

VICTORIAN TEA – THE MAGIC OF HOW IT HAPPENS

Have you ever wondered how many groceries are purchased for each Victorian tea season or how much preparation work is done before the scones, sandwiches and desserts are produced? I thought not, so over a cup of tea (of course!) our kitchen coordinator, who actually deals with these issues, sat down and thought about it. Even we were a bit surprised about what she discovered. Called for a second cup of tea!

Bear in mind all the calculations are approximate but we have been at this long enough to know we are close.

Our guests see and enjoy the finished products. Even our buffet ladies and servers may not be aware of what happens before those ready to serve items arrive upstairs.

There are 36 loaves of bread ordered for each tea plus additional loaves at Christmas as we prepare to feed an increased number of guests and volunteers. That is 360 loaves as a minimum. We get closer to 400 when the Christmas tea is added. We remove 18,550 inches of crust. That is 1545.8 feet or 515.2 yards. For those who prefer metric that is 47,117 centimeters or 471.1 meters. Thank goodness for electric knives and May, our principal crust cutter! And no, we have never considered making our own bread.

We produce 3500 scones, 6,960 sandwiches and 3,100 desserts each season. There are 350 children's meals each consisting of a cheese, fruit or veggie starter, sandwiches and a special dessert.

Our King Cole Tea is flown in from beautiful Halifax, Nova Scotia. Who would have thought! We purchase 24 pounds of loose tea annually. From this 48 recipes of tea brew are produced yielding 960 cups of brew. This will eventually be translated by the tea makers into 1920 pots of tea to arrive at a grand total of 15,360 cups of tea - more or less! We believe it to be the perfect blend for the Victorian teas and apparently so do our guests. We have been able to reproduce this blend almost perfectly and it is now available for sale exclusively from GHHS

at Government House. Thanks to Murchie's Teas for working with us on this project and for making this delightful blend available.

We feed 600 volunteers by the time the Christmas tea is over and we are done for the season.

In order to accomplish all of this we buy groceries! An extensive but by no means exhaustive list follows:

- Crisco - 72 pounds or 32.72 kilos
- Ham - 120 pounds or 54.5 kilos
- Cream Cheese - 1000 ounces or 31,250 grams
- Pineapple - 760 ounces or 23,750 grams
- Green onions - 60 bunches
- Buttermilk -30 litres
- Milk -26 litres
- Cucumbers - 7550 slices
- Eggs - 2000
- Flour - 100 pounds or 45.45 kilos
- Sugar - 80 pounds or 36.36 kilos
- Lemon tarts -900 per year
- Jam - 10 litres
- Butter - 80 pounds or 36.36 kilos
- Margarine - 40 litres
- Mayonnaise - 40 litres

- Oil - 8 litres
- Brown sugar - 8 -2 kilogram bags
- Icing sugar -10 -1 kilogram bags
- plus baking powder and soda, salt, vanilla, herbs, spices, applesauce, dried fruits and assorted treats for busboys, dishwashers and volunteers

As you may well imagine the grocery stores love to see us coming. We love to do it or we wouldn't still be here after 29 years!

Maybe someday we will let you in on the secret of how the Christmas pudding is made. But that's for another day and after another cup of tea!