



RATIONING

WHAT IS RATIONING?

During World War II there was a shortage of all sorts of essential and non-essential foods as well as clothing, furniture and petrol.

It was decided that there had to be a way of allocating these goods equally and fairly to everyone.

and so **RATIONING** was born.

**RATIONING MEANS A FAIR
SHARE FOR ALL OF US**

WHY WAS RATIONING NEEDED DURING WWII?

Reason 1

Great Britain depended on Merchant Navy cargo ships to carry food and other raw materials from all over the world to British ports.

Before the Second World War started, about 55 million tons of food a year was imported from other countries.

After war was declared in September 1939, the British government had to cut down on the amount of food and other goods it brought in from abroad as German submarines and ships started attacking British merchant ships.



During WWII, 4,700 British-flagged ships were sunk and more than 29,000 merchant seamen died.

WHY WAS RATIONING INTRODUCED DURING WW2?

Reason 2

When war came, factory production had to concentrate on the war effort. This resulted in less clothes, food and other household goods being produced.

The government was worried that as food became scarcer, prices would rise and people might not be able to afford to eat. There was also a danger that some people might hoard food, leaving none for others.

MORE



LESS



Tentative moves to set up a rationing system in the event of a new war began to be made in November 1936 when the Food (Defence Plans) Department of the Board of Trade was established.

Were you surprised to find out the government were thinking about rationing so long before the outbreak of war?



As soon as war was declared a fully-fledged Ministry of Food came into being headed by William Morrison. It fell to him to announce on 1st November 1939 that rationing was going to be introduced in the near future. His announcement caused a storm of protest in the press. Picture Post magazine described it as “the most unpopular Government decision since the war began”.

The British people were not so hostile to the idea of rationing.

A Liverpool housewife said: “I wish to goodness they would introduce rationing. At least I would be able to go into a shop and get what I was allowed.”



Morrison was in post until April 1940 and was replaced by an obscure business peer, Lord Woolton. Within a remarkably short space of time, from being one of the most despised of wartime bureaucratic creations, the Ministry of Food under Woolton became admired. Woolton was a popular minister. To the public he soon became “Uncle Fred”.

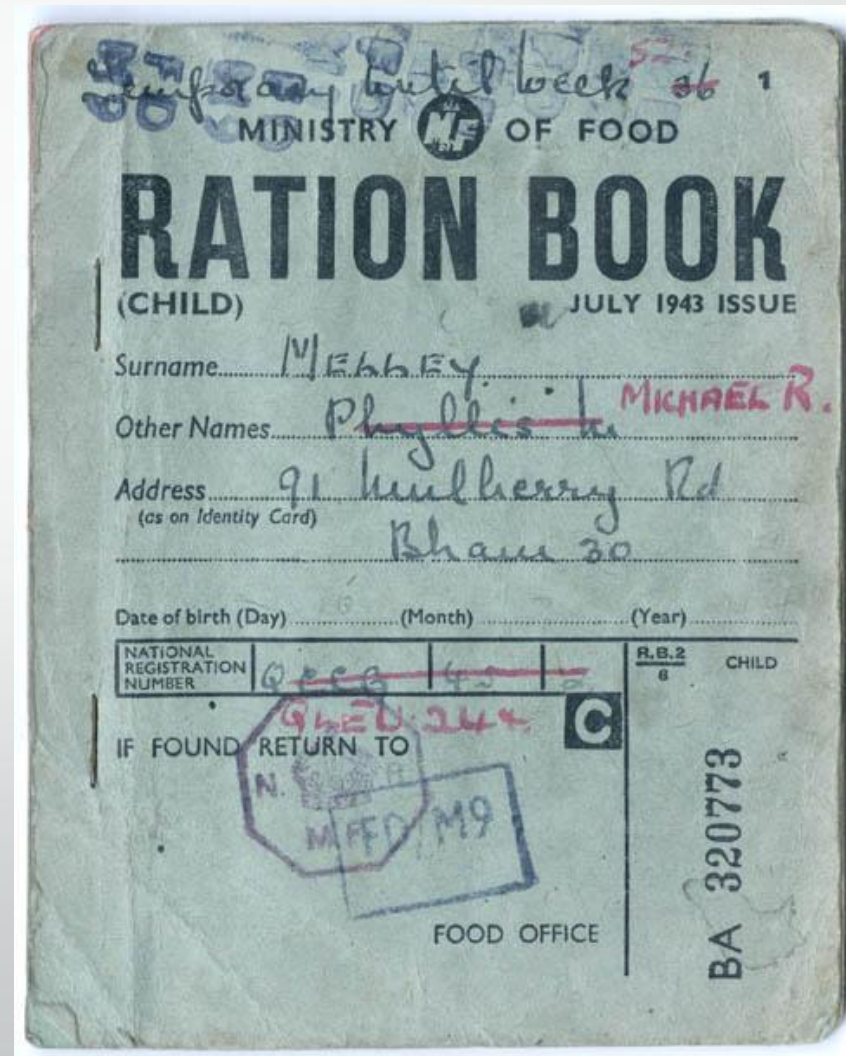
WHEN WAS RATIONING INTRODUCED?

When the British government introduced food rationing in January 1940, it was done to make sure everyone had a fair share.

The Ministry of Food was responsible for overseeing rationing.

Every man, woman and child was given a ration book with coupons. These were used when rationed goods were bought.

Housewives had to register with particular shops. This was supposed to make sure that the shop keeper had sufficient rations for all their customers.



WHAT WAS RATIONED FIRST?

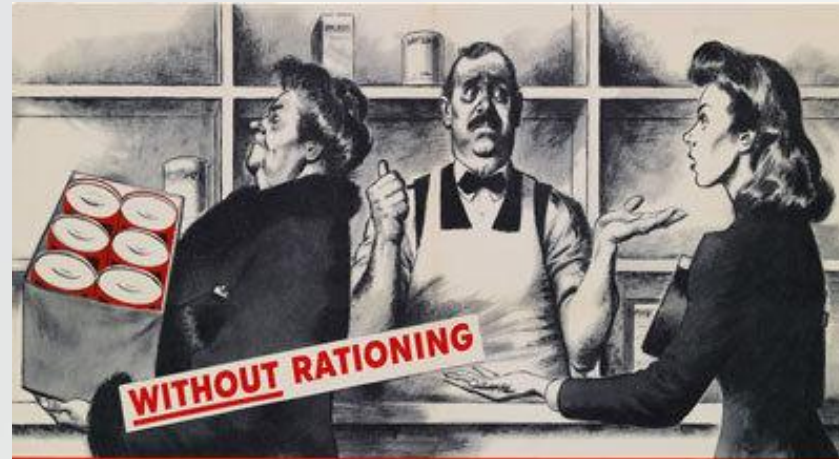
January 1940:

The first foods to be rationed were:

- *Sugar*
- *Butter*
- *Ham*
- *Bacon* (this was later rationed by price rather than by weight)

This was followed by meat in March 1940 and tea (2 oz per person, weekly) in July 1940.

Later, preserves (jam, margarine, syrups and treacle), sweets, cheese, cooking fats and eggs (1 egg per person, weekly) were added to the list of rationed foods.



Rationing means
a fair share for all of us



MINISTRY OF FOOD PAGE 1

RATION BOOK SUPPLEMENT

This is a Spare Book
YOU WILL BE TOLD HOW AND WHEN TO USE IT

HOLDER'S NAME AND REGISTERED ADDRESS

Surname HERRING

Other Names William R

Address 1 Walton Way Mitcham

If found, please return to

MITCHAM

FOOD OFFICE

Date of Issue 1.6.40

NATIONAL REGISTRATION NO.

CNC2 37 1

Class and Serial No. of Ration Book already held

RB1PP609997

R.B. 9

PICTURE: Ration books were actually prepared in 1938, issued to the British general public on Monday 8th September 1939 and used to purchase rationed goods on 8th January 1940.

THE MINISTER OF FOOD

The Minister of Food was Lord Woolton. He suggested novelty food suggestions such as whale meat (this had an odd flavour that could only be subdued overnight by soaking in vinegar!) and recipes like carrot fudge, sultana casserole and Woolton Pie (see photo right).

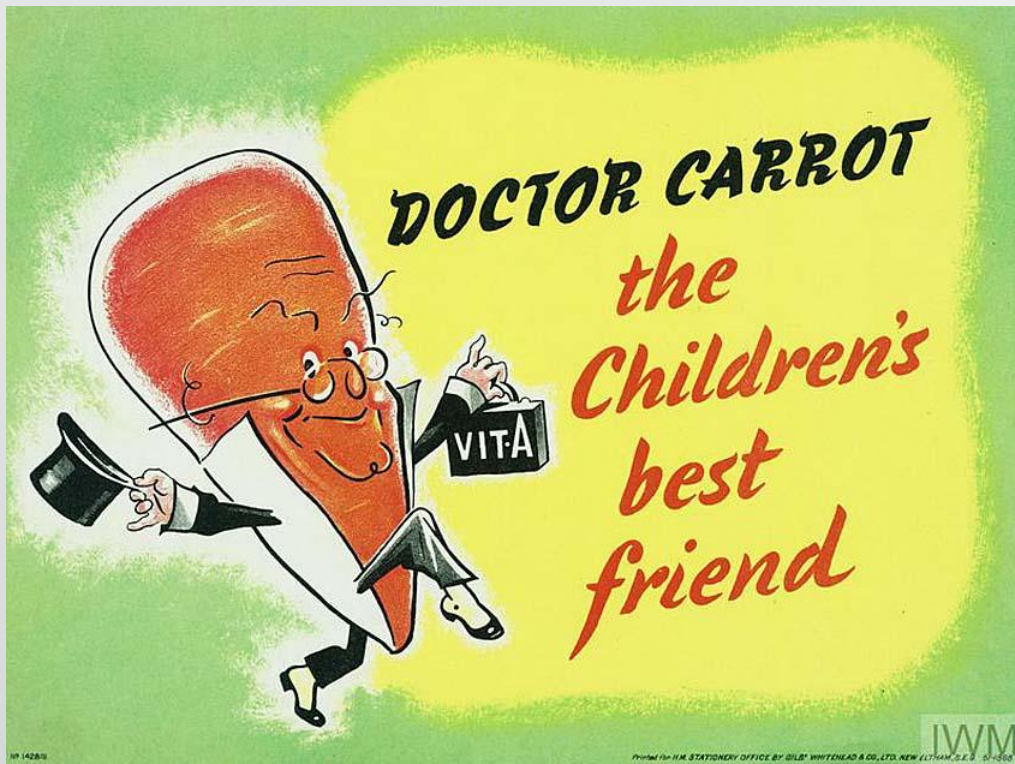
He also made sure that every child under the age of three received daily milk, cod liver oil and orange juice to boost their vitamin intake and those over three and under five years old had cod liver oil.



Lord Woolton enjoys a cup of tea.

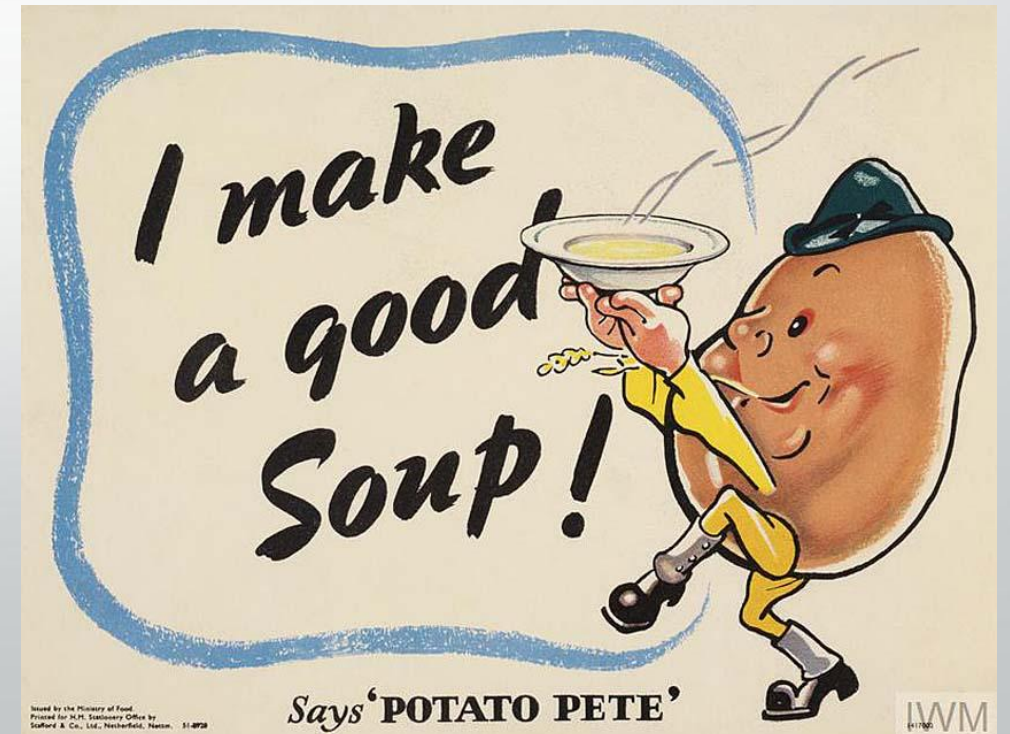


Woolton pie: 'a steak and kidney pie without the steak and kidney'



The BBC broadcast “The Kitchen Front” for six mornings a week after the 8am news, each programme having a listening public of 5.5 million. The cartoon figures of “Dr Carrot” and “Potato Pete” were created to encourage children to eat up their vegetables and entertainers like “Gert and Daisy” and Tommy Trinder were pressed into service to get the British to eat well and wisely.

To help the public eke out these rations, Woolton’s Ministry mounted a massive publicity campaign. 40 million “Food Facts” advertisements were printed each week in the press, and between March 1942 and November 1946, over 200 Ministry “Food Flash” short films were shown in British cinemas, each one to an estimated audience of 20 million.



QUEUES, QUEUES AND MORE QUEUES

Today most shopping is done in supermarkets but shopping during the war involved visiting individual shops - the butcher, greengrocer or baker - separately.

There were usually queues!



Queuing outside a greengrocers in Wood Green, North London in 1945.



What was the weekly food ration for an adult?

This is a typical weekly food ration for an adult:

- **Bacon & Ham** 4 oz
- **Other meat** value of 1 shilling and 2 pence
(equivalent to 2 chops)
- **Butter** 2 oz
- **Cheese** 2 oz
- **Margarine** 4 oz
- **Cooking fat** 4 oz
- **Milk** 3 pints
- **Sugar** 8 oz
- **Preserves** 1 lb every 2 months
- **Tea** 2 oz
- **Eggs** 1 fresh egg (plus allowance of dried egg)
- **Sweets** 12 oz every 4 weeks
- *16 points a month for other rationed foods (usually tinned) subject to availability*

Weigh 12oz of sweets, These would have to last you for 4 weeks. Could you have a sweet every day?



1 oz (ounce) is the same as 28gm

These weekly rations were stretched with the help of un-rationed extras like bread (not rationed until after the war), cereal, potatoes, offal and fruit and



The weekly ration for two adults. (milk, sugar, bacon, cheese, butter and chocolate)



Bananas are possibly the most popular fruit in the world today. During the war though, as imported perishables, they were impossible to get and most children did not see their first banana until after the war.

Oranges were also hard to get and if any were available they were saved for the children.



Despite the British people having to go without, on the whole, rationing did mean that the nation was better fed than it had been in the 1930's.

People preferred equality to a free for all in which the 'well-off' would stockpile food and the poor go hungry.

Undoubtedly while everyone may have missed certain foods in wartime Britain, no one starved.

What foods
would you
miss if we had
rationing now?



Everyone had their own ration book to help them keep track of goods. These ration books were full of coupons which were cut out and used to buy a fixed amount of rationed foods each week/month.

For example, each time sugar was bought, a sugar coupon was handed over to the shop keeper. If all of the sugar was used up for the week, you had to wait until the next week for more.

Sometimes shop keepers didn't have enough for all their customers.

As shortages increased, long queues became commonplace.



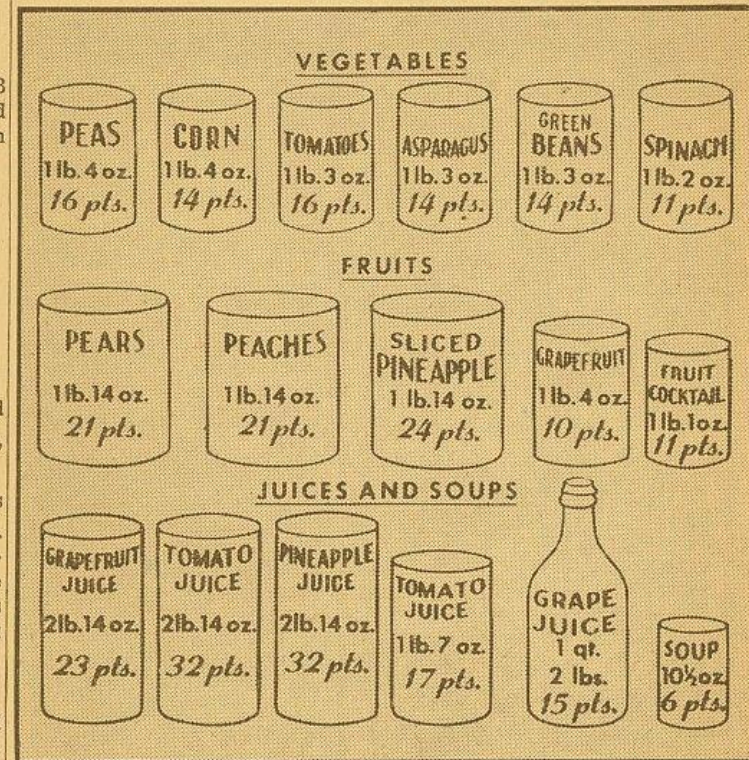
New Point Ration Chart

BLUE STAMP Rationed Foods . . . Effective Mar. 29, 1943.
Ration Points indicated by Numerals **0**

| CANNED AND BOTTLED | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------|----|
| CAN SIZE | 2 | 2½ | 3* |
| APPLESAUCE | 14 | | |
| APRICOTS | | 24 | |
| BERRIES | 14 | 21 | |
| CHERRIES (Except Maraschino) | 14 | 21 | |
| FRUIT SALAD | | 24 | |
| FRUIT COCKTAIL | | 24 | |
| GRAPEFRUIT | 10 | | |
| GRAPEFRUIT JUICE | 4 | | 9 |
| GRAPE JUICE (4 pint, 8 qt.) | | | |
| PEACHES | | 24 | |
| PEARS | | 21 | |
| PINEAPPLE | 19 | 28 | |
| PINEAPPLE JUICE | 10 | | 22 |
| OTHER FRUITS | | 15 | |
| OTHER FRUIT JUICES (12 oz. 3) | 4 | | 9 |
| 3* = No. 3 cylinder can | | | |
| BABY FOOD (1 small jar, 2 large jar) | 1 | | |
| FROZEN | | DRIED, DEHYDRATED | |
| CHERRIES, PEACHES, STRAWBERRIES | 13 | PEAS, BEANS, LENTILS— 4 per lb. | |
| RHUBARB | 6 | ALL FRUITS REQUIRE NO POINTS | |
| ALL OTHER FRUITS | 10 | SOUP: 1 up to 2 oz. | |
| ASPARAGUS, LIMAS, PEAS, SPINACH | 10 | 2 up to 4 oz. | |
| BAKED BEANS, SQUASH | 8 | | |
| CORN, GREEN & WAX BEANS | 7 | | |
| CORN ON COB (2 per ear) | | | |
| ALL OTHER VEGETABLES | 6 | | |

This point ration chart replaces the previous chart based on March 1 values. Clip it out and paste it in your ration book No. 2.

Points on Most Popular Cans



This chart, prepared by the office of price administration, shows the most widely sold canned foods with their approximate weights and point values. The sizes of the vegetables in the top row are known as No. 2 cans. If a person bought three of these cans of peas, for example, during March he would just use up his 48-points of coupons allotted each person for the month. He could then purchase no other canned, dried or frozen goods in March, but other members of the family could with their coupons.

Each person had 24 points per four weeks.

From 1st December 1941, there was “points” rationing for tinned goods, dried fruit, cereals, pulses, syrup, treacle and biscuits.

The “Points” system differed from the general food rationing scheme in that the public did not have to register at any particular shop to buy “points” foodstuffs.

Clothes were rationed too.

Clothes were also rationed.

Beginning on 1st June 1941, every person, (men, women and children), was allocated a maximum of just 66 clothing coupons per year.

This equated to just one complete outfit a year!

In 1942, a utility scheme was introduced to limit the amounts of material used in the making of clothes.

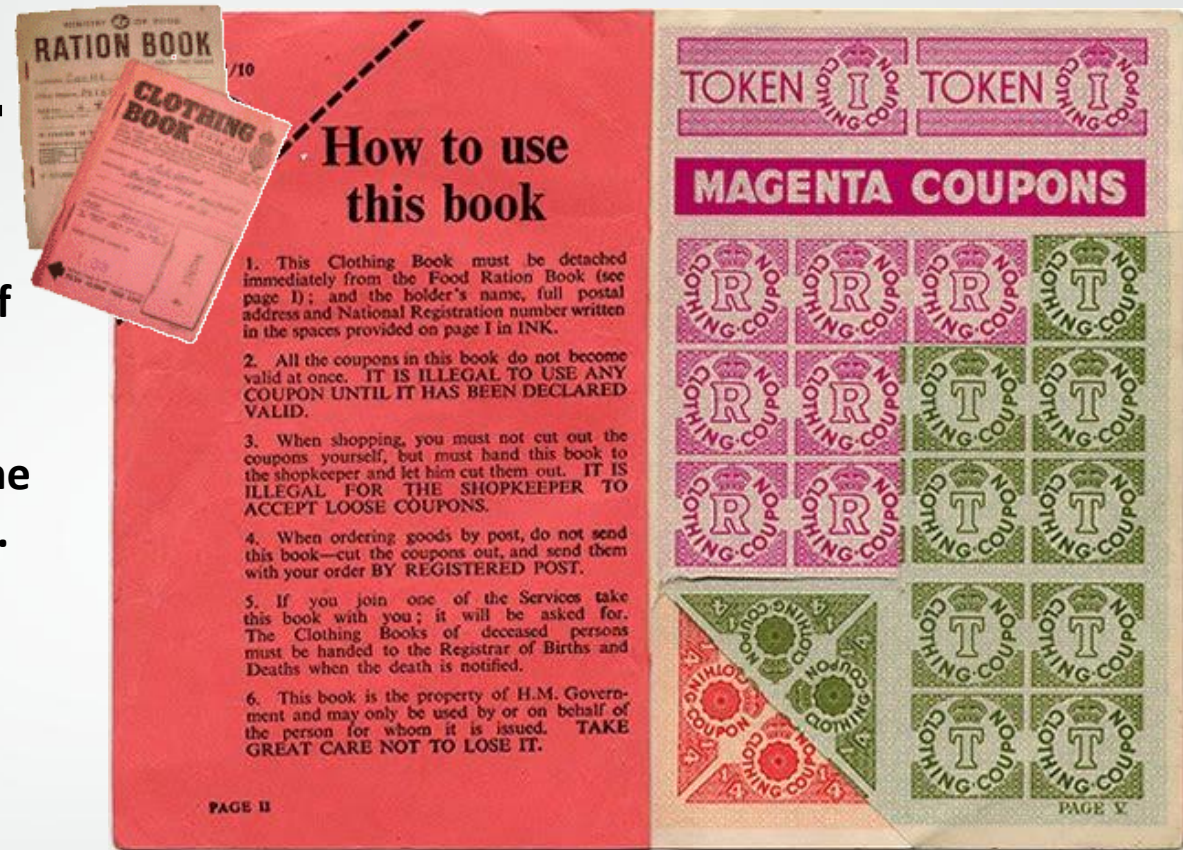
For example:

Gents Suit

- 3 pockets maximum
- NO turn ups
- 3 buttons maximum
- 48cm trouser length maximum

Ladies Clothing

- NO elastic waistbands
- NO fancy belts
- Shoes with a maximum heel height of just 5cm



How many coupons did it take to buy clothing?

| Men and Boys | | Adult | Child |
|---|--|-------|-------|
| Unlined mackintosh or cape | | 9 | 7 |
| Other mackintoshes, or raincoat, or overcoat | | 16 | 11 |
| Coat, or jacket, or blazer or like garment .. | | 13 | 8 |
| Waistcoat, or pull-over, or cardigan, or jersey | | 5 | 3 |
| Trousers (other than fustian or corduroy) .. | | 8 | 6 |
| Fustian or corduroy trousers | | 5 | 5 |
| Shorts | | 5 | 3 |
| Overalls, or dungarees or like garment .. | | 6 | 4 |
| Dressing-gown or bathing gown | | 8 | 6 |
| Night-shirt or pair of pyjamas | | 8 | 6 |
| Shirt, or combinations—woollen | | 8 | 6 |
| Shirt, or combinations—other material .. | | 5 | 4 |
| Pants, or vest, or bathing costume, or child's blouse | | 4 | 2 |
| Pair of socks or stockings | | 3 | 1 |
| Collar, or tie, or pair of cuffs | | 1 | 1 |
| Two handkerchiefs | | 1 | 1 |
| Scarf, or pair of gloves or mittens | | 2 | 2 |
| Pair of slippers or goloshes | | 4 | 2 |
| Pair of boots or shoes | | 7 | 3 |
| Pair of leggings, gaiters or spats | | 3 | 2 |

| Women and Girls | | Adult | Child |
|---|--|-------|-------|
| Lined mackintoshes, or coats (over 28 in. long) | | 14 | 11 |
| Jacket, or short coat (under 28 in. in length) | | 11 | 8 |
| Dress, or gown, or frock—woollen | | 11 | 8 |
| Dress, or gown, or frock—other material .. | | 7 | 5 |
| Gym tunic, or girl's skirt with bodice .. | | 8 | 6 |
| Blouse, or sports shirt, or cardigan, or jumper | | 5 | 3 |
| Skirt, or divided skirt | | 7 | 5 |
| Overalls, or dungarees or like garment .. | | 6 | 4 |
| Apron, or pinafore | | 3 | 2 |
| Pyjamas | | 8 | 6 |
| Nightdress | | 6 | 5 |
| Petticoat, or slip, or combination, or camiknickers | | 4 | 3 |
| Other undergarments, including corsets .. | | 3 | 2 |
| Pair of stockings | | 2 | 1 |
| Pair of socks (ankle length) | | 1 | 1 |
| Collar, or tie, or pair of cuffs | | 1 | 1 |
| Two handkerchiefs | | 1 | 1 |
| Scarf, or pair of gloves or mittens, or muff | | 2 | 2 |
| Pair of slippers, boots or shoes | | 5 | 3 |

You have 66 coupons each year. What could you buy?

Count your coupons **before** you go shopping

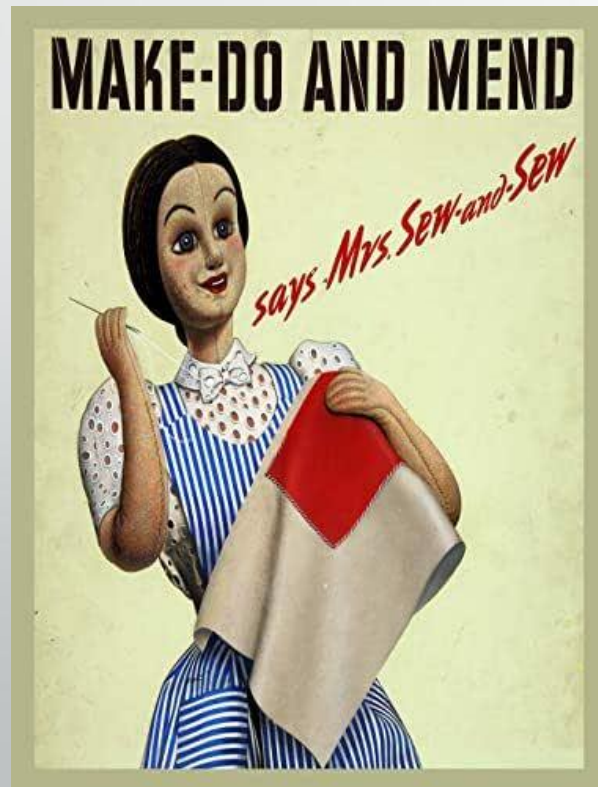


Which can you do without?

Making Do

When clothing was rationed, women were encouraged to repair old family clothes or 'recycle' old clothing by (for example) unravelling the wool of old unwanted jumpers and knitting it into something else, and other similar ideas.

Some of these unraveled sweaters were also knitted into socks and scarves for the British troops.



Campaigns like 'Mrs Sew-and-Sew' and 'Make Do and Mend' gave people ideas about how to create new clothing using old materials. Old curtains were often turned into skirts or dresses, and women sometimes drew lines down the backs of their legs to give the impression that they were wearing stockings. Stockings were in short supply because there was a shortage of nylon.

Plan ahead



allow for growing

IWM

MAKE DO AND MEND



HINTS ON WASHING

MAKE DO AND MEND

UNPICK AND KNIT AGAIN

WHERE'S THAT MOTH?

DECORATIVE PATCHES

PREPARED FOR THE BOARD OF TRADE BY THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

Price 3^d net

30 MAKE DO AND MEND

Wool that is unpicked and washed will not knit into the same-sized garment as originally. It may be thinner; a 4-ply wool may knit up like a 3-ply wool, or a 3-ply like a 2-ply. Use the wool, then, to make a smaller garment, or combine some other wool with it to make contrasting welts or stripes, or for yoke and pockets. Always weigh your wool, if you possibly can, before re-using it. If you are following a new pattern be sure the wool is the right ply, and test the tension by knitting a square inch or two.

WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH THESE ODDMENTS OF WOOL

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1½ oz. of 3-ply | } make a back or front of a jumper. |
| 3 oz. of 4-ply | |
| 1 oz. of 3-ply | } make a pair of short sleeves. |
| 1½ oz. of 4-ply | |
| 3 oz. of 3-ply | } make a pair of long sleeves. |
| 4 oz. of 4-ply | |

New life for old Woollies

Jumpers. Re-knit the sleeves in stripes, using up oddments of brightly-coloured wool, and make the new shaping at the top, thus giving it an extended shoulder-line. Add a striped pocket to match. A discarded jumper will make a child's jersey or frock. A 2-ply jumper in a pale colour would re-knit into a vest.

Worn Sleeves. Unpick at the shoulder seams, and put in new sleeves knitted in a contrasting colour or, using the best part of the old wool with some new, knit in stripes, panels or a half-and-half design.

If the elbows alone are worn, cut them off above the damaged part, and bind with contrasting petersham braid, ribbon or material from the bit bag, cut on the cross. Add a similar binding at the neckline to give a finish.

Felted or matted wool. Have you a hopelessly-looking, thoroughly shrunken and matted old jumper or jacket? Unpick the seams carefully, *don't* unravel it. You can then treat it just like cloth, cutting it out from a paper pattern. If, of course, it is not matted all over, you must tack the parts where stitches are likely to run, before cutting. Machine round the edge of the pattern and join up by hand. This keeps the garment firm and stops it from stretching.

Golf Stockings. Re-knit worn golf stockings into serviceable socks.

This cloth will make boleros,

There were plenty of ideas.

FROM FATHER'S OLD SUIT AND SHIRT

Oven Glove

Boy's Jacket

Child's Skirt

Cushion

From a Jacket

From a pair of Trousers

Braided Skirt

Jiny Tot's Play Dress

From Plus-Fours

From a Shirt

Coal Glove



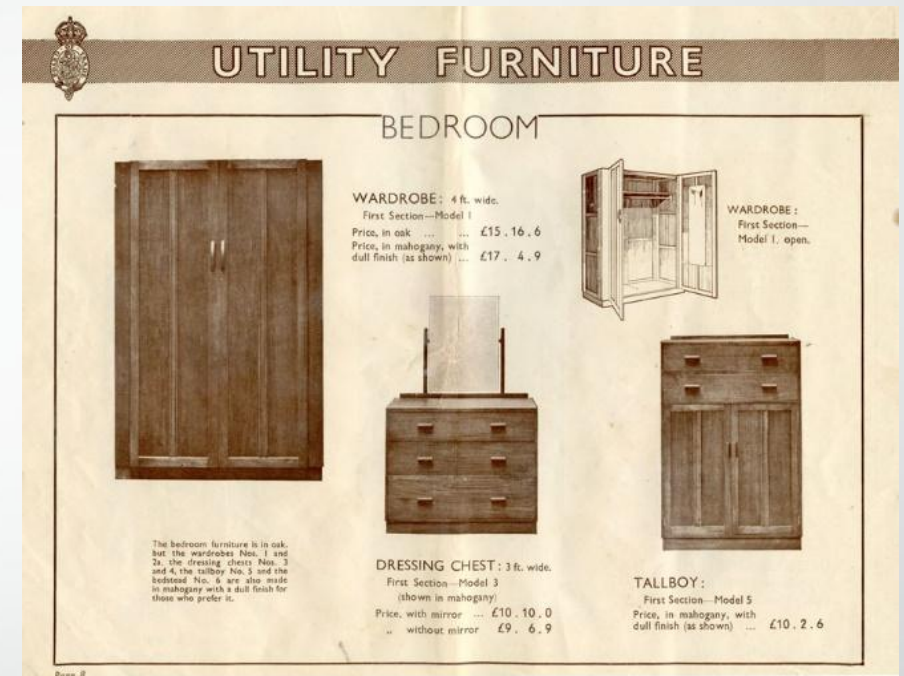
make do and mend.

Other Forms of Rationing

Other goods like furniture were also rationed. As people couldn't replace or repair their homes, they grew shabbier as the war went on.

Utility furniture was designed to use as little wood and other raw materials as possible but not everyone could buy it. Only newly weds and civilians who had lost everything as a direct result of air raid bombings could buy new furniture.

Materials used in the production of plates, saucepans and umbrellas were also tightly controlled – for example, cups were often white with no handles.



MORE Rationing

Shortages of petrol meant fewer vehicles on the road and a greater reliability on public transport, which in itself was also restricted.



Even soap was rationed! It was rationed from 9th February 1942.



Does that mean we don't have to wash?



Four coupons were given each month, and in 1945 each coupon could be used to buy 4 oz hard soap, 3 oz toilet soap, 1/2 oz liquid soap, 6 oz soft soap, 3 oz soap flakes and 6 oz soap powder. This covered not only soaps used for hand washing but for clothes washing as well.

Timeline: when did rationing begin and end?

| | |
|----------------|--|
| January 1940 | Food rationing begins: butter, bacon, ham and sugar rationed |
| March 1940 | Meat rationed |
| July 1940 | Tea and margarine rationed |
| May 1941 | Cheese rationed |
| June 1941 | Clothes rationed |
| December 1941 | Points rationing introduced for canned and processed foods |
| February 1942 | Soap rationed |
| July 1942 | Chocolate and sweets rationed |
| May 1949 | Clothes rationing abolished |
| May 1950 | Points rationing abolished |
| September 1950 | Soap derationed |
| October 1952 | Tea derationed |
| February 1953 | Sweets rationing abolished |
| May 1954 | Cheese and fats derationed |
| July 1954 | Meat, bacon and ham derationed... |

... end of rationing

Rationing continued for over fourteen long years, only finally ending on 30th June 1954 when meat "came off the ration".



These people were very excited in February 1953. WHY?