

Butter Churn

1 INTRODUCE



What is this object called?

A butter churn (churn means to move around vigorously/ a lot).

What job did this object do?

It turned cream into butter.

What objects today do the same

job? We buy butter ready-made; it is made in a factory.



2 INVESTIGATE



Let the Children Examine the Butter Churn and turn the handle.

3 DESIGN/MATERIALS



What is this object made out of? Glass and metal.

Why is glass used for the main container? So you can keep an eye on the cream turning into butter and stop it at the right time.

Why is it quite small? No refrigeration to store butter, so it was made often in small amounts.

Is it portable? Yes - it could have been put away when it wasn't being used.

4 HOW DID IT WORK?



How did it work? The cream was put into the glass container, a little bit of salt was added, the lid was screwed on. Then the handle was turned, which makes the paddles move, churning the cream into butter.

Who used it? Everyone, but in particular women as they would have been responsible for making all the food.

Have you ever used a butter churn or something similar? Nowadays we 'churn' or blend liquids and solids to make milkshakes, smoothies, ice-cream etc, using machines like blenders and food processors.



5 LEARN MORE...SAY...

In country areas in your grandparents or great-grandparents time, most people would have kept a cow or two; these were called house cows. They would be milked each morning (usually by the children), then the milk was left to rest so that it separated into cream and milk. The cream was then put into the butter churn to make butter. Churning the cream makes it thick, like the cream you put on scones and pikelets. If you keep on churning after that, it turns into butter.

A little bit of salt was added to make the butter last longer. There was no fridges at this time so salt was used to preserve lots of different foods.

The butter churn is fairly small so that fresh supplies of butter were made often, but also because if it was too big, it would have been hard for one person to turn the handle. The butter factories would have had giant churns that were operated by a machine.



6 COMPARE IT TO TECHNOLOGIES TODAY

How is the butter churn different to the machines we use today?
Most kitchen appliances use electricity, especially ones that churn or mix, like beaters, blenders etc

Do people still use butter churns today?
Most people today buy butter from the supermarket, or use margarine.



7 THINK

What does this item tell us about life in the past? People had to make all their own food, even basic items like butter. Having no refrigeration meant you had to make small amounts of things often.

How would your life be different if you had to use a butter churn?