

## MFT Frontline Cuisine from the 1970s and 1980s

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On MFT, sometimes we had a bag lunch, usually PBJ [Peanut butter and jelly] and an apple. There was also the baloney and cheese, with mustard and mayo from squirt bottles, served up from the large cooler that doubled as a seat (pre-seatbelt days, chilluns). This cooler, sometimes two, sat behind the driver's seat, facing the side door and doubled as a seat. There was usually an assembly crew, mayo squirter, salami slapper, cheese slapper, mustard squirter, and bagger.

At least on MFT usually there was variety of some kind. Breakfast could be granola in a cup with milk, juice (grape juice was banned, as you were always eating while bouncing down the road).



If you were out all day, lunch was up to you. Sometimes in small towns, I'd go to a corner store and get a can of something, borrow a can opener off the shelf to open it. Funnily enough, this was considered normal in Tennessee, but in Kentucky people would get indignant if I asked to use one of the can openers on display. So I got a P38 at an army surplus store, a little folding can opener that fit into your wallet.

Hormel chili was a solid meal, but (pre-microwave days, chilluns) it was kind of gross when you opened up the can to see globs of congealed fat on top. Vienna sausage was 50 cents a can or so. That and a 25 cent sleeve of crackers was a po boys meal. If I ever walked into a car sales place, and the guy was eating vienna sausage and crackers, I knew I was dealing with a broke individual.

In the heat of summer, I sometimes bought a small can of OJ [frozen orange juice] concentrate and ate it along with plain yogurt. I also discovered that a 98 cent jar of Kroger peanut butter would melt if you left it up by the windshield of a Ford van in July. I would drink it between runs. Yes, I loved peanut butter that much.

In some country stores in Tennessee, you could buy a couple slices of bread and a slice or two of cheese. I remember Janet Wada (don't remember her original name) arguing with a clerk because they sold baloney and cheese sandwiches for \$1, but she wanted to just buy the ingredients for less.



Sometimes we'd trade product for a watermelon. Rebel flags were a hot barter item.

Van lunches could be anything from sandwiches, McDonalds or what have you. Roger Johannsen used to buy cans of green beans, beets and chickpeas and mix them up for a salad.

This was also the era when the salad bar hit it big, and before long, salad bars were just about everywhere. If they just allowed you one trip, I'd fan pickle spears out over the edge of the bowl, then set lettuce leaves on top of them, and proceed to pile up salad on top. Alfalfa sprouts were something I tried to get when I could. On Tim Forster's team, I even grew them in a jar in back of the van.



*Salad Bar*

All you can eat salad bars were hog heaven. We could certainly pack the food away, I always burned it off. So it was always amusing when someone hit me with the "food deprived, brainwashed Moonie" line. It was kind of laughable when they believed that if they could just get me to eat a hamburger, I'd snap out, drop my flower bucket and join the Baptists.

But generally, on MFT we ate a lot, if not always well. We used to get \$7 a day for lunch and dinner, and it was possible to eat pretty well on that, believe it or not.



Doing malls was another story. Six weeks between November and Christmas, and usually I was the only one working the booth, so I had to ask someone at a nearby store to watch my stuff and sprint to the bathroom or the food court. I subsisted on Chick Fil-A sandwiches and carob bars from GNC. Once in Kentucky there was a GNC that sold frozen wheat grass juice.

And IOWC? For the few months I was on a travelling team, the lunch every single day, without fail, was one PBJ and one baloney and cheese in a paper bag. I've always been a PBJ fan, but the baloney and cheese got to me after a while. My stomach would lurch when I looked at them, however hungry I was. I can't think of baloney and cheese without losing my appetite, even decades later. Even with a scrap of lettuce on it.

Workshop food was another story, though it did depend on where your workshop was. I was at an MFT workshop in Boulder, CO one January, and the breakfast consisted of oatmeal, toast and milk. People were getting sick and I was dying for something resembling fruit, but there just wasn't any. I ended up making tea out of ginger and cinnamon from the kitchen. That kept me going.