



Eighteenth century dining room recreated in rich fabric and paintings.



At Fort Louisbourg, "inhabitants" wear eighteenth century costumes and assume the role of residents who actually lived and worked there in 1744.

beef and molasses, even menus and rules for the card games.

Two taverns, L'Hotel de la Marine and L'Epée Royale, now serve eighteenth century fare to visitors — coarse brown bread, strong cheese and navy beans at one; fancier meat pies and brandy at the other. A royal bakery sells \$2 loaves of soldiers' bread, made daily from whole wheat and rye flour.

That is the extent of commercialization. There are no shops or tourist trin-

kets. Visitors must leave their cars a kilometre away at the visitor centre and take a shuttle bus to the fortress.

History

Louisbourg was built in 1713, after the French lost their colonies in Acadia and Newfoundland to the British. The fortress was constructed on an ice-free harbour near the rich Grand Banks fishing grounds as the capital for the remaining colony of Ile Royale.

By the 1740s, scores of merchant ships

and frigates crowded the harbour. News and visitors arrived from Versailles, plantations in the West Indies, colonies in New England and Quebec. A lighthouse, the second on the continent, used a giant pool of codfish oil to cast a beam 29 kilometres out to sea.

Under siege

Louisbourg was ill-chosen for a long siege. In May 1745, British ships blockaded the harbour. Gunners shelled the fort from low, protected hills just outside the walls.

The fortress fell in only 46 days. But the British returned it to France in 1748 under the Treaty of Aix-la-Chappelle, and the city prospered again.

Ten years later, during the Seven Years' War, the British again attacked. It took 16 000 troops seven weeks to take control, and two years for them to demolish the thick stone walls and ramparts.

The Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Park covers 83 square kilometres, and contains well-marked hiking trails through salt marshes, beaches and forests. Signs and maps point out remains of the fortifications and siege works. Park rangers can help arrange diving tours to visit eighteenth century wrecks in the harbour.

Campgrounds and hotels are located in the nearby town of Louisbourg, and in Sydney, about 35 kilometres away.

(Article by Bob Drogin in Ottawa Citizen, June 4, 1983)



Authentic eighteenth century fare, such as coarse brown bread, strong cheese and navy beans, is served to visitors at Fort Louisbourg.