

**FREE**

# *A wee bit of maritime history... 29*



## **SEASIDE RECIPES FROM THE OLDEN DAYS** **part 1 - sea vegetables**

*Some recipes from "The Cookin' Woman" - Miss Florence Irwin*

Miss Florence Irwin (1883 – 1965) was well known in County Down, particularly in the Little Ards around Portaferry. She collected and published traditional recipes from across Northern Ireland - in her column in "The Northern Whig" and in her book "The Cookin' Woman" (published by Blackstaff Press, 1986). Comments and explanations to Miss Irwin's recipes are *in italics*, all the rest is from her own pen.



sloke for breakfast, just add  
bacon!



a plain seaweed pudding

Old recipes can conjure up a picture of the society from which the cooks came. Mostly oatmeal and potatoes suggests that money was very scarce. However, seaweed could be found in most households, albeit with butter and bacon, or cream and sugar for the better off.



## Uses of Carrageen Moss

As a hot drink taken last thing at night it is considered good for sleeplessness. It is a good supper for dyspeptics. It is good for coughs and colds. (What patent medicine could do better?)

### **Carrageen milk (hot drinks, for 4 persons)**

½ oz Carrageen moss, 2 pints new milk, sugar if liked.

Wash the moss very thoroughly in several waters, clipping off the roots and dark stems with a pair of scissors. Put it into a saucepan with the new milk. Bring to the boil very slowly. At once strain into four tumblers. Sweeten if liked. Take last thing going to bed. A chip of lemon rind may be cooked with it if liked.



*Chondrus*



*Mastocarpus*

*Irish Moss (Carrageen) can be picked at any time of year but is best during the late spring. It is collected on any rocky shore so long as there are no streams or drains running down. Two species (Chondrus and Mastocarpus) are both called Irish Moss – so gather the cleanest, pinching off only the leafy parts. Wash, oven dry, then store in an airtight container. If it is to be used for a plain milk pudding, then it needs to be left outside in a net bag on the washing line to bleach first, otherwise you see dark speckles in the pudding. Sometimes the cleaned, dried product can be found in speciality food stores but half the fun is collecting a few handfuls yourself.*



## **Carrageen Moss Recipes**

### **A Peasants Jelly**

A County Antrim peasant who once helped me to gather the moss told me she gave jelly made from it to her children for supper. This was her recipe:- She washed the freshly gathered moss in the stream. Then she put it in a pot with water and 'gave it a good boil'. She then strained it into bowls, and the children ate it cold for supper. (*I tried this once – it was not nice at all. This gives some idea of rural poverty in the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> C.*).

### **Coffee carrageen moss.**

1 pint milk,  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz Carrageen moss (*dried*), 3 teaspoonfuls Nescafé, sugar to sweeten. Wash the carrageen in several waters till it is soft and flabby. Put in a saucepan, add the milk and slowly bring to the boil. Stir in the coffee and sugar, and simmer 2 or 3 minutes. Cool slightly and strain into individual glasses. When set, put whisked condensed milk on top sprinkled with a crisp and crushed breakfast cereal.

### **Chocolate carrageen moss.**

As above, but use cocoa powder and some vanilla essence.

note: Carrageen moss is bought from a chemist or grocer in cellophane packets. (*Not any more*).

### **Carrageen Moss Blanc-mange (Tory Island recipe)**

$\frac{1}{2}$  oz Carrageen moss, 2 pints milk, chip or two lemon rind, sugar to sweeten.

Trim and wash the moss. Put it in a saucepan with the milk and some chips of lemon rind. Very slowly bring it to the boil. Strain into a wetted mould, stirring in fine sugar to sweeten. Turn out when set. Serve with any fruit stewed or tinned.

### **Carrageen Moss Blanc-mange (South Donegal)**

$\frac{1}{2}$  oz Carrageen moss, 2 pints milk, 1 or 2 eggs, 3 teaspoonfuls sugar, few chips lemon rind.

Cook the moss as above. Beat the yolk and sugar together and strain the moss over it. Stir till evenly mixed. Return to the pan and cook like a custard. Fold in the white stiffly whipped. When cool enough, pour into a glass dish. This is a popular supper in summer, porridge being the almost universal supper in winter.



### **Dulce** (dulse) (*Palmaria palmata*)

This is cut from rocks at low tide and spread on the shingle in the sun. When dry it is sold at fairs and markets all over the country, a halfpenny worth of dulce being a popular purchase. It was supposed to be good for killing worms in children.

### **Fried Dulce (Glenarm)**

Wash the dulce in seawater. Heat butter in a pan and fry the dulce till it turns colour.

### **Stewed Dulce (a Portaferry recipe 100 years old at least) (and that was in 1949).**

Wash freshly-gathered dulce to remove sand and grit. Put it in a saucepan with milk, butter, salt and pepper and stew till tender. It takes 3-4 hours. Use as a supper dish with oatcakes or brown bread.

### **Sloke**

Sloke is best gathered after a spell of frost

*Sloke is the seaweed Porphyra, which looks like dark red-brown to black cling-film on rocks on the middle part of the shore; the Welsh know it as Laver*



### **Sloke - a County Down recipe**

Wash it thoroughly in several waters to remove grit and sand. Squeeze into a saucepan put enough water to cover the bottom, bring to the boil, add the sloke, stir till it all boils; and then stir often till cooked, which will take 3 or 4 hours. Add pepper and salt to taste. To dress - add some butter and cream. Eat with oatcakes for supper or with mutton and potatoes for dinner.

### **Sloke cakes**

Take some boiled sloke, which will keep several days, and dress it with butter and cream, and season well. Into it mix enough oatmeal to enable you to form it into cakes. Make these about the size of small fish-cakes. Toss in oatmeal. Fry in the pan after frying the bacon.



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