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## The Evolution of the America Perception of Lobster from the 17th to the 21st Century

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# “The Evolution of the American Perception of Lobster from the 17th to the 20th Century”

Fisher: The Evolution of the America Perception of Lobster

Michael Fisher, History 300W · Dr. Bridget Chesterton

## Colonial Era

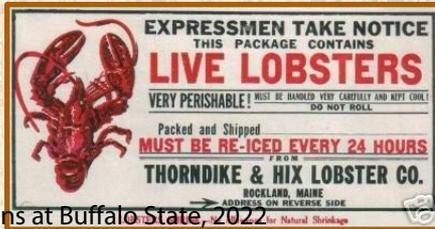
In the Colonial Era of American history lobster was so plentiful that it had become practically worthless. Compounding this was the often terrible taste it had due to the few methods of preservation available to the colonists namely; smoking, pickling and wrapping the lobster in brine soaked rags then burying it in sea sand for months. These methods were far from adequate and harshly impacted flavor.

## Post Civil War

In the era following the Civil War very few people in America outside of those living along the coast had ever tried lobster before, chiefly due to the lack of ability to transfer the meat safely over long distances. But with the arrival of canning and the expansion of Railways across the US people deep into the nation could experience canned lobster, which became something of a novelty but not something to be enjoyed. In fact canned lobster was featured in the Chicago World Fair.

## The Great Depression

The Great Depression sowed the seeds for the meteoric rise of lobster in the public perception. The devastation caused to the canaries in Maine and along the coast removed the inferior canned meat from the market. Coupled with advanced technology that allowed for easy, relatively cheap and reliable transportation of fresh live lobster. Such as refrigeration and more expansive railways and better trains.



## World War II

During the second world war the US federal government instituted various rations on supplies to aid the war effort. Almost every form of meat was subject to these rations. But lobster was not. In fact the government went so far as to create guides on how to properly cook and eat lobster so as to ensure the flavor of the lobster was best as possible. With the wartime boost to production, the economy and technology lobster quickly became a viable food for people to eat. The spread of the airplane was the final component needed to allow the american lobster to spread across the United States as a delicacy.



## Modern Day

In the modern era lobster is known as a food for the upper class or at least not something that is commonly enjoyed by the poorer class. It is associated with lavish living, with wealth and status. Because of this commonly held belief of lobsters status many people are shocked to learn that lobster was once a food for the poor. For slaves and servants. It took technology which allowed for easy transportation of live lobster nationwide.



## Image sources

(1893 COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION FOLD OPEN TRADE CARD BURNHAM & MORRILL CANNED LOBSTER. n.d. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/10583600@N00/10313333333/>) Lobster Rules - Doe and Don's of Handling Live Lobsters. Lobster Anywhere. Accessed November 20, 2021. <https://lobsteranywhere.com/storing-live-lobster/> 1930-40S THORNDIKE & HIX LOBSTER CO. AD ROCKLAND, MAINE. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/10583600@N00/10313333333/> <https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/1930-40s-thorndike-hix-lobster-co-ad-rockland-vintage-1930s-fish-dishes-weldons-household-series-cover-image-ad-culinary-food-cookery-print-culinary-recipe-seafood-lobster-advertisement-etsy> Accessed November 30, 2021. <https://www.etsy.com/listing/798257111/vintage-1930s-fish-dishes-weldons>.

