

Art of the Table

Porcelain plates, silver cutlery, sparkling glassware – a well-laid dining table is a work of art. The changing forms and appearances of these familiar objects over the past 500 years reflect the history of changing attitudes to the food we eat, and how we eat it. Exploration of the globe brought new foods and drinks to the tables of Europe that required new equipment to facilitate their consumption. Shifting social patterns changed when we ate and with whom we ate.

Drawn from the NGV's rich collection of decorative arts, together with a number of private loans, *Art of the Table* looks at dining practices from the Renaissance to today. Key themes include the role of sugar and spice, cutlery, medicinal foods, the eighteenth-century pleasure dairy and the introduction of tea, coffee and chocolate into Europe – exotic luxuries that sparked a revolution in social practices and the development of new dining utensils to consume these imported beverages.

NORTH BALCONY

THOMAS PITTS, London manufacturer
England active 1744–93

Epergne
1762–63
silver

Felton Bequest, 1932

3304.a-w-D3

Epergnes, or centrepieces, emerged during the mid eighteenth century when the display of the dessert course had reached its most extravagant. They would have sat in the centre of the table and the baskets would have been filled with seasonal fresh fruit, nuts or a range of sugared confectioneries. This epergne is a masterpiece of silversmithing and represents one of the most delightful manifestations of the mid-eighteenth century Rococo taste for chinoiserie. It is a fanciful representation of a chinese garden pavillion, topped off by the pineapple, an exotic fruit in the eighteenth century and a symbol of hospitality.

Table theatre

By the mid eighteenth century the extravagance of the dessert course had become an opportunity for grand theatrical display. The table would be set with a central raised platform, mirrored on top and decorated with porcelain and sugar sculpture. Garden themes were highly fashionable and grand architectural schemes were created, complete with garden sculpture, pavilions and figures. Flowerbeds made from powdered, coloured sugar were laid out, gravel walks were created from sugared seeds and hedges and borders were made from mousseline, a coloured sugar paste forced through a sieve to give it a mossy texture.

To accompany these extravagant creations, it became highly fashionable to use trompe l'oeil wares for the table and serving dishes of the dessert. Tureens and ewers were created in the form of fruits, vegetables, birds and animals and plates and baskets either imitated in form or were decorated with leaves and flowers.

DERBY PORCELAIN, Derby manufacturer
England c. 1748–1848

Sauce boat
c. 1765
porcelain (soft-paste)

The Colin Templeton Collection.
Gift of Mrs Colin Templeton, 1942 272-D4

LONGTON HALL, Longton, Staffordshire manufacturer
England c. 1749–60

Bowl and stand
c. 1755
porcelain (soft-paste)

The Colin Templeton Collection.
Gift of Mrs Colin Templeton, 1942 267.1-2-D4

CHELSEA PORCELAIN FACTORY, London manufacturer
England c. 1744–69

Pair of partridge tureens
c. 1755
porcelain (soft-paste)

Presented through the NGV Foundation by Mrs Angela Isles, Governor, 2001 2001.310.a-d

CHELSEA PORCELAIN FACTORY, London manufacturer
England c. 1744–69

Pair of sunflower plates
c. 1755
porcelain (soft-paste)

Presented through the NGV Foundation by Mrs Angela Isles, Governor, 2001 2001.311.a-b

MEISSEN PORCELAIN FACTORY, Meissen manufacturer
Germany est. 1710
Johann Joachim KÄNDLER modeller
Germany 1706–75

Cockerel tureen
c. 1743
porcelain (hard-paste)

Collection of Kenneth Reed, Sydney

Zoomorphic tablewares were created by Kändler from the earliest time of his work at the Meissen factory. Indeed, many of his animal-form tablewares are closely related to porcelain figures of animals. This cockerel tureen appears to be a variant of a bird sculpture of 1732 identified as a Paduan cockerel. Many of Kändler's avian sculptures were decorated in a naturalistic palette, enhancing the objects' mimetic character. The colourful, high-key artificial palette of the enamels employed on this tureen may have been influenced by the decoration found on Chinese porcelain zoomorphic tureens created for the European market.

PROSKAU FACTORY, Silesia manufacturer
Silesia 1763– c. 1783

Pair of bird ewers
c. 1770
earthenware (tin-glazed)

Collection of Kenneth Reed, Sydney

The German faience industry reached its height during the mid eighteenth century, given that porcelain still remained a prohibitively expensive luxury for many. The Proskau faience factory was one of the few earthenware manufactories that were established after the mid eighteenth century, despite the increasing competition from porcelain production. This pair of parrot ewers, their beaks forming the spout and their heads the lids, reflects the factory's specialisation in trompe l'oeil wares. Their inspiration is ultimately derived from Chinese porcelain models of the Kangxi Period (1661–1722).

LONGTON HALL, Longton, Staffordshire manufacturer
England c. 1749–60

Dish

c. 1755
porcelain (soft-paste)

The Colin Templeton Collection.
Gift of Mrs Colin Templeton, 1942

294-D4

CHELSEA PORCELAIN FACTORY, London manufacturer
England c. 1744–69

Melon tureen

c. 1755
porcelain (soft-paste)

Collection of Kenneth Reed, Sydney

The fashion for trompe l'oeil wares probably originated in France or Germany, and the Meissen factory in Germany was the first to make such illusionistic serving vessels in porcelain. The fashion was soon taken up in England, especially at the Chelsea and Longton Hall porcelain factories. Such vessels would have been used to serve stewed fruits or other wet sweetmeats. Melon tureens are mentioned in the 1755 Chelsea sale catalogue: '*First Day's Sale, Monday 10th March, p.4, lot 38 – Two fine melons for desert*'. The form is copied from a Meissen model and was produced in two sizes.

PAUL HANNONG FACTORY, Strasbourg manufacturer
France 1731–60

Cabbage tureen

c. 1754–62
earthenware (tin-glazed)

Collection of Kenneth Reed, Sydney

CHELSEA PORCELAIN FACTORY, London manufacturer
England c. 1744–69

Lettuce tureen

c. 1755
porcelain (soft-paste)

The Colin Templeton Collection.
Gift of Mrs Colin Templeton, 1942

247.a-b-D4

BOW PORCELAIN WORKS, London manufacturer
England c. 1748–76

Partridge tureen and cover
c. 1755
porcelain

Private collection, Sydney

DERBY PORCELAIN, Derby manufacturer
England c. 1748–1848

Pigeon tureen
c. 1765
porcelain (soft-paste)

Gift of John H. Connell, 1929

3080-D3

DERBY PORCELAIN, Derby manufacturer
England c. 1748–1848

Cabbage tureen and cover
1780
porcelain (soft-paste)

Private collection, Sydney

CHELSEA PORCELAIN FACTORY, London manufacturer
England c. 1744–69

Peony, plate
c. 1755
porcelain (soft-paste)

The Colin Templeton Collection.
Gift of Mrs Colin Templeton, 1942

422-D4

Renaissance dining

The fourteenth century saw the beginnings of a revolution in European dining practices. In the aftermath of the Black Death, a dramatically reduced population enjoyed a much greater abundance of food, whilst burgeoning trade networks led to increased access to exotic foodstuffs. Along with the increased availability of food, a general increase in wealth saw the small range of objects used for dining in the medieval period multiplied and embellished amongst elites. Developments in the production of ceramics, glass and metal wares saw the creation of rich and luxurious dining equipment for the dining tables of the great courts of Renaissance Italy. New foodstuffs appeared too, further stimulating the creation of new tablewares: Christopher Columbus's discovery of the Americas at the end of the fifteenth century introduced a gamut of new foods which changed the way Europeans dined forever.

ITALY, Faenza manufacturer

Plate

1519

earthenware (maiolica)

Felton Bequest, 1940

4672-D3

Although the wealthy and powerful adorned their festive tables with beautifully decorated maiolica vessels, the majority of people used broad platters of wood or bread to serve food. Bread trenchers would soak up the sauces and juices of the food they carried and were often distributed to servants and the poor after a meal.

NICOLA da Urbino

Italy active c. 1520–38

Jupiter and Semele, plate

c. 1524

earthenware (maiolica)

Felton Bequest, 1940

4710-D3

Colourful, tin-glazed earthenware tablewares, known as maiolica, developed in Italy under the influence of ceramics imported from Spain and the Islamic world. Maiolica reached its apogee in the early sixteenth century with the so-called *istoriato* (history-painted) wares. Inspired by Greek and Roman pottery, these vessels decorated with finely painted scenes from ancient history and mythology were highly valued by connoisseurs and were intended as much for display as for use. This example forms part of a service which was created for the great art patron Isabella d'Este; her arms combined with those of her husband Francesco Gonzaga adorn the pieces of the service.

ITALY, Cafaggiolo manufacturer

Plate

1525–50

earthenware (maiolica)

Felton Bequest, 1939

4546-D3

ITALY (attributed to) manufacturer

Spoon

c. 1450

silver, agate, enamel

Gift of Stanley Lipscombe Esq., 1968

1776-D5

The use of cutlery, apart from knives to cut meat and bread, remained relatively rare in Renaissance Italy. A diner brought their own utensils to the table and these could be quite luxurious, like this agate and enamel spoon, a marker of the owner's wealth, rank and social refinement.

ITALY, Venice manufacturer

Footed bowl

early 16th century

glass (applied decoration), gilt

Purchased, 1871

27-D1R

The ability of glass to be shaped into complex forms and to be decorated artfully with coloured enamels and gilding led to sophisticated glass vessels for the grand dining table being highly valued in Renaissance Italy. A footed dish like this one would probably have been used to serve fruits or sweetmeats, the precious glass vessel and the expensive foodstuffs it contained serving both to enliven the visual spectacle of the dining table and to proclaim the wealth and refinement of the host.

ITALY, Venice or SPAIN manufacturer

Jug

mid 16th century

glass (*vetro a retorti* decoration)

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Mrs Margaret Stewart, Founder Benefactor, 1987

D80-1987

ITALY, Venice manufacturer

Oil and vinegar cruet

c. 1680

glass (applied decoration)

William and Margaret Morgan Endowment, 1973D180-1973

This refined vessel, a cruet, of Venetian glass has two reservoirs to contain the oil and the vinegar used to dress salads. The Greeks and Romans had eaten dishes of green leaves dressed with oil and vinegar, but it was in Renaissance Italy that the salad reasserted its role as an important part of the meal, often including various seafoods as well as leaf vegetables. The luxurious nature of this hand-blown cruet indicates the manner in which the presentation of the table, not merely the provision of food to guests, was becoming an important display of rank and power.

GERMANY potter

ENGLAND (IF maker) silversmith

England active 1555–84

Jug

1571–72

stoneware, silver-gilt

Felton Bequest, 1934

3573-D3

Expansion of trade networks in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, both in and beyond Europe, facilitated the spread of new ideas about dining, new foodstuffs and luxury tablewares. High-quality German stonewares produced in the Rhineland were exported across Europe in large quantities throughout the sixteenth century. This jug is embellished with silver-gilt mounts which were added in England, demonstrating the high value accorded to the fine stoneware vessel. Such vessels were used to serve beer or wine, the stoneware body helping to keep the beverage cool.

Seventeenth-century dining

The establishment of seaborne trade routes to the Americas and to Asia in the sixteenth century saw the focus of European commerce gradually move from Italy and the Mediterranean to ports situated on the Atlantic. As a result, a range of exotic new commodities began to enter Europe for the first time in significant quantities during the seventeenth century. Important amongst these was porcelain from China and Japan, and an enormous demand developed for blue and white porcelain to grace the dining tables of Europe's wealthy and powerful.

As demand exceeded the volume of imports, European ceramic manufacturers, especially in the Netherlands, began to produce tin-glazed earthenware imitations of the imported porcelain. The Dutch also produced imitations of the sophisticated glasswares made in Italy. Silver vessels retained an important role on the tables of Europe's elites, both for use and for display; more humble tables substituted pewter for costly silver.

CHINESE

Plate

Qing dynasty, Kangxi period 1662–1722
porcelain

Gift of H. W. Kent, 1938

3759.1-D3

CHINESE

Bowl

Qing dynasty, Kangxi period 1662–1722
porcelain

Bequest of Howard Spensley, 1939

4303-D3

Blue and white Chinese porcelains had been admired in Europe since the Renaissance, but until the Portuguese discovery of sea routes to Asia porcelain reached Europe in only very small quantities. Finely decorated porcelains like this bowl were in great demand amongst Europe's wealthy elites, both to be admired as exotic works of art, and for use on grand dining tables.

DE GRIEKSCHE A POTTERY (SAMUEL VAN EENHOORN), Delft manufacturer
the Netherlands est. 1674–85

Plate

1674–85

earthenware

Felton Bequest, 1939

4562-D3

This tin-glazed earthenware plate was produced at the town of Delft in the Netherlands. Delft became the centre of a major industry in the seventeenth century, producing earthenwares in imitation of the porcelain being imported into Europe from China and Japan by the Dutch East India Company. The plate's decoration draws on both European and Asian sources. The floral wreath border with cavorting putti is in the Baroque style, while the central motif depicts exotic flowers and porcelain vases of Chinese form. The blue and white palette of the plate is directly inspired by imported Ming and early Qing blue and white porcelain.

ENGLAND manufacturer

Dish

c. 1650

pewter

Felton Bequest, 1933

3429-D3

Pewter is an alloy or mixture of metals consisting primarily of tin. Vessels made from pewter were part of everyday life in Europe from the late medieval period until the nineteenth century. More durable than wood and earthenwares, and much cheaper than silver or porcelain, pewter allowed the production of long-lasting, affordable objects for eating and drinking. Less convenient, however, was pewter's tendency to flavour food and drink through the interaction of certain food acids with the metal. Early pewter could also contain lead, resulting in lead poisoning from prolonged use.

ENGLAND manufacturer

Jug

c. 1682

glass (pincer and applied decoration), silver

William and Margaret Morgan Endowment, 1973D163-1973

JAMES PLUMMER manufacturer
England active 1619–63

Dish
1633–34
silver

Felton Bequest, 1932

3303-D3

THE NETHERLANDS, Holland or GERMANY manufacturer

Serpent-stem goblet
Flügelglas

early 17th century
glass (*façon de Venise*), (enamel twist stem, applied and pincer decoration)

Felton Bequest, 1977

D151-1977

So highly regarded was the beautiful glassware produced in Venice from the fifteenth century onwards that Dutch and German glassmakers began to imitate these wares, creating *façon de Venise* glass (glass in the Venetian manner). Ornate glasses such as this example were intended for use in formal banqueting situations.

THE NETHERLANDS, Holland manufacturer

Wine glass
late 17th century
glass

William and Margaret Morgan Endowment, 1973D151-1973

This delicate and refined Dutch wine glass is of a form known as *tazza* in Italian and was first produced in Italy in the sixteenth century. The shallow drinking bowl on a high stem is very difficult to drink from without spilling, and was no doubt intended as a test of the manners and sophistication of its user.

STEPHEN VENABLES (Jnr) (attributed to) manufacturer
England active 1670s–

Spoon
1678–79
silver

Gift of John H. Connell, 1914

1432-D3

This late seventeenth-century English spoon is engraved with the initials of its owner on the reverse of the handle. This reflects the practice of setting spoons and forks on the table with their bowls and tines facedown. This etiquette had its origins in French court circles and here illustrates the influence of French table manners on English dining in the seventeenth century.

ENGLAND (WC maker) silversmith

Goblet
1639–40
silver

Felton Bequest, 1924

2649-D3

BOHEMIA, Silesia manufacturer

Goblet
c. 1650– c. 1699
glass

Private collection, Melbourne

Backdrop in case

Jan Davidsz. de HEEM
Dutch April 1606 - 26 April 1684,

Still life with fruit, detail
(c. 1640-1650)
oil on canvas

Felton Bequest, 1935

231-4

The porcelain dinner service

The secret of the production of a European hard-paste porcelain imitating that from China and Japan was discovered in Saxony in 1709, and in 1710 Europe's first porcelain manufactory was founded at Meissen, Germany. Here the first dinner services in porcelain were created. The idea of a ceramic service had first appeared in Renaissance Italy, but it was at Meissen that the dinner service as we know it today, with a full range of matching dining and service pieces for the multiple dishes of a formal meal, was first devised.

Formal dining in the eighteenth century followed *service à la française* (service in the French style), in which all the food was brought out at once and placed on the table in an impressive display, requiring matched service pieces. This practice was supplanted in the early nineteenth century by *service à la russe* (service in the Russian style), in which individual courses were brought to the table sequentially, essentially in the way we dine today.

MEISSEN PORCELAIN FACTORY, Meissen manufacturer
Germany est. 1710

Elements of a dinner service, including plates, dishes, tureens, *pots à jus*, salts, butter curler, ladle and a *plat de ménage*

c. 1740–73

porcelain (hard-paste)

Private collection, Melbourne

The very first porcelain dinner services were not created for the Saxon King-Elector who, as a great prince, would dine off nothing less than gold and silver plate, but for Count Brühl, the Saxon prime minister and director of the Meissen factory. So successful were the large-scale Baroque services produced at Meissen that soon every prince in Europe was eager to possess one, and by the mid 1730s even the Saxon King was dining off porcelain.

This case contains a selection of pieces from an eighteenth-century Meissen dinner service decorated in the *Deutsche Blumen*, or German flower pattern.

Plat de ménage

The *plat de ménage* was a form of table centrepiece which developed in the mid seventeenth century and was used for the main savoury courses of a meal. The centrepiece traditionally consisted of a lemon basket and a series of containers for various seasonings. The porcelain *plat de ménage* formed a part of Meissen dinner services from the late 1720s onwards. This example is of a form that became common in the 1740s and continued in use into the nineteenth century. The individual components include jugs for oil and vinegar, a spouted mustard pot and a sugar caster. The central elevated basket held lemons, a luxury item in the eighteenth century which had to be imported from the Mediterranean area. All of these seasonings were required for the serving of meats, fish and salads.

Pots à jus

The *pot à jus* is a small lidded cup with a handle, first created in France around 1730. The cup was originally designed for the serving of hot meat juices and similar reductions made from fish or vegetables. *Jus* (literally 'juice') reduced or extracted from meat, fish and vegetables was an essential flavouring of eighteenth-century French savoury dishes, and these cups could have been used by diners to flavour their food, as well as for enjoying such juices on their own. Some may also have been used for juices extracted from fruit. By the late eighteenth century these pots were alternatively known as *pots à crème* and were used to serve custard. The cups often came on a small matching tray.

Tureens

The tureen is a covered serving dish generally used to hold soups or stews. In the first half of the eighteenth century grand dining followed the practices instituted by Louis XIV at the French court – the so-called *service à la française*. This involved multiple dishes being placed on the table in a single course. Diners helped themselves to dishes near to them, or asked fellow diners to serve them from dishes out of reach. Decorative serving vessels, such as these tureens, became essential parts of a grand dining service. Most eighteenth-century porcelain tureens were used with a metal liner inside them to hold the food and protect the porcelain.

The dinner service

Although the porcelain dinner service rapidly achieved popularity amongst European elites and enjoyed a special place on the dessert table, silver plate for dining remained important and continued to function as a statement of rank and an indication of wealth. European porcelain services were very costly; less expensive were porcelain services made and decorated in China, ordered through the various European East India companies. For those who could afford neither porcelain nor silver, fine earthenwares continued to be used for dining and remained the most common form of dinner service for the lower aristocracy until the end of the eighteenth century.

FRANCE, Rouen manufacturer

Plate

c. 1700–25
earthenware

Felton Bequest, 1940

4660-D3

PASQUALE RUBATI FACTORY, Milan manufacturer
Italy 1756– c. 1830

Plate

c. 1770–80
earthenware

Felton Bequest, 1940

4670-D3

Fine earthenware dinner services were amongst the most common of all eighteenth-century services, as porcelain remained relatively expensive until towards the end of the century. This plate by the Milanese Rubati factory demonstrates the extreme refinement the best of these wares could achieve. The decoration is inspired by fashionable imported Japanese porcelain in the Kakiemon style, which was also imitated in European porcelain.

CHINESE

Armorial plate

18th century Qing dynasty
porcelain, enamel, gilt

Felton Bequest, 1962

420A-D5

CHINESE

Armorial plate

c. 1767–71 Qing dynasty
porcelain, enamel, gilt

Felton Bequest, 1962

420B-D5

Porcelain dinner services could be ordered from China through the European East India companies. An order was placed and the design sent to Canton, where the service was decorated by Chinese craftsmen, then the service was returned to the client in Europe. Armorial services were particularly popular forms for this Chinese export porcelain. This plate, from an export service, bears the coat of arms of Thomas Hodges, British Governor of Bombay.

CHELSEA PORCELAIN FACTORY, London manufacturer
England c. 1744–69

Sauce boat

c. 1755
porcelain (soft-paste)

The Colin Templeton Collection.
Gift of Mrs Colin Templeton, 1942 461B.2-D4

Sauces for meats and vegetables formed an important part of eighteenth-century dining practices. Sauce boats were special jugs designed to serve these accompaniments. They were often accompanied by a stand, to protect the tablecloth from drips, and were also often used with a spoon to ladle sauce out of the boat.

ENGLAND, London manufacturer

Sauce boat

c. 1740
silver

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria
by Mrs M. E. Cutten, Founder Benefactor, 1980D426-1980

GABRIEL SLEATH, London silversmith
England

Dish

1719–20
silver

Gift from the Estate of Janet Biddlecombe, 19541413.a-b-D4

Silver and gold plate had been an important part of courtly dining practices from the Renaissance onwards. Persons of princely rank dined exclusively off these precious metals until well into the eighteenth century, and even after porcelain services had achieved broad acceptance silver remained an important means of displaying wealth and rank. A serving dish like this would probably have been used on a dining table for savoury foods as part of a meal employing *service à la française*, where multiple dishes were placed on the table at the same time.

Cutlery

During the Renaissance food was generally still consumed with the hands. Cutlery remained relatively rare and was brought to a meal by the diner, not provided by the host. As a result, much early cutlery was elaborately decorative and came in its own carrying cases. A knife might be used to cut meats and transport hot food to the mouth, and a spoon could be used for liquid dishes like soup. The fork remained a novelty until the very end of the sixteenth century and was generally reserved for serving; its use was considered by many outside of Italy and Spain to be overrefined and effeminate. It was only in the very late seventeenth century that the practice of acquiring sets of cutlery, to provide for guests' use at a meal, began to take hold. During the eighteenth century specialised forms of cutlery began to develop for eating and serving particular types of food.

GERMANY manufacturer

Spoon

16th century

silver, silver-gilt, textile cone (Conus textile)

Gift of Mr Stanley Lipscombe, 1956

1569-D4

A spoon such as this, formed from an exotic shell, was a luxury item – as much a work of art as an object for use. Spoons might be used for ritual purposes, such as anointing, as well as at table. If used for dining, a spoon like this was not intended to bring food or liquid directly to the mouth; instead it was used to ladle liquid out of a container onto a plate, or into another vessel.

ENGLAND, London manufacturer

Spoon

1582–83

silver, silver-gilt

Purchased, 1961

314-D5

The handle of this spoon terminates in a figure of Saint James the Less. Spoons depicting the Twelve Apostles (messengers of Christ) were popular throughout the sixteenth century. Individual apostle spoons were sometimes given as christening gifts, but were also intended for use. Groups depicting all Twelve Apostles could be found amongst wealthier members of society.

CHRISTOPHER EASTON, Exeter manufacturer
England active 1580–1610

Spoon

c. 1585

silver, silver-gilt

Purchased, 1961

315-D5

ENGLAND, Bridgwater (AB maker) silversmith

Spoon

c. 1630

silver

Purchased, 1961

316-D5

ENGLAND manufacturer

Spoon

c. 1619

silver, silver-gilt

Purchased, 1961

318-D5

The short, often thick handle found on early spoons is indicative of the fact that the handle was held in the whole hand. The practice of holding the handle of the spoon between the thumb and first two fingers only developed in the mid seventeenth century.

ENGLAND, London manufacturer

Spoon

1600–01

silver, silver-gilt

Purchased, 1961

317-D5

ENGLAND (WP maker) silversmith

Spoon

1694–95

silver

Gift of John H. Connell, 1914

1431-D3

This spoon is of the so-called 'trefid' pattern, named for the three-lobed shape of the end of the handle. Popular in England towards the end of the seventeenth century, the trefid pattern was one of the very first cutlery patterns in England to be produced in services: that is with knives, forks and spoons as matched sets.

SAINT-CLOUD PORCELAIN FACTORY, Saint-Cloud manufacturer

France est. 1666–1766

Knife and fork

c. 1750

porcelain, metal

Felton Bequest, 1929

3115.1-2-D3

Porcelain handles for cutlery were introduced into Europe from China in around 1730. By the mid eighteenth century porcelain-handled cutlery was highly fashionable. The pistol-grip handles of this knife and fork are typical of mid eighteenth-century cutlery, as is the shape of the knife blade, the so-called 'scimitar' form.

THE NETHERLANDS manufacturer

Knife and fork set

1650–1700

ivory, steel

Felton Bequest, 1928

3025.a-c-D3

This cutlery set consists of a knife and fork with elaborately carved ivory handles and an ivory sheath designed to house both implements. The handles take the form of a fashionably dressed man and woman in costumes typical of the latter half of the seventeenth century. Sets like these often formed part of a bridal trousseau. Gifting knives as part of a wedding contract was practiced in Europe from as least as early as the fourteenth century.

THE NETHERLANDS manufacturer

Knife

17th century
steel, ivory, ebony

Felton Bequest, 1929

3078-D3

ENGLAND manufacturer

Knife

1750–1800
steel, agate

Felton Bequest, 1931

3261-D3

JOHN WILSON, Sheffield manufacturer

England est.1750

Knife and fork

18th century
steel, dyed bone, mother-of-pearl

Felton Bequest, 1928

3028.1-2-D3

This knife and fork are ingeniously designed to fit together, allowing them to be carried around by their owner. The blade of the knife and the tines of the fork each slide, head to head, into the handle of the other utensil.

GERMANY manufacturer

Knife and fork

1650–1700
steel, ivory

Felton Bequest, 1932

3338.1-2-D3

The handles of this knife and fork are of ivory carved in the form of figures (representing the virtues), surmounted by a lion (the heraldic emblem of the Dutch republic). Handles of this form were popular in the Netherlands during the seventeenth century. The style of carving on these examples, however, along with the cutler's mark on the blade, suggest that they are German in origin.

GERMANY manufacturer

Knife and fork set

c. 1700

silver, steel, agate, wood, shagreen

Felton Bequest, 1928

3026.a-d-D3

This beautiful cutlery set consists of a knife and fork with agate handles and a fitted case covered in shagreen: leather made from shark or ray skin. Often referred to as travelling cutlery sets, objects like these are reminders that until the late seventeenth century it was the diner's responsibility to provide their own cutlery, not the host's. The fine materials employed in this set indicate the rank and refinement of their owner and his or her expectation to dine elegantly wherever they might find themselves.

HESTER BATEMAN, London manufacturer

England 1760–90

Teaspoon

1790–91

silver

Gift of John H. Connell, 1914

1468-D3

BOW PORCELAIN WORKS, London manufacturer

England est. c. 1748–76

Spoon tray

c. 1755

porcelain (soft-paste)

Felton Bequest, 1940

4731-D3

Spoon trays formed part of the equipment used in the English tea ritual and served to keep used teaspoons off the linen tablecloth, where they could leave marks.

ENGLAND manufacturer

SAINT CLOUD PORCELAIN FACTORY, Saint Cloud manufacturer

France 1666–1766

Cutlery box with fruit service

c. 1700–25

wood, porcelain (soft-paste), silver, fabric, metal

Private collection, Melbourne

Knife boxes stood on the sideboard so that servants could set out fresh cutlery for each new course of a meal. This example contains a fruit service with French porcelain handles and English silver knife blades and forks. Silver was used for fruit services as the natural acids in fruit could discolour steel cutlery.

WEDGWOOD, Staffordshire manufacturer

England est. 1759

Fish slice

c. 1790

earthenware (creamware)

Private collection, Melbourne

The eighteenth century saw the development of specialised pieces of cutlery intended for the serving of particular foods. This earthenware spatula was intended for the serving of fish. The choice of earthenware for such an implement was intentional. Fish was normally served with lemon juice, an acid which caused discoloration of steel implements and which in turn transmitted a metallic taste to the food. Ceramic or silver implements, unaffected by food acids, avoided such problems.

Sugar and spice

Due to the enormous overindulgence at feasts, spices and fruit pastes were consumed at the end of a meal to aid digestion. Sugar-coated seeds and spices were served, all of which were believed to have digestive and carminative properties. This practice had its roots in European medieval feasting, developing into the dessert course during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Pepper, cloves and nutmeg were presented in spice boxes and were also taken as palette cleansers, their consumption no doubt masking bad breath.

Sugar was one of the most important ingredients in cooking and was used to make foods more palatable. In medieval and Renaissance dining the distinction between sweet and savoury did not exist and sugar was present as a condiment alongside salt, oil and vinegar, mustard and spices. The consumption of sugar rose dramatically in subsequent centuries as European plantations developed in the West Indies, run by slave labour.

C. C., London manufacturer
England active 1797–1806

Cruet

1799–1800 cruet, 1800–01 mustard spoon
silver, glass

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by
Mrs M. E. Cutten, Founder Benefactor, 1980D425.a-m-1980

A cruet is a stand designed to hold condiments for the table. Simple cruets for oil and vinegar date back to medieval times, but the form became more complex from the seventeenth century onwards with the increase of spices used at the table. This cruet reflects the developing complexity of tablewares at the end of the eighteenth century. It contains two ewers for oil and vinegar, two casters for sugar and pepper or spices, a mustard pot with spoon and two smaller ewers for sauces, one with a glass stopper, the other with a narrow spoon attached to the stopper.

CHARLES ADAM, London manufacturer
England active 1682–1711

Set of three casters

1708–09

silver

Felton Bequest, 19242651.a-b-D3, 2652.a-b-D3, 2653.a-b-D3

The caster, with its pierced, high-domed lid and cylindrical body, developed in the late seventeenth century. It was used for sprinkling sugar, ground pepper or mustard powder over food, and sets of three casters usually represented these three condiments. Casters were available singly, as sets of three or six, or as part of an epergne. The pear-shaped body of these casters developed around 1700–10, the change in shape making them easier to hold.

HENNELL & NUTTING, London manufacturer
England 1808– c. 1817

Mustard pot

1809–10

silver

Gift of John H. Connell, 1914

1418-D3

BOW PORCELAIN WORKS, London manufacturer
England est. c. 1748–76

African man and woman, figure group

c. 1765

porcelain (soft-paste)

The Colin Templeton Collection.

Gift of Mrs Colin Templeton, 1942

437-D4

The employment of African people within the English home was seen as a marker of luxury in the eighteenth century, and as many as ten thousand Africans are estimated to have been living in England working as unpaid, domestic staff. This mirrors the great trade in slave labour in the West Indies where thousands of African people were consigned to work in slavery in the French and English sugar plantations. The exploitation of slave labour to service the desires of the European palette presents a much darker side to the story of eighteenth-century dining.

Francis CRUMP manufacturer
England active 1741–73

Sugar bowl with cover
1744–45
silver

Gift of John H. Connell, 1914 1365.a-b-D3

BOW PORCELAIN WORKS, London manufacturer
England c. 1748–76

Sugar box and stand
c. 1755–60
porcelain (soft-paste)

Felton Bequest, 1938 3809.a-c-D3

SAINT-CLOUD PORCELAIN FACTORY, Saint-Cloud manufacturer
France 1666–1766

Spice box
c. 1715–20
porcelain (soft-paste)

Purchased through the NGV Foundation with the assistance of
Mr Peter Wynne Morris, Honorary Life Benefactor, 2003 2003.431.a-b

This compartmentalised spice box with its swivelling lid would have contained pepper, cloves and nutmeg to be taken as digestives following the main course, or as palette cleansers in between courses. The consumption of spices no doubt masked the bad breath of rotting teeth. The form was derived originally from a silver shape, but such boxes were produced in both porcelain and earthenware during the eighteenth century.

CHELSEA PORCELAIN FACTORY, London manufacturer
England c. 1744–69

Salt cellar
c. 1745
porcelain (soft-paste)

The Colin Templeton Collection.
Gift of Mrs Colin Templeton, 1942 401-D4

WORCESTER PORCELAIN, Worcester manufacturer
England c. 1751–1862

Pickle dish
c. 1775
porcelain (soft-paste)

Gift of Mrs Andrews, 1925

2698-D3

GERMANY manufacturer

Spice box
c. 1765
earthenware

Private collection, Melbourne

BOW PORCELAIN WORKS, London manufacturer
England c. 1748–76

Pickle dish
c.1746
porcelain (soft-paste)

Private collection, Melbourne

CAUGHLEY PORCELAIN MANUFACTURE, Shropshire manufacturer
England c. 1711–99

Covered mustard pot and spoon
1775–80
porcelain (soft-paste)

Private collection, Melbourne

MEISSEN PORCELAIN FACTORY, Meissen manufacturer
Germany est. 1710

Pedestal salt
1735–40
porcelain (hard-paste)

Private collection, Melbourne

MENNECY PORCELAIN FACTORY, Mennecy manufacturer
France 1734–1812

Sugar sifter
1745–50
porcelain (soft-paste)

Private collection, Melbourne

Regency extravagance

As part of the increased extravagance of table displays during the Regency Period, sumptuous glass chandeliers became fashionable at grand dining occasions. Until this point the use of glass in lighting had been restricted to candlesticks or table candelabra, but in the early nineteenth century the glass chandelier, a multi-branched candelabra suspended from the ceiling, made its appearance. The geometric faceting of the drops and prisms – a feature of glass during this period – only served to magnify the flickering light of the candles, aided by the highly refractive nature of the English lead crystal.

Such a chandelier would have been commissioned for the dining room of a grand country house or public building. Its sumptuous design with fine ormolu mounts and extravagant starbursts indicate that it would have been made by one of the leading manufacturers in England. The placement of the starbursts in between the candles maximised the effect of sparkling light and played on the idea of the starburst and light.

CAUGHLEY PORCELAIN MANUFACTORY, Shropshire manufacturer
England c. 1771–99

Miniature tea service
c. 1785
porcelain (soft-paste)

The Colin Templeton Collection.
Gift of Mrs Colin Templeton, 1942

239-D4

ENGLAND

Chandelier
c. 1810
glass, gilt-bronze, metal

Felton Bequest, 1962

434.a-ccc-D5

The dessert

The word 'dessert' derives from the French verb *desservir*, meaning to clear the table. It developed out of the medieval practice of consuming spices, wafers and sweet wine as digestives at the end of a meal. In England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this ritualised end to a court meal developed into an elaborate presentation of sweetmeats that came to be known as the banquet. It incorporated a range of candied and preserved fruits, sweetmeats and sugarwork novelties that were presented in a geometric display down the table.

By the eighteenth century the extravagance of the dessert course had reached its peak, encompassing a lavish display of seasonal fresh fruit, wet and dry sweetmeats, biscuits, sugared confectioneries and ices, the most fashionable sweet dish of the period. The sweets were presented in shallow dishes, *tazzas* for elevation, pyramidal stands for candied and fresh fruits and extravagant silver epergnes, or centrepieces.

DERBY PORCELAIN, Derby manufacturer
England c. 1748–1848

The four continents, figures
c. 1770
porcelain (soft-paste)

The Colin Templeton Collection.
Gift of Mrs Colin Templeton, 1942 382.1-4-D4

Porcelain figures were an important feature of the dessert table and were often presented in unglazed biscuit porcelain, in imitation of sugar sculpture. Sets of figures were created specifically for the dessert table, generally following mythological, allegorical or historical themes. Sugar's ability to absorb moisture undoubtedly made the storage of these fragile and expensive sculptures a great challenge. Once porcelain manufacturing had developed in Europe, it made sense to replace the sugar sculptures with porcelain figures that were much more stable and durable.

CHELSEA PORCELAIN FACTORY, London manufacturer
England c. 1744–69

Turkish woman, sweetmeat dish
c. 1755
porcelain (soft-paste)

Anonymous Bequest, 1980

D32-1980

This figure of an aristocratic woman, dressed as an exotic Turkish lady, holds a large scallop shell that forms a small sweetmeat dish. It would have been part of a set of figures that were arranged down the centre of the dessert table. Porcelain figures derive from their earlier counterparts made from sugar paste. Sugar modelling paste was made from powdered sugar tempered with a mucilage of gum tragacanth, and had been used by confectioners since the late medieval period. In England it was known as sugar plate or gum paste, while in France it was called *pastillage*.

ITALY, Venice manufacturer

Covered bowl and stand
late 18th century
glass (applied decoration)

Purchased, 1871

54.a-c-D1R

WORCESTER PORCELAIN, Worcester manufacturer
England c. 1751–1862

Dish
c. 1775
porcelain (soft-paste)

Gift of John H. Connell, 1929

3091-D3

Shallow dishes of individual shapes were made specifically for the dessert service and would have been arranged down the table in geometric fashion, either side of the central decorated platform. They held a vast range of dry sweetmeats, including wafers and biscuits, comfits (sugar-coated seeds and spices), candied fruits and flowers, and all kinds of sugared confectioneries.

The serious business of drinking

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England alcohol was consumed in vast quantities and drunkenness, both public and private, was pervasive throughout all levels of society. In fashionable circles it was common for multiple bottles of wine and spirits to be consumed during one evening, and much breakage of wine bottles and glasses occurred.

Drinking toasts was an important part of the meal. It was regarded as proper to 'raise your glass and look fixedly at the one with whom you were drinking, bow your head and take your wine with gravity'. The same glass was used for red and white wine, all wines being served chilled, and sweet wines were served with the dessert course.

Beer and ale were considered nourishing drinks and up until the late eighteenth century, before tea became more widely available, ale was the standard drink for breakfast in England, water being polluted and considered unsafe to drink.

GUILLAUME HENRY, Guernsey manufacturer
Channel Islands c. 1720–67

Salver
c. 1750
silver

Gift of E. Ivar Dorum, 2008

2008.504

William BEILBY (attributed to) decorator
England 1740–1819

Wine glass
c. 1760
glass, enamel

William and Margaret Morgan Endowment, 1976D49-1976

Wine had been drunk for centuries in England but emerged in the late seventeenth century as the drink of choice with the evening meal. The diner would signal a footman and a glass would be brought on a silver salver, the wine consumed and the glass removed to the sideboard where it was rinsed and chilled in a monteith filled with chilled water. Wines were not matched with specific dishes and all wine was served chilled in the eighteenth century, the same glass being used for red and white wine.

ENGLAND (IS maker) silversmith
England active c. 1692–96

Monteith
1694–95
silver

Felton Bequest, 1932

3302-D3

A monteith was a deep bowl that had a notched rim in order to hold the stems of wine glasses. The glasses would sit upside down so that their bowls were kept chilled and rinsed in the iced water that filled the monteith. The form was invented in Britain in the seventeenth century, and the first examples appeared in silver. Some monteiths had a detachable rim so that they could double as punch bowls.

ENGLAND manufacturer

Wine glass
c. 1745
glass (wheel-engraved, air-twist stem)

William and Margaret Morgan Endowment, 1973D102-1973

ENGLAND manufacturer

Wine glass
c. 1745
glass (wheel-engraved, air-twist stem)

William and Margaret Morgan Endowment, 1973D132-1973

ENGLAND manufacturer

Wine glass
c. 1745
glass (wheel-engraved, air-twist stem)

William and Margaret Morgan Endowment, 1973D67-1973

ENGLAND manufacturer

Cordial glass

c. 1750

glass (wheel-engraved)

William and Margaret Morgan Endowment, 1973D72-1973

VINCENNES PORCELAIN FACTORY, Paris manufacturer

France 1740–56

Wine cooler

1753

porcelain (soft-paste)

Felton Bequest, 1976

D5-1976

THE NETHERLANDS / FLANDERS manufacturer

Toasting goblet

c. 1660

glass

William and Margaret Morgan Endowment, 1973D187-1973

The shape of this toasting goblet, without a proper foot, demanded that the drinker was required to down the entire contents of the glass in one draught before up-ending it on the table.

ITALY, Venice manufacturer

Wine glass

18th century

glass

Purchased, 1871

62-D1R

WORCESTER PORCELAIN, Worcester manufacturer
England c. 1751–1862

Jug

c. 1765

porcelain (soft-paste)

Felton Bequest, 1956

1590-D4

Jugs of this scale would no doubt have been used for beer or ale. The fact that this one is made from porcelain by one of the leading manufacturers of the day, however, indicates that it would have been made for private use by the aristocracy, rather than tavern use, where pewter or stoneware jugs were most common.

WORCESTER PORCELAIN, Worcester manufacturer
England c. 1751–1862

Mug

1760–65

porcelain (soft-paste)

Felton Bequest, 1938

3801-D3

GERMANY manufacturer

Beer glass

Schlangenglas

late 16th century

glass (applied decoration)

Purchased, 1966

1448-D5

Such beer glasses were known as snake or pass glasses, the name deriving from the decoration of the ribbed glass filament that was applied around the vessel's exterior at intervals. The ribs relate to a drinking game in which the glass was handed around and each drinker had to drink down exactly to the next ring on the glass in a single draught. If unsuccessful they had to drink down to the next ring. The use of these glasses for beer is confirmed by their occurrence in still-life paintings of the period.

Imported luxuries: tea, coffee and chocolate

The arrival of tea, coffee and chocolate in Europe during the second half of the seventeenth century prompted the development of new wares to serve and imbibe these exotic beverages. All three were marketed as medicinal preparations and curiosities before becoming drinks of daily consumption.

Tea was imported from China and made its first appearance in England during the early 1660s. A leaf infusion with mild stimulant properties, it was often promoted as having exceptional health-giving properties capable of curing innumerable ills. By the early eighteenth century, however, the taking of tea had developed into a highly fashionable pastime.

Chocolate was introduced to Britain at around the same time and was marketed as a medicinal beverage, often with great aphrodisiac powers. Coffee had been introduced to Britain from the Middle East by the mid seventeenth century, and by 1652 the first coffee house had opened in London.

MEISSEN PORCELAIN FACTORY, Meissen manufacturer
Germany est. 1710

Teapot
c. 1715
stoneware

Felton Bequest, 1939

4564.a-b-D3

ENGLAND, London manufacturer

Teapot
1735–36
silver, ebony

Bequest of Howard Spensley, 1939

4165-D3

CHINESE

Teabowl and saucer

Qing dynasty, Kangxi period 1662–1722
porcelain (hard-paste)

Bequest of Howard Spensley, 1939 4340.a-b-D3

Chinese porcelain teapots, teabowls and saucers began to arrive in Europe from the mid seventeenth century onwards. By the early eighteenth century they were being imported via the Netherlands in vast quantities. The East India ship the *Loyal Bliss* is recorded as carrying 110,000 teabowls and saucers on her 1710–12 voyage. The earliest teabowls were small in size, reflecting the expensiveness of tea which was priced up to £20 per pound, a vast sum in the early eighteenth century.

ANSBACH PORCELAIN FACTORY, Ansbach manufacturer
Germany 1757-1860

Coffee pot

c.1765
porcelain (hard-paste)

Felton Bequest, 1939 4449.1-2-D3

CHINESE

Coffee pot

c. 1760 Qing Dynasty
porcelain, enamel (*famille rose* ware)

Gift of Mrs Oscar Hammerstein II, 1961 198.a-b-D5

Along with the development of new wares for taking tea, new forms of equipage relating to the consumption of coffee also developed in the late seventeenth century. Like tea wares that were originally influenced by Chinese forms – China being the source for tea into Europe, the earliest European coffee pots were based upon Turkish coffee pots and had a tapering, cylindrical form with a high domed lid. Later on in the eighteenth century the handle of coffee and chocolate pots was often moved to the side, at right angles to the pot.

VINCENNES PORCELAIN FACTORY, Paris manufacturer
France 1740–56

Cup and saucer

c. 1750

porcelain (soft-paste)

Felton Bequest, 1939

4634.a-b-D3

MEISSEN PORCELAIN FACTORY, Meissen manufacturer
Germany est. 1710

Chocolate pot

1740–45

Porcelain (hard-paste), wood, metal

Private collection, Melbourne

Chocolate pots often took the same form as coffee pots during the eighteenth century. Chocolate pots are distinguished, however, by their removable or swivelling finial, which allows a stirrer to be inserted to froth up the chocolate tablet in the hot milk or water. The use of wood, ivory or leather and cane wrapped around the handle provided insulation from the hot vessel.

CHELSEA PORCELAIN FACTORY, London manufacturer
England c. 1744–69

Chocolate cup and saucer

1752–56

porcelain (soft-paste)

Private collection, Melbourne

backdrop image

Philippe Sylvestre Dufour

Frontispiece: Traitez Nouveaux & Curieux du Café, du Thé et du Chocolate. Ouvrage également nécessaire aux Medecins , & à tous ceux qui aiment leur santé 1693

British Library (1145.a.515)

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Medicinal and healthy eating

Prior to nineteenth-century developments in medical thinking, many foodstuffs were considered to possess particular medicinal properties, a belief that had its origins in the physiognomic theory of the Classical world which proposed that external, sense-perceptible qualities reflected inner moral and spiritual qualities. Foods which were sweet smelling or sweet tasting, for example, were assumed to have health-giving properties, hence the great value attached to sugar in pre-modern dining. Posset, a sweetened, spiced beverage made from milk curdled with wine or ale, was believed to be a remedy for a cold or other minor ailment. Since the Renaissance broth has also been consumed for its presumed health-giving properties. Historically broth made from birds, like chickens, was considered to have special health benefits because the ability of birds to fly placed them closest to heaven and, thus, made them the most noble of foods. Special vessels were developed for the consumption of these and other therapeutic foods.

WEDGWOOD, Staffordshire manufacturer

England est. 1759

Food warmer

Veilleuse

1790–1820

earthenware (creamware)

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by
Mr Keith M. Deutsher, Founder Benefactor, 19951995.463.a-c

This food warmer or *veilleuse* is a device that derives its name from the French word for a night vigil. It was used to keep a drink or portion of semi-liquid food warm at night-time, initially for infants or invalids, but from the late eighteenth century for more general use. A small oil burner placed in the pierced base both kept the contents above warm and provided a gentle night light.

LE NOVE PORCELAIN FACTORY, Le Nove manufacturer

Italy 1762–1825

Ecuelle and stand

1780s

porcelain

Felton Bequest, 1939

4590.a-c-D3

ALCORA CERAMIC FACTORY, Alcora manufacturer
Spain 1727–c.1858

Ecuelle

1790

porcelain (soft-paste)

Felton Bequest, 1939

4594-D3

CHELSEA PORCELAIN FACTORY, London manufacturer

England c. 1744–69

Ecuelle and stand

c. 1753– c. 1758

porcelain (soft-paste)

Anonymous Bequest, 1980

D33A-1980

Covered bowls such as this were known in France as *écuelles*, and were intended for the serving of hot broth. Broth, which was believed to have particular health-giving properties, was commonly served in the morning in the bedroom during the toilette, the ritual in which a woman of rank dressed and prepared for the day. The *écuelle* is thus a form specifically associated with the toilette and not normally used at the dinner table. The bowl's cover kept the contents warm, and the broth could be sipped by using the two handles, while bread rested on the stand.

ENGLAND manufacturer

Posset pot

c. 1695

glass

William and Margaret Morgan Endowment, 1973D185-1973

Posset was made by curdling milk with wine or ale and adding sugar and spices. Some recipes also added bread, oatmeal or biscuits. This glass pot is of a form specifically associated with the consumption of posset. The curds floated to the top of the mixture where they could be eaten with a spoon, while the curved spout allowed one to drink the liquid from underneath. As well as being given to women after childbirth and to those returning from the fields in winter, posset was used to revive anyone too weak to eat a full meal. Possets sometimes replaced the evening meal during Lent.

ENGLAND, Staffordshire manufacturer

Posset pot

c. 1700

earthenware

Felton Bequest, 1938

3791-D3

WILLIAM KEATT manufacturer

England active 1689–1735

Porringer

1698–99

silver

Felton Bequest, 1924

2661-D3

The porringer is a form found in metalware and ceramics, and may have one handle or two. Some also include a lid. The porringer was used to hold warm broth or gruel which was sipped directly from the vessel.

ENGLAND, London manufacturer

Pap boat

1775–76

silver

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by
Mrs M. E. Cutten, Founder Benefactor, 1980 D423-1980

A pap boat is a small vessel, usually of silver, intended for feeding pap to an infant. Pap was a milk-based baby food prepared like porridge, but made with eggs and flour. It was commonly heated in a small saucepan in the nursery.

The pleasure dairy

The concept of the dairy as a pleasure pavilion for female nobility began in France in the sixteenth century and culminated in the 1780s when an ornamental dairy had become an essential element of an aristocratic, picturesque garden. Specifically for royal and elite women, the dairy was the final destination of an afternoon garden tour where ladies would relax in the coolness of the interiors and indulge in a range of milk-based dishes. Interiors were fitted-out in marble and stone and the dessert service and serving dishes were acquired from leading ceramic manufacturers of the day.

Pleasure dairies were often located on the fringes of estates, to allow detachment from the formal gardens and provide an opportunity for female visitors to engage with the surrounding countryside, both physically and metaphorically. Often regarded as rural follies, dairies represented an important element of a royal estate that was symbolic of feminine ideals and where social, political, architectural and decorative trends intersected.

WEDGWOOD, Staffordshire manufacturer
England est. 1759

Ice pail

c. 1790

earthenware (creamware)

Gift of Alan Landis through
the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 20112011.107

The ceramic dessert services used in dairies were often commissioned from leading manufacturers of the day. This creamware ice pail, imitative of a rustic, wooden pail that would have been used in a functional dairy, was acquired by the Beal Bonnell family for the dairy of their estate Pelling Place, in Old Windsor, Berkshire. It would have likely been used to serve a form of ice-cream. Ices came in a large range of flavours and were made either as *liqueurs glacées*, a type of granita, or *neiges*, a sweeter version of our modern-day ice-cream.

WEDGWOOD, Staffordshire manufacturer
England est. 1759

Comport

c. 1790

earthenware (creamware)

Gift of Alan Landis through
the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 20112011.108

ENGLAND manufacturer

Sweetmeat glass

c. 1750

glass (diamond-moulded)

Felton Bequest, 1949

890-D4

ENGLAND manufacturer

Jelly glass

c. 1750

glass (wheel-engraved)

William and Margaret Morgan Endowment, 1973D112-1973

Glasses such as these, with their narrow, tall form and faceted surface, would have been used to serve fruit jellies, creams or syllabubs – their form and sparkling surface chosen to set off the brightly coloured contents. Translucent jellies were made from raspberries, plums, grapes, cherries and currants, and some fruits were preserved and set whole in clear jellies, including apples, peaches and barberries. The pectin from the fruits was enough to set the jelly, however jellies were also made from boiling up calf's feet and other animal parts to produce clear gelatines that were then coloured and flavoured.

ENGLAND manufacturer

Jelly glass

c. 1750

glass (honeycomb-moulded)

Felton Bequest, 1949

878-D4

WEDGWOOD, Staffordshire manufacturer

England est. 1759

Cream spoon

c.1790

earthenware (creamware)

Private collection, Melbourne

ENGLAND manufacturer

Jelly glass

c. 1750

glass

Felton Bequest, 1949

880-D4

ENGLAND manufacturer

Jelly glass

c. 1760

glass

Felton Bequest, 1949

881-D4

ENGLAND manufacturer

Jelly glass

c. 1775

glass

Felton Bequest, 1949

882-D4

ENGLAND manufacturer

Jelly glass

c. 1770

glass

Felton Bequest, 1949

883-D4

ENGLAND manufacturer

Jelly glass

c. 1780

glass

Felton Bequest, 1949

885-D4

WEDGWOOD, Staffordshire

England est. 1759

Covered cream vase

c. 1790

earthenware (creamware)

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by
Mrs Norma Deutsher, Governor, 1994 D24.a-b-1994

DERBY PORCELAIN, Derby manufacturer

England c. 1748–1848

Ice cream pail

c. 1810

porcelain (soft-paste)

Purchased, 1975

D78.a-c-1975

This ingenious and elegant ice-cream pail contains an inner bowl in which the ice-cream would have been placed. The vessel would have been packed with ice below the liner and also in the top of the deep lid in order to stop the ice-cream from melting.

VINCENNES PORCELAIN FACTORY, Paris manufacturer

France 1740–56

Covered milk pot

c. 1755

porcelain (soft-paste)

Private collection, Melbourne

Then and now

Although the period between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries saw significant changes in the way people across Europe dined, by the middle of the eighteenth century the majority of tablewares that we employ today had emerged in forms that we still recognise. Table manners, too, had arrived at a state not dissimilar to that with which we are accustomed.

Of course, there have been changes since the eighteenth century. New materials and technologies have made good-quality tablewares available to a much wider section of society. There has also been a general simplification of dinner services outside of the most formal of dining situations. As domestic servants became a thing of the past in the wake of the First World War, simpler table services for the consumption of meals prepared and cooked by a member of the family became the norm.

WEDGWOOD, Staffordshire manufacturer

England est. 1759

SADLER & GREEN, Liverpool decorator

England 1756– c. 1790

Parts of a tea and coffee service

1764–70

earthenware (creamware)

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by
Mr Keith M. Deutsher, Founder Benefactor, 1993D9.a-k-1993

Josiah Wedgwood, and the ceramic manufactory he founded, was a leader in technical innovation and industrialisation, as well as in marketing techniques. This elegant creamware tea and coffee service is decorated with transfer-print images executed by the Liverpool-based Sadler and Green company, the inventors of the technique. The use of such advanced production techniques allowed good-quality wares to be produced at a lower price, making them accessible to a much wider audience.

Arne JACOBSEN designer

Denmark 1902–71

STELTON, Copenhagen manufacturer

Denmark est 1960

Parts of a Cylinda-line tea and coffee set

c. 1965

stainless steel, opaque synthetic polymer resin

Presented by Incorporated Agencies Pty Ltd, 1972D63.a-h-1972

The streamlined shapes of this stainless steel tea and coffee service lack the ornament of the nearby Wedgwood service, but the basic vessel forms have changed little since the eighteenth century. The polished stainless steel gives a shiny metallic surface reminiscent of silver, but without any of silver's maintenance requirements.

Taking tea

By the early eighteenth century the taking of tea had developed into a highly fashionable pastime. It was often taken in the mid afternoon, together with a light repast, to fill the gap between a late morning breakfast and the early evening meal at around 6 pm.

Tea was one of the most expensive household commodities and was kept under lock and key by the lady of the house. Bohea (a black oolong tea) and green tea were stored in silver canisters in a wooden caddy, including a mixing bowl. Once the tea equipage had been brought into the room, the hot water kettle placed on its stand and the service brought on a tray, the tea was dispensed by the lady of the house using the lid of the canister as a measure. Tea was drunk with milk and sugar, the sugar kept in a solid loaf and broken into pieces to be served in the lidded sugar bowl.

ENGLAND

Stand

c. 1760

mahogany, brass

Bequest of Howard Spensley, 1939

4240-D3

ENGLAND

Chair

c. 1710–25

walnut, wool, hessian, other materials

Purchased, 1953

1313.1-D4

BENNETT BRADSHAW & ROBERT TYRRILL manufacturer
England 1737–42

Kettle, stand and lamp

1737–38

silver, wood, cane

Felton Bequest, 1932

3296.a-c-D3

SAMUEL TAYLOR manufacturer
England active 1744–73

Tea caddy set
1749–50
silver, silver-gilt, sharkskin, velvet, silver brocade

Felton Bequest, 1932 3301.a-g-D3

WORCESTER PORCELAIN, Worcester manufacturer
England c. 1751–1862

Tea service
c. 1800
porcelain (soft-paste)

Bequest of Arthur Allen, 1968 1890.a-v-D5

Allan RAMSAY
Scottish 1713–84, worked in England 1738–53, 1757–84, Italy 1754–57

The Countess of Cavan
c. 1751
oil on canvas

Felton Bequest, 1920 983-3

SOUTH BALCONY

MENNECY PORCELAIN FACTORY, Mennecy manufacturer

France 1734–1812

François JOUBERT silversmith

France active 1749-1793

Louis SAMSON II silversmith

France 1710–1781

Travelling chocolate service

Nécessaire de voyage

c. 1765

porcelain, glass, silver, leather, wood, brass, other materials

Purchased, NGV Supporters of Decorative Arts, 2012 2012.128.a-t

A *nécessaire de voyage* was a portable case or coffer containing all of the accoutrements that one required for a given activity. They came in a range of sizes and complexities, with the most luxurious examples containing all of the necessities for activities such as tea, coffee and chocolate preparation and drinking, dining, grooming, sewing and letter writing. This example contains equipment for partaking of chocolate and a knife, fork and spoon for dining. The drawer in the bottom of the case may once have held a small serving tray, perhaps of Japanese lacquer.
