[**Jib**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2545-jib/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,076 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Minneapolis, MN
* Interests:Piracy, stage combat, martial arts, reading, film, travel

[Posted May 3, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=413951) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=413951)

What do we know about colonial inns? Did all of them service a meal? What sort of food was common? Did all of them have a tavern for drinking and socializing? Was music common? What other services were provided (stables etc)? Did they seem to follow a typical layout or building plan?

[**jendobyns**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11262-jendobyns/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 562 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Baltimore
* Interests:too numerous to mention, really. Period foodways, baroque dance, material culture, etc., etc.

[Posted May 3, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=413954) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=413954)

There has bee a fair amount of work done on this. The site I used to work at had a history of running a ferry and inn together through several owners. They were in some part required to provide certain services attached to receiving a license. Food was seasonal and whatever the cook made that day. Bread can be a given. Beer, cider, wine and stronger drink would be available.

Accommodations were whatever the owners could provide, but shared rooms with strangers was not unusual. Getting a bed for the night just meant you had space on a bed, not that you had it to yourself.

Shelter and fodder could be provided for horses.

Building plans were not standard, although regional architecture could influence things. Also a big factor is urban vs rural.

One starting point for getting a sense of the thing is The Journal of Madam Knight. This was written by a woman traveller in the period. I will tap my friends in the local museums for more recent work, it's out there!

**Edited May 3, 2013 by jendobyns**

[**Jib**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2545-jib/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,076 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Minneapolis, MN
* Interests:Piracy, stage combat, martial arts, reading, film, travel

[Posted May 6, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=413965) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=413965)

Thanks Jendobyns! In my own little research it appears certain establishments had to obtain a license to sell wine (instead of beer,ale, cider and rum). Despite the fact the names are changeable today there appears to be a difference between the tavern, inn, public house, and coaching inn (services provided and products sold).

Growing up in the Midwest we had restaurants, bars and something called a **"Supper Club"**. When I was older I discovered this was hold over from my grandparents generation. Supper Clubs served hard liquor along with food. Hard to fathom not being able to have a cocktail at your local Applebee's or TGI Fridays but at one time not all restaurants could serve hard liquor in the Midwest US.

I wonder if something like this was going on in the colonies and Europe???

[**jendobyns**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11262-jendobyns/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 562 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Baltimore
* Interests:too numerous to mention, really. Period foodways, baroque dance, material culture, etc., etc.

[Posted May 6, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=413968) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=413968)

I haven't run across too much of a distinction as you are describing, although there were private clubs created by and attended exclusively by gentlemen. Their purpose varied. Any division made between type of establishment could also be dependent on which colonial government was granting the license. So dividing them into neat pigeon holes could prove difficult. If you are thinking of creating an interpretation of one of those establishments, the best thing you can do is model it on one that you know to have existed at a certain time and location and track it's records. There are licenses, lawsuits, all sorts of documents since they are a public establishment and people invariably misbehave, owners die, owe people money or are owed money, establishments change hands, etc.

Also, if you contact the good folks here: <http://www.historiclondontown.org/> someone should be able to direct you to some great print resources. The current director, Rod Cofield, has done a lot of research on period taverns and other similar establishments. But a lot of the staff there could probably give you some guidance. Just give them a call and see where it leads you. And if they are within range of a visit, go there. It's a cool place with a great library and informed staff and volunteers. And lots of great artifacts in the museum.

And, many state Archives have searchable databases these days. A quick search under "public house" in the MD Archives shows more about \_who\_ could be served rather than \_what\_ could be served (seamen and various others were restricted/excluded, for example, mostly for financial reasons). Search also under \_ordinary\_ and \_license\_.

When I have more down time, I'll check through Accessible Archives to see what pops under "license' in the various period newspapers.

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* 
* 
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted May 6, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=413969) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=413969)

check out colonial williamsburg as well. not only do they have lots of info on line they also have colonial newspapers on line as early as 1733(ish) a tiny bit late for some of our stuff,but a good source all the same.

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,081 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted May 7, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=413974) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=413974)

I don't know anything whatsoever about this topic (although I am finding it quite fascinating and looking forward to additional informed comment), but the first thing I thought of when I read it was that it would be highly unusual for there to be a 'standard' ordinary template.

There were no doubt scattered rules and regulations as has been noted, but I intuitively suspect that these were much less specific and detailed than they are now. Even today, with the armies of inspectors and so forth, people don't always follow the rules and regulations anyhow. Imagine what it was like three hundred years ago.

Standardization in many things (other then government imposed rules - and even then - think of how far the colonies were from the mother country) seems to be mostly a creature of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

[**jendobyns**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11262-jendobyns/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 562 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Baltimore
* Interests:too numerous to mention, really. Period foodways, baroque dance, material culture, etc., etc.

[Posted May 7, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=413978) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=413978)

\*smacks forehead\* Uh, yeah, lots of cool stuff there!

Thanks for the reminder!

 On 5/6/2013 at 11:51 PM, Dutchman said:

check out colonial williamsburg as well. not only do they have lots of info on line they also have colonial newspapers on line as early as 1733(ish) a tiny bit late for some of our stuff,but a good source all the same.

[**Jib**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2545-jib/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,076 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Minneapolis, MN
* Interests:Piracy, stage combat, martial arts, reading, film, travel

[Posted May 7, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=413983) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=413983)

I suppose the meaning and the words "inn", "Tavern", and "Pub" might appear similar to our vocabulary today but held different meanings altogether in the GAOP. As the common man on the street today about **"Ajax"** and I doubt he will tell you about a ancient Greek hero.

Then again maybe such terms were regional? Today we have **soda**, **pop**, and **coke** which depending upon where you are can mean the same thing.

[**Jas. Hook**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11157-jas-hook/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,650 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Long Island NY
* Interests:Fishing & Piracy

[Posted May 8, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=413991) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=413991)

You can also try the book *'Stage Coach and Tavern Days'* by Alice Morse Earle

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,081 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted May 8, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=413993) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=413993)

 On 5/7/2013 at 3:49 PM, Jib said:

I suppose the meaning and the words "inn", "Tavern", and "Pub" might appear similar to our vocabulary today but held different meanings altogether in the GAOP. As the common man on the street today about **"Ajax"** and I doubt he will tell you about a ancient Greek hero.

Then again maybe such terms were regional? Today we have **soda**, **pop**, and **coke** which depending upon where you are can mean the same thing.

From studying medicine (which, again, has nothing whatsoever to do with this topic, but it's a period topic I know well), I can tell you that in that field terminology was astonishingly loose. Many terms are used for the same thing, some of which are no longer relevant and some of which we would identify as being positively incorrect. I found the same thing when trying to explain parts of a ship while discussing the surgeon's quarters. From this, I suspect that terminology was much less precise than it is today.

[**jendobyns**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11262-jendobyns/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 562 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Baltimore
* Interests:too numerous to mention, really. Period foodways, baroque dance, material culture, etc., etc.

[Posted May 10, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=414016) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=414016)

A bit post period, but a great reference stating that there were regulations and that fees were supposed to be posted. This also went for earlier period taverns in other colonies as well. From a disgruntled patron to the Virginia Gazette around third quarter 18C:

Mr. PURDIE,

THE impositions and exactions on the publick by the TAVERN-KEEPERS in this colony in general, as well as in Williamsburg, is so exorbitant, as to call for some mode of redress by those to whom that power belongs. No colony on this continent is allowed greater profit on vending and retailing provision than this, but that does not satisfy the *voracious publican* . **By the law, the courts settle the rates of provision, &c. which is to be put up in the tavern.** This is neglected, the better to facilitate the design; and, countenanced by those whose duty it is to detect such proceedings, by paying every unjust charge in the tavern-keeper's bill (from a mistaken notion that it is below the dignity of a gentleman to contest small accounts) they go on with impunity. **It is hoped, therefore, that all tavern-keepers will immediately put up the rates allowed by the court in the most conspicuous part of the tavern or be punished for such neglect.**

I am, sir,

[**Jib**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2545-jib/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,076 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Minneapolis, MN
* Interests:Piracy, stage combat, martial arts, reading, film, travel

[Posted May 16, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=414055) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=414055)

Jendobyns and myself have been tracking this topic via email. Very interesting what she has uncovered. One idea I hadn't imagined was that "The Crown" set the prices at inns and taverns. This make me curious if underground drinking establishments appeared? A back alley or basement, a keg, and a few hardened men ready to make some coin??? Seems like a good place to fence stolen goods too!

[**jendobyns**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11262-jendobyns/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 562 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Baltimore
* Interests:too numerous to mention, really. Period foodways, baroque dance, material culture, etc., etc.

[Posted May 18, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=414083) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=414083)

 On 5/16/2013 at 11:49 AM, Jib said:

Jendobyns and myself have been tracking this topic via email. Very interesting what she has uncovered. One idea I hadn't imagined was that "The Crown" set the prices at inns and taverns. This make me curious if underground drinking establishments appeared? A back alley or basement, a keg, and a few hardened men ready to make some coin??? Seems like a good place to fence stolen goods too!

Without a single bit of hard evidence before me, I want to say, of course there were! One of our friends from the UK can probably speak to this with more authority, but iirc, there was an entire underground economy in some places (thinking about one in particular in Scotland that was literally underground). It's just part of human nature. The place to find out about that type of thing would be in court records, as people get caught doing what they oughtn't.

[**jendobyns**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11262-jendobyns/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 562 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Baltimore
* Interests:too numerous to mention, really. Period foodways, baroque dance, material culture, etc., etc.

[Posted May 18, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=414084) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=414084)

And as I hit the send button I realized that I am writing from the home of moonshine and origins of NASCAR. Just another type of pirate, eh?

[**Jib**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2545-jib/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,076 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Minneapolis, MN
* Interests:Piracy, stage combat, martial arts, reading, film, travel

[Posted May 22, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=414119) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=414119)

So the "Speakeasy" might not be an invention of prohibition???

[**William Brand**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1471-william-brand/)

* Mercury Malefactor
* 
* 
* Admin
* 8,884 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Logan, Utah
* Interests:My name is William Pace and I live and work as a graphic designer, illustrator and photographer in Northern Utah. I'm married to the lovely Tracy Pace and we have three children. In addition to all things art, I enjoy traveling and meeting new people from every walk of life. I've always been a fan of history, theology, and of course, Pyracy.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSkt-q-HihQ

[Posted May 22, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=414121) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=414121)

[speakeasy (n.)](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=speakeasy&allowed_in_frame=0) "unlicensed saloon," 1889 (in New York "Voice"), from [speak](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=speak&allowed_in_frame=0) + [easy](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=easy&allowed_in_frame=0); so called from the practice of speaking quietly about such a place in public, or when inside it, so as not to alert the police and neighbors. The word gained wide currency in U.S. during Prohibition (1920-1932). In early 19c. Irish and British dialect, a *speak softly shop* meant "smuggler's den.""

[**Jib**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2545-jib/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,076 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Minneapolis, MN
* Interests:Piracy, stage combat, martial arts, reading, film, travel

[Posted May 24, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=414142) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=414142)

So the term dates to later but the concept is earlier?

[**jendobyns**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11262-jendobyns/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 562 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Baltimore
* Interests:too numerous to mention, really. Period foodways, baroque dance, material culture, etc., etc.

[Posted May 25, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=414147) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=414147)

It might be useful to examine this work, or if you can find it, the 1765 version, and track backward, for the period slang term:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk_files=3275608&pageno=1>

If nothing else, it could add some colorful language to your vocabulary 

[**jendobyns**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11262-jendobyns/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 562 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Baltimore
* Interests:too numerous to mention, really. Period foodways, baroque dance, material culture, etc., etc.

[Posted May 25, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=414149) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=414149)

As of the 1811 edition of the Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue:

BOWSING KEN. An ale-house or gin-shop.

So far only made it to B's. There are over 200 pages. Have fun lads!

[**JS1990**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/20905-js1990/)

* Deck Swabber
* 
* 
* Member
* 28 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:South Africa
* Interests:Aspiring Writer, living adventures imagined behind closed eyes.
Yoga lover, red wine enthusiast.

[Posted August 11, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=414609) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=414609)

 On 5/7/2013 at 8:39 AM, Mission said:

I don't know anything whatsoever about this topic (although I am finding it quite fascinating and looking forward to additional informed comment), but the first thing I thought of when I read it was that it would be highly unusual for there to be a 'standard' ordinary template.

There were no doubt scattered rules and regulations as has been noted, but I intuitively suspect that these were much less specific and detailed than they are now. Even today, with the armies of inspectors and so forth, people don't always follow the rules and regulations anyhow. Imagine what it was like three hundred years ago.

Standardization in many things (other then government imposed rules - and even then - think of how far the colonies were from the mother country) seems to be mostly a creature of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

I definitely agree with this; I doubt that the rules and regulations, though stated, would have been followed through with 100%, or would have been as detailed as they are today.

If only one could go back in time to witness the realism of it. Currently, we only have Hollywood and a small handful of reliable sources to gauge upon :-).

Warm regards,

Jacqui

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,081 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted August 17, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=414662) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=414662)

Hey, I was looking for images and I found a couple interesting ones over at wiki commons that sort of fit this category.

Interior of an Inn by Adriaen van Ostade (1658)



17th Century Coffeehouse in England



Notice the dogs.

[**Jib**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2545-jib/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,076 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Minneapolis, MN
* Interests:Piracy, stage combat, martial arts, reading, film, travel

[Posted August 23, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=414703) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=414703)

I also noticed what appears to be children playing on the floor. No need for daycare, bring the kids to the pub! They can help you find the way home when you're done!

[**jendobyns**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11262-jendobyns/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 562 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Baltimore
* Interests:too numerous to mention, really. Period foodways, baroque dance, material culture, etc., etc.

[Posted June 11, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=416817) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=416817)

Actually, standardization goes back pretty far. The Worshipful Company of Grocers dates from the Medieval period, and it had the responsibility for maintaining the official set of weights and measures. You can see how far back they go by looking at their website and history. They are still in existence today. The Crown liked things to be measured, organized, etc. so that things were properly taxed. Granted, throughout history there are those who avoid the official channels whenever they can, but the desire and tools are there.

I ran across this image this evening while researching period coffee houses. It's a pretty standard list of what would be available in an establishment, although no prices are listed. No date provided with the museum info: [**http://tinyurl.com/mofb5kh**](http://tinyurl.com/mofb5kh)

**Edited June 11, 2014 by jendobyns**

[**jendobyns**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11262-jendobyns/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 562 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Baltimore
* Interests:too numerous to mention, really. Period foodways, baroque dance, material culture, etc., etc.

[Posted June 11, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=416818) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=416818)

This link should take you to a bill of fare for the Bush Tavern, Christmas 1700. Pretty impressive

[**http://tinyurl.com/lr5yhpz**](http://tinyurl.com/lr5yhpz)

**Edited June 11, 2014 by jendobyns**

[**Red Sea Trade**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/3073-red-sea-trade/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 157 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Melbourne, Florida
* Interests:16th and 17th century Colonial America, especially Florida (my current location). All aspects of material culture, especially foodways and music.

25 years of American Revolution reenacting.

[Posted May 10, 2015](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=findComment&comment=418101) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/19117-the-colonial-inn/&do=reportComment&comment=418101)

Taverns, like everything else in Colonial America, seem to have varied tremendously by region, period and social class. Sarah Knight, travelling from Boston to New York in 1704, found a huge variety of fare and accommodations. Arriving in Rye, New York, she stopped at the Strang Tavern and recorded: “Here being very hungry, I requested a fricassee, which the Frenchman undertakeing, managed so contrary to my notion of Cookery, that I hast'ned to Bed supperless.” Now Rye was a small town, and choices were limited. Larger towns offered greater choice. Even St. Augustine, Florida, a flyspeck on the far edge of the map, managed to support 40 taverns by the start of the 18th century. Patrons in all but the smallest towns would have had a choice of watering holes.

Major cities often boasted elegant taverns with elaborate menus. Another traveler from the first half of the century, Dr. Alexander Hamilton, while traveling from Annapolis to Boston satisfied himself on the road with bread, cheese, and cold apple pie for a meal but would have expected more substantial and better fare in the cities; he recorded a good dinner at Todd's Tavern in New York City, which consisted of veal, beefsteak, green peas, and raspberries.

The potential liquor selection was similarly impressive. While staying in a Philadelphia tavern during negotiations with the Iroquois, a traveler named William Black's liquor bill included champagne, madeira, claret, cider, lime punch, rum, brandy, port and sherry.

If you hadn't already guessed, I am pretty excited about this topic, having worked in two 18th century taverns in my younger days.