

WARTIME FOOD

During World War II, Australia, Britain and the United States all introduced food rationing. But Britain, which suffered a naval blockade and relied on millions of tons of food being shipped in each year, was particularly badly affected. Meat, eggs, sugar, butter, cooking fat and virtually all the ingredients that make food delicious were rationed or just not available. Bananas vanished. So too, for a while, did onions. Oranges were very rare.

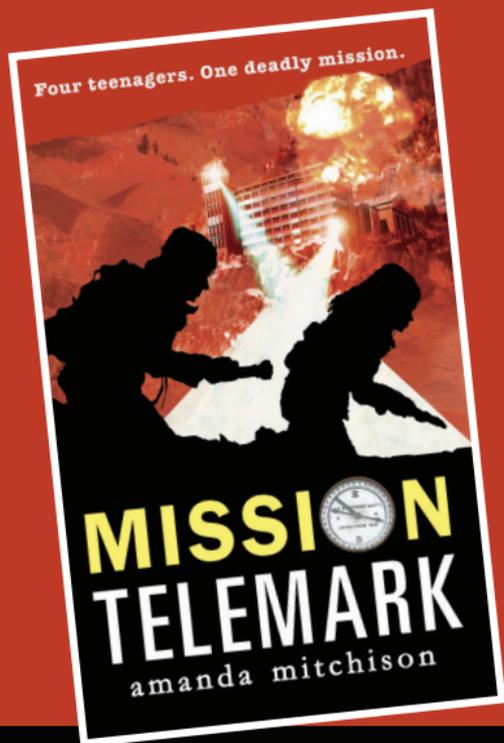
But carrots, swedes, parsnips and potatoes were always plentiful. The Ministry of Food put a lot of effort into encouraging people to eat root vegetables – they invented the cartoon characters: patriotic “Potato Pete” and health-giving “Doctor Carrot”. Cookery writers published countless ingenious recipes. Housewives were told they could replace cheese with sour milk, and cream with whipped margarine and vanilla essence. Other spooky ingredients came to the fore: dried egg – which is never nice – and liquid paraffin, which isn’t really a food at all. Spam, a pink processed meat, came into its own.

And so did Doctor Carrot. Wartime carrot recipes abound: carrot pie, carrot croquettes, carrot savoury, curried carrots, carrots with peanut butter, carrot sandwich spread (Yeuch!). So too do sweet recipes: carrot buns, carrot cookies, mock apricot tart (made from carrots...), and toffee carrots (that’s a carrot on a stick). The idea was that carrots, because they are naturally sweet, could take the place of sugar. But you can push things too far. Carrot marmalade was apparently vile. Turn over for a recipe for carrot fudge.



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carrot fudge



4 tablespoons of finely grated carrot
1 gelatine leaf
Orange squash or orange essence

1. Put the carrots in a pan and cook them gently, in just enough water to keep them covered, for ten minutes.

2. Add a little orange squash, or orange essence, for flavour.

3. Melt a leaf of gelatine and add to the mixture. Cook for a few minutes, stirring all the time.

4. Spoon the mixture into a flat dish and leave it to set in a cold place for several hours. When the fudge feels firm, cut it into chunks and get eating.

*Note that this recipe has no sugar and no fat. Don't try it at home. However clever you are, it won't be nice.