

SECOND WORLD WAR RATIONING



History, Food Studies, Art, PSHE



7 to 11 years old



30 minutes to 2 hours

Before the start of the Second World War, Britain imported around two-thirds of its food. After war was declared in September 1939 the British Government had to reduce the amount of imported food as German submarines began attacking British supply ships.

There was a concern that this would lead to food shortages, so the Government introduced a system of rationing.

Rationing made sure that people were able to purchase an equal amount of food each week, so that everyone got a fair share. The Government was concerned that as food became more difficult to get, the cost would go up and people with less money may not be able to buy enough food to eat. There was also a danger that some people may hoard food leaving none for others. Rationing was introduced at the beginning of 1940, it was difficult but generally people agreed with the Government's system.

During the Second World War, it wasn't just food that was rationed. Clothes, furniture and petrol were also rationed.

Ration Books

On National Registration Day on 29 September 1939, every household in Britain had to complete a form giving details of all the people that lived in their home.

Using this information, the Government issued everyone with an identity card and ration book.

People of different ages were issued with ration books of certain colours.



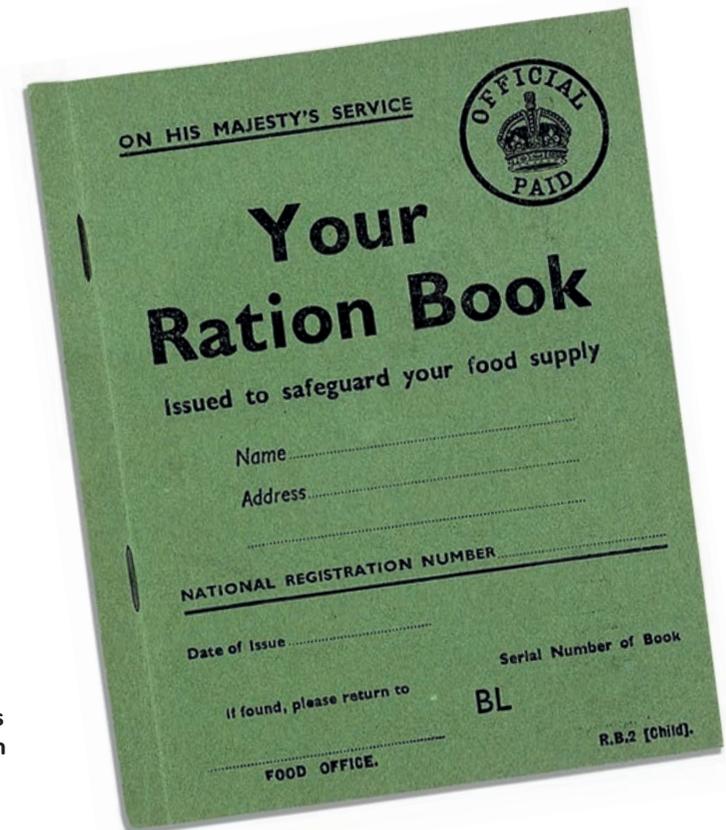
Light Brown
Most adults had this colour.



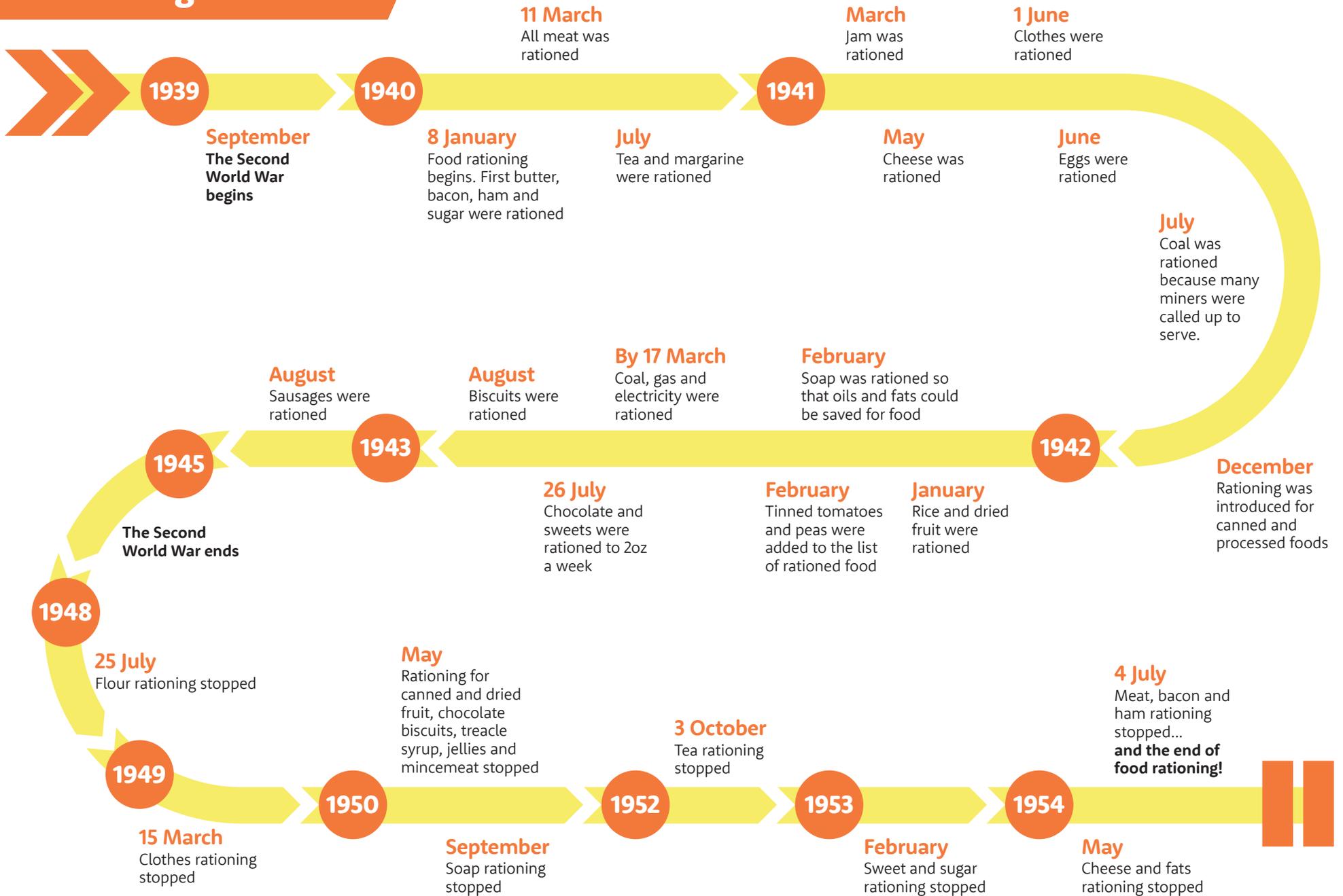
Green
This colour was for pregnant women and mothers nursing children under 5 years old. The green book entitled these women to the first choice of fruit, a daily pint of milk and a double supply of eggs.



Blue
This colour was for children between 5 and 16 years old. It was thought to be important that all children had fruit, the full meat ration and half a pint of milk a day.



Rationing Timeline



The Ministry of Food

The Ministry of Food, which ran from 1939 to 1958, was a British government department whose main task was to oversee rationing and make sure that everyone had a nutritious diet. It set up Advice Centres throughout the country where they held cookery demonstrations and gave out leaflets with ideas for using the food they had.

The department also developed a range of characters and posters to encourage people to eat different, healthy foods. These included Potato Pete and Doctor Carrot.

Create your own cartoon character and make a poster to encourage people to eat more fruit or vegetables.

Think of seasonal fruit and vegetables that are grown in Britain – Adam Asparagus, Carl Cox (apple) or Lucy Leek.



Take a photograph of your poster and add it to the Arboretum's social media with #WW2poster



@NationalMemorialArboretum



@nat_mem_arb



@Nat_Mem_Arb

The Ministry of Food

People need to drink enough water and to eat the right amount of food from each food group to stay healthy.

Can you put the following foods into the right food group?

Bread	Tuna
Eggs	Cheese
Butter	Tomatoes
Olive oil	Lentils
Soya milk	Broccoli
Rice	Margarine
Strawberries	Yogurt
Pasta	

Can you add any other foods to the groups?

**FRUIT AND
VEGETABLES**

**OILS AND
SPREADS**

PROTEIN

**STARCHY
CARBOHYDRATES**

**DAIRY AND
ALTERNATIVES**

For more information about eating a healthy diet look at The Eatwell Guide - [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide)
www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide

The Ministry of Food

Children's rations were slightly different to adults. Children were entitled to extra food that was considered essential for healthy growth, such as milk and orange juice. The National Milk Scheme provided one pint of milk for every child under 5. Fruit and vegetables were not rationed but were in short supply.

A ration for each person varied as food became easy or difficult to get. However, a typical ration for one child aged between 5-16 for a week was:

Meat: 113g	Bacon and ham: 113g	Eggs: 3
Butter: 57g	Margarine: 113g	Cooking fat: 57g
Cheese: 28g	Milk: 3 ½ pints – plus milk at school	Tea: none
Sugar: 227g	Jam: 57g	Sweets: 71g

With a parent or guardian weigh out the food types above to see how much you'd have been given a week. Remember to wash your hands before, after and whenever you've touched raw meat.

The End of Food Rationing

Food rationing in Britain ended at midnight on 4 July 1954, nine years after the end of the Second World War. This meant there had been 14 years of rationing and restrictions on food.

Think about the food you eat in a week and write it down in the menu planner. If you want to, why not keep a diary for a week to see what you really eat in a week?

Write down everything that passes your lips! When putting down drinks, you don't need to put down water, add things like orange juice, milkshakes, hot chocolate and tea. Remember to say if you have milk and sugar, and that tea wasn't allowed for people under 16 during the war.

Try and weigh some of the food as well, you could do this in ounces and grams.

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks	Drinks
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					

The End of Food Rationing

Using the information we have provided on the rations that children might receive try and create a food diary for the week.

Look at the rations for a week and try and create a food diary for the week.

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks	Drinks
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					

Make Do and Mend

Fabrics were essential to the war effort so clothing was rationed from the summer of 1941. With clothing and fabrics in short supply, people had to come up with creative ways to make clothes and often used the fabric from old items to make new items of clothing. Even people's best clothes were often made from old items and many people would have been wearing clothes that they'd made on VE Day.

Using items from around the house, such as magazines, buttons and pieces of fabric, collage a VE Day outfit for the man and woman opposite.

