

Rationing experiment. Some notes

After two weeks of trying to live on the 1944 adult ration allowance I have the following experience and notes to pass on to anyone considering the proposed "Rations for Lent" experiment:

First a list of the weekly and monthly allowances converted for the whole 40-day period.

- Bacon and ham: 650g (4 oz per week)
- Other meat: about 3Kg. By value 1s2d per week (about £3.20 in Dec. 2022)
- Butter: 350g (2 oz per week)
- Cheese: 350g (2 oz per week)
- Margarine: 700g (4 oz per week)
- Lard: 350g (2 oz per week)
- Milk: 17 litres (3 pints per week, mainly from dried powder)
- Sugar: 1.3Kg (8 oz per week)
- Tea: 350g or about 140 teabags (2 oz per week)
- Sweets and chocolate: 2Kg (12 oz per week)
- Eggs: 6 fresh or 18 from dried powder.
- Jam or marmalade: 600g Jam or 1.2Kg marmalade. (1 or 2 lb per month)

Goods sold by points. 32 points allowance (24 per month)

- 1 tin baked beans: 2 points
- 1 lb dry biscuits: 2 points
- 1 lb sweet biscuits: 4 points
- 1 tin herrings: 2 points
- 1 tin Spam: 16 points
- 1 oz chopped pork: 3 points
- 1 lb split peas: 2 points
- 1 lb rice: 8 points
- 1 tin sardines: 2 points
- 1 lb sultanas: 8 points
- 1 lb skimmed milk: 5 points
- 1 lb stewed steak: 20 points
- 1 lb rolled oats: 2 points
- Salmon: 16 points
- Best red salmon: 32 points
- 1 lb sausage meat: 12 points

Dining out: meals not to exceed 3 courses, only one of meat or fish, and not to exceed 5s in total (about £13.50 at the end of 2022). I believe that one coupon was required for a meal.

Allocating your rations.

Buying options are not what they were in 1944. You cannot buy 2 oz of butter or cheese nowadays. For items where the minimum purchase is more than a week's allowance I recommend splitting the portions and packing separately, marked with the week number for use. Alternatively create your own ration book and mark off the number of week's coupons used when you open a new pack. For example 200g block of cheddar cheese is the ration for just over 3 weeks at 57g per week, so mark off 3 week's coupons.

Supplementing your rations

Fruit and vegetables were not rationed but could be scarce. Don't even look at an orange or a banana. Try to use vegetables in season. I found that a single supermarket "stew-pack" with a few potatoes and some additives was enough to make several portions of Woolton Pie and enough stew for three meals. I made eight meals for about 25p per portion. The freezer comes in handy unless cooking for a family.

Bread was not rationed until after the war, but only a poor-quality wholemeal loaf was available.

Game, if available, was off-ration, but today unless you want to spend about £50 at a specialist on-line butcher for a pack of meats you will not find any.

Good luck everyone.

Start digging for victory now.