'In London, they dropped into coffee-houses or pastry cooks' between noon and 1 o'clock', after breakfast had finished at about 11 a.m. and before dinner at 3 or 4 p.m.¹⁷ In 1825 a Swiss confectioner, M. Verrey, opened his confectioner's shop in London where 'he introduced small tables at which ladies, exhausted by shopping, could rest and consume an ice or a cup of chocolate in the middle of the morning.'¹⁸ This pattern of light, sweet refreshments between breakfast and lunch (or the next major meal) continues to define the essence of elevenses.

In the early twentieth century, transatlantic passengers on Cunard liners were fortified on deck with a restorative cup of bouillon at elevenses, such fare being 'perfect for soothing a distraught stomach'.¹⁹ In England today, suitable foods for elevenses are firmly established as a hot drink for adults (usually coffee, though tea and chocolate are also options), accompanied by a sweet snack (a biscuit or a pastry or cake). Children drink milk, milky coffee, weak tea or juice. The food and drinks that comprise the ideal elevenses are commonly promoted by advertisers as being comforting, relaxing, providing a break from work, disregarding the caffeine hit and sugar rush that will follow

their consumption. It is the notion of a pause from exertion that is important, according to Roland Barthes: 'coffee is felt to be not so much a substance as a circumstance. It is the recognized occasion for interrupting work and using this respite in a precise protocol of taking sustenance.'²⁰ The coffee mornings held in church halls and by Women's Institutes across Britain throughout the post-Second-World-War era had a similar function. They provided an opportunity for non-working mothers to meet and socialize in a structured way between the hours of dropping off and picking up children from school or other activities; and if children were present, the snack provided a distraction for them. Such formal social structures are less prevalent today, but Starbucks and other contemporary coffee houses are regularly packed at mid-morning with women and pre-school children, meeting one another to socialize and distract the children with sweet treats.

Whilst its content is commonly understood, unlike other meals and snacks, elevenses has no fixed format other than the habit of the individual consumer. It is domestic, informal and comforting in nature, and would never appear by name on a menu, even if the establishment clearly provides the materials to compose elevenses. This is in contrast to afternoon tea, a specifically understood event with two courses (savoury and sweet), requiring the use of a specific tea service. Afternoon tea may be formally served in public, and emphatically punctuates the day. Elevenses can happen in the garden shed, at the kitchen table, or at the desk; a drink in a mug and a biscuit straight from the packet (or a bun from the bag) are just as acceptable as a cappuccino and pâtisserie served on china in a coffee shop. It is the least formal of all food events; more of a habit – or even a treat – than a necessity.²¹ This perhaps explains why it barely merits a mention in the many works assessing the history of the British at table: it is a sociological as well as an historical phenomenon.

Snacking between meals is not usually viewed as a benign habit. Alan Davidson cites the case of Hilaire Belloc's Henry King, 'Cut off in Dreadful Agonies' by his choice of little pieces of string

for his elevenses.²² Belloc does not explicitly name elevenses as the cause of death, but although we know that by the twentieth century it had already been established as part of the rhythm of the English day, it is notable by its absence on the list of meals deemed necessary for daily survival.²³ In a life without manual labour, elevenses ceases to be an essential restorative, and becomes an excuse for unnecessary additional consumption and gluttony. This makes it expressive of a certain childishness or lack of control; an indulgence, or even something to be ashamed of. Tea does appear on Henry King's list of approved meals, and this pattern of acceptance of the afternoon snack and lack of mention of its morning equivalent is repeated in much English literature and social and historical record. For example, in *The Road to Wigan Pier* George Orwell excludes elevenses from his description of the working class's miserable daily sequence of meals, naming only breakfast, dinner, tea and supper.²⁴

I have already referred to the colloquial nature of the term elevenses in most languages. It is probably for this reason that positive references to it tend to be found in children's literature. Two very different bears, for two different generations, Pooh and Paddington, are both well known as inveterate consumers of elevenses. Winnie the Pooh, whose clock was famously stopped at five to eleven, making the moment ever-ripe for a snack, could on occasion become guiltily evasive when asked to do something at the critical time of day:²⁵ Paddington was always more open about his intentions. Characteristically, he leaves the house for a hospital visit 'with a small parcel of sandwiches and a thermos flask of hot cocoa in case he got delayed and missed his elevenses', although he would more usually guard against this eventuality by spending the critical time with his friend Mr Gruber, an émigré antique dealer, over cocoa and buns.²⁶ Both examples serve to place elevenses in a comfortable, middle-class, domestic zone: the worst thing that can happen to you over elevenses is to misplace the buns, be obliged to eat the broken biscuit, or spill the cocoa.

Lack of nutritional value or the provision of additional unnecessary calories are key arguments made against elevenses. In

British schools free milk was served to all schoolchildren in the morning break until 1970. When 'Maggie Thatcher, Milk Snatcher' (then Secretary of State for Education) ended this universal provision, retaining it only for the under-sevens, her money-saving move was widely condemned as depriving Britain's youth of necessary nutrition – as well as their elevenes.²⁷ In France, the mid-morning distribution of milk to schoolchildren began in 1974, on nutritional grounds, but now a different set of concerns is emerging: whilst there is no economic imperative to stop (over-)production of milk in the European Union makes it inexpensive to provide milk to children), it is argued that the nutritional benefit is in fact minimal. Indeed, the fact that the milk is accompanied by cakes or biscuits is held responsible for a 'calorific excess' that has given rise to obesity in France.²⁸ The morning school milk is blamed for the introduction of a new, pervasive '*mauvaise habitude*' – effectively elevenes – in a country where inter-meal snacking, in particular in the morning, has not, according to most observers, previously been common.²⁹ Although this view is disputed by Flandrin, who reports 'in the twentieth century, the "morning snack" taken a few hours after a morning coffee – which became widespread in provincial France – has not disappeared from popular practice', the nutritional point is valid.³⁰ The traditional French breakfast remains similar to the sweet snack of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century bourgeoisie: white coffee and bread. Adding elevenes to the scheme effectively introduces a second, unnecessary breakfast.

North American companies hoping to promote their goods in the UK have seized upon the concept of elevenes as an ideal marketing opportunity. For example, the makers of Krispy Kreme doughnuts understand that in the UK, in contrast to the USA, breakfast is not doughnut time, but that elevenes might be: 'Henshall [marketing director for Krispy Kremes] accepts that his doughnuts might not replace the traditional English breakfast fry-up of eggs and bacon, or muesli and milk. But they can, he believes, become fodder for "elevenes" – midmorning tea – where they could replace the ubiquitous biscuit.'³¹ Kellogg's too

has launched a British version of its global brand of Nutri-grain cereal bars, and called it Elevenes. It comes in two flavours, regular and ginger, and is popular with cyclists as an energy boost, and with snackers in general. Its distribution is restricted to the UK, but it has found fans further afield: the briefest internet search will reveal desperate consumers in the USA, converted to Elevenes (in every sense) during a visit to the UK, urgently seeking a British accomplice to send them food parcels.³² Although named for the moment, it is unlikely that the consumption of Elevenes bars is restricted to the prescribed hour. As Palmer explained as early as 1952, the intervals between food events have reduced progressively over time, so that we find ourselves in a situation where there is virtually no interval at all. 'Already large sections of the public, absent-mindedly munching, must find it difficult to say at any given time whether they are enjoying elevenes, lunch, tea, or some chance, additional makeshift.'³³

Elevenes emerged as a response to industrialization in Britain and the concomitant shift in mealtimes. The 'elevenner' comprised that most traditional British drink of ale or beer, taken as sustenance to fuel hard work. It evolved to embrace the new drinks introduced from colonies and trading partners abroad – coffee, tea, chocolate – which have in their turn become traditions, surviving initial hostility to them as foreign contaminants. Originally an important source of energy and nutrition for people undertaking hard labour, elevenes has become a somewhat anachronistic indulgence which nonetheless helps to punctuate the working day. Recognized by major food producers as a marketing opportunity for new products, or more of the same products, it continues to be promoted as part of the 'traditional' English day. This 'tradition' is one which has emerged in the last 200 years, and which has changed enormously in that time. In the twenty-first century, with its major preoccupation with excessive consumption and obesity, elevenes might appear to be a tradition that has had its day. However, experience shows us that once established, it takes a major revolution in social,

industrial and political thought to instigate lasting change. Paddington's elevenuses appear to be safe for another few decades, at least.

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NOTES

1. Thanks are due to Barbara Santich for encouraging and constructive comments; to Jane Davidson for giving me open access to Alan's books, as well as much helpful advice and stimulating conversation; and to Alex Veness, whose active interest in the subject inspired this research in the first place.
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17. Palmer, p. 28.
18. Palmer, p. 111.
19. Carol Wright, *Ginant Cook Book* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1969), p. 17. This research was directed by the reminiscence of Jane Davidson, who pleasantly recalled on-deck evenings of bouillon. She also pointed out Simon Schama's article in *The New Yorker* recording the maiden voyage of the Queen Mary II, which explicitly laments the lack of mid-morning bouillon on today's transatlantic crossing. My mother, Joyce Levi, wrote a postcard from the *QEII* in June 2004 to inform me that mid-morning bouillon is still served on that vessel, but she was not impressed to find that it was made from granules.
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23. Hilarie Belloc, *Cautionary Verses* (London: Duckworth, 1940), p. 20: "Oh my friends, be warned by me, That Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch and Tea Are all the human frame requires..." "With that the Wretched Child expires."
24. George Orwell (pseud. Eric Blair), *The Road to Wigan Pier* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1937), p. 15.
25. A.A. Milne, 'The House at Pooch Corner' in *The World of Pooch* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1958), p. 236. An unwillingness to admit to the weakness of elevenes, or to share them with others, is typical of the following exchange, when Pooch is asked to help with something during the late morning: "'Well,' said Pooch, 'at eleven o'clock - at eleven o'clock - well, at eleven o'clock, you see, I generally get home about then. Because I have One or Two Things to Do.'" "Quarter past eleven then?" "Well—" said Pooch "Half past?" "Yes," said Pooch. "At half past - or perhaps later".
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THE COVER ILLUSTRATION is from Mary Wondrausch's book *Brickfields*, described in the pages below. The painting is by Mary Wondrausch herself and is entitled 'The Mexican Candelabra'.

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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JANE LEVI is a businesswoman as well as chairman of the Trustees of the Oxford Symposium. She is pursuing online the MA in gastronomy taught by Barbara Santich at Adelaide. Her piece on elevenses, below, gained a Sophie Coe Award at Oxford this year.

DANA LITTLE is an American writer and editor. She is currently writing a culinary history of Haiti (1492–1900), where she lived for six years. She now lives in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.

FIONA MURRAY lives in Angus, studied at St Andrew's and, more recently, in Food Policy with Tim Lang. She campaigns (see her website www.stirinstuff.co.uk) for greater involvement of children in cookery.

CHARLES PERRY writes on food for the *Los Angeles Times*, and masterminded *Medieval Arab Cookery* for Prospect.

WILLIAM RUBEL has written *The Magic of Fire*, about open-hearth cookery, and is currently working on the early history of bread.

CORINNA SARGOOD is an artist, author and book illustrator living in Somerset. Her work has ornamented many Prospect books, not least *Honey from a Weed*.

SANDRA SHERMAN is Professor of British Literature at the University of Arkansas. Her book *Fresh from the Past. Recipes and Revelations from Moll Flanders' Kitchen* has recently been published by Taylor.

JANE STEVENSON is a scholar, critic and novelist. Her reviews may be read in the *Observer*, her *Astrea Trilogy* may be purchased anywhere, her edition (with Peter Davidson) of Sir Kenelm Digby may be bought from Prospect.

BRICKFIELDS

The cover illustration by Mary Wondrausch comes from the book of this name published by the artist, obtainable from her for £15 plus £1.50 postage from The Pottery, Brickfields, Compton, near Guildford GU3 1HZ. Mary Wondrausch is one of our foremost slipware potters and everyone should own at least one of her finely decorated plates or cooking pots. Failing that, they should search out her authoritative account of British slipware published by A. & C. Black (the latest edition was in 2000). A third line of approach is to buy the book described here. It is a most attractive, indeed seductive, presentation of an artist-potter's life – still pursued with full vigour after decades of activity – and shows us (slobs and slatterns all) how a sense of appearance, an urge to mould and create, can leave its mark on every interstice of a building, a garden, or an everyday event. So it teaches by example – a handsomely and profusely illustrated example at that – and provokes emulation. A recommended read and, if you are thinking of building fountains, an essential one.

JAKE TILSON

The intriguing book *3 Found Fonts* is by the graphic designer Jake Tilson, published by Atlas (ISBN 0907508375). Mr Tilson works in the new media as well as the old, so surfers will find him hospitable at his sites www.areasdas.com or www.thecooker.com. We are intrigued because food is obviously a preoccupation – at home and in his work. The fonts which he launches in his book are inspired by Italy: the first derives from the label on a tin of tomatoes; the second from a computer-till receipt at a Bologna restaurant; and the third from the stencilled street signs of Venice. This last, called Nizioletto, is a cracker for labelling parcels. In homage, I have used it in the headings of this section. The book comes with a cd-rom containing the (free) fonts and much supporting material. Visitors to the websites can find details of the Independence Lunch which he cooked (as well as constructing an artwork to celebrate in honour of the South London Gallery, and with the backing of the Institute of Culinary Arts of Boston, in 2003. Cookery book designers would do well to study his work.

CUPOLA

There is a wonderful late seventeenth-century house in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk that goes by this name for the remarkable octagonal