

## Make Hard Tack

Have you ever thought how the Australians at Gallipoli could be supplied with food: many thousands of men, at short notice, with no refrigeration? While they were fighting on Gallipoli the Australian soldiers were supplied with food from as far away as Egypt and Greece, and this, combined with the lack of refrigeration, meant that they could get very little fruit, vegetables, meat or dairy products.

So what did they eat? Bully beef [tinned corned beef], rice, jam, cocoa, tea, some bread and above all hard tack fed the Australian soldiers at Gallipoli. Hard tack, also known as "ANZAC Wafer," or "ANZAC Tile," has a very long shelf life, unlike bread. Hard tack or biscuits continued to be eaten during the Second World War. The original biscuits were made by Arnott's, and our recipe has been provided by Arnott's.



Gallipoli, 1915 Soldiers in the trenches  
enjoying a light meal. [H02303](#)

# Hard Tack Recipe

## Ingredients

Makes six biscuits.

1½ cups self-raising white flour  
3 cups self-raising wholemeal flour  
5 tablespoons sugar  
3 tablespoons milk powder  
pinch salt  
1 cup water

## Equipment

Large mixing bowl  
Mixing spoon  
Board and rolling pin  
Baking tray



Gallipoli, 1915. A group of ANZACS making a meal. [A05251](#)

## Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180C.
2. Place dry ingredients in a large bowl and mix together.
3. Make a well in the centre and add the water. Mix together until an even dough is formed.
4. Turn the dough onto a floured board and knead for a few minutes. Shape the dough into a ball and let rest for half an hour.
5. Divide the dough into three and then roll each ball into thick 1 cm sheets.
6. Cut the rolled sheet of dough into 9 cm squares, using the edge of a steel ruler, rather than a knife. This pressing action helps to join the top and bottom surfaces of the biscuit and will improve the "lift" in baking.
7. Now make a regular pattern of holes in each biscuit, five holes across by five holes down (25 holes in all). The ideal tool to use to make these holes is a cotton bud with the cotton wool cut off or the thick end of a bamboo skewer. Push it through to the bench, twist slightly and withdraw. (Some historians claim that each biscuit had 49 holes.)
8. Place on a slightly greased baking tray, being careful that the biscuits are not touching. Form a wall around the outside edge with scrap dough. This will stop the outside edges of the biscuits from burning.
9. Bake on the centre shelf for 30-40 minutes or until golden brown. Be careful not to burn them!
10. Leave the biscuits on a cooling rack until they harden. Or switch off the oven and return the biscuits to the oven until it becomes cool.

## Follow-up activity

Organise a lunch with other Gallipoli rations - tinned corned beef, rice and jam. What would you wash it down with? How about a cup of billy tea, cocoa or water? Make sure that you do not eat or drink anything the soldiers would not have had on Gallipoli - soft drink is definitely out! If you don't like hard tack by itself how else could you eat it? Some soldiers used to break up or grate the hard tack and mix it with water or powdered milk to make porridge. What would you prefer?

**Warning** Hard tack is really hard! There are many stories of soldiers breaking their teeth on them, so be careful



# THE BORELLA RIDE