

From the Museum Collections



E.G. Woodward dairy farm at McCoy Lake c. 1914 AVM

Butter is a dairy product made from the fat and protein of milk or cream. The earliest butter would have been made from sheep or goat milk. Today, butter is frequently made from cow's milk, but it can also be made from other mammals including buffalo and yaks. It is made by churning the cream to separate the fat globules from the buttermilk. The



butter will last in the fridge for roughly ten days. Butter remains a firm solid when refrigerated, but softens to a spreadable consistency at room temperature and becomes a liquid consistency when heated. It normally has a pale yellow colour but varies from deep yellow to nearly white. The natural, unaltered colour is dependent on the source animal's feed and genetics. The colour of processed butter is commonly changed with food colourings. Today 'butter' can refer to pureed vegetable or seed and nut products such as peanut butter or almond butter. It is also used to describe fruit spread



products such as apple butter.

To make butter the room temperature, separated cream was placed into the churn (at left). Turning the handle, turned the paddles, which caused the fat in the cream to stick together and separate from the buttermilk. The butter was washed and rinsed and then put into a butter mold, (at right). The butter was put into the mold and then the handle was pushed down, compacting the butter.



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The butter was then ready to use or store.

These artefacts can be found on display in the Food Production case in the Alberni Valley Museum.