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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Reserve

Thursday, November 18, 1943

3/12
QUESTION BOX:

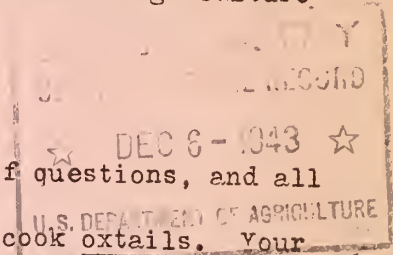
Cook vegetables covered or uncovered?
Soya grits in spoon bread?
How make "no-point" oxtail stew?

ANSWER FROM:

Home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture

--ooOoo--

"Something old and something new"---in today's batch of questions, and all these questions are about food. The "old" subject is how to cook oxtails. Your grandmother knew how, and the home economists of today cook them the same way. The "new" topic is soya grits. Americans are only recently making the acquaintance of soybeans and soya products, though the soybean has been a staple food in the Orient for centuries. And there's also "something new" in the answer about cooking green vegetables.



Suppose we start off with that one. This homemaker asks: "Should I cook green vegetables covered or uncovered? I was always told that vegetables kept their green color better if cooked with the cover off; but I'm told also that it's better to cover all vegetables when you boil them. What do the government food specialists say?"

The home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture say to boil green vegetables covered. The idea is to speed up cooking, to prevent loss of vitamins and minerals. We know now that the longer a vegetable is cooked, the greater the loss of vitamin C; and also the more vitamin A and other food values lost. If you cook green vegetables quickly they don't have time to lose their color.

So the "government food specialists" say: "Start green vegetables cooking in briskly boiling, lightly salted water....just enough to prevent sticking to the pan, or with greens, only what clings to the leaves. Cover green vegetables to

1944
The Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C.

Mr. [Name]
[Address]
[City, State]

Dear Sir:

Reference is made to your letter of [Date] regarding [Subject]. The information requested is as follows: [Detailed information regarding the subject matter, including dates, locations, and specific details.]

Very truly yours,
[Signature]
[Title]

Enclosed are [Number] copies of [Document Name]. The information is being furnished to you for your information and use. If you have any further questions, please contact the [Department Name] at [Phone Number].

speed the cooking. Or use a pressure saucepan to shorten the time even more. Cook green vegetables only until tender, season simply, and serve at once."

There you have the secret of delicious vegetables with the best of their food values saved. Boiled in this way, lima beans take the longest, but only 30 minutes. Cabbage and spinach are done in 5 to 10 minutes, beet and turnip greens in 10 to 20 minutes. Snap beans take 20 to 30 minutes, broccoli and kale 15 to 25 minutes, and most other green vegetables less than 20 minutes. And cover all of them.

"Well," some of you maybe saying as this correspondent does, "that's a new one on me, too." And now for something else new in foods.

"I had a delicious new kind of spoon bread the other day at a friend's house, but forgot to ask for the recipe. My friend said it was made with 'soya grits' and was very nutritious. Can you tell me where to get soya grits and how to make this kind of spoon bread?"

The home economists explain that soya grits and soya flour are very new products to most Americans. They are being put up in one-pound packages and larger economy packages, and you should be able to buy them at the grocer's. They are a low-cost, high-protein food made from soybeans. These soya products are treated by heat, which improves the flavor and protein value. When you add soya grits or flour to other dishes you increase the food value---step up nourishment.

To make spoon bread such as you sampled, containing soya grits, you substitute for part of the corn meal an equal amount of soya grits. Here's the full recipe for 6 servings, tested by the government home economists. If you'd like to jot it down, the ingredients are: Three-fourths of a cup of corn meal...one-fourth of a cup of soya grits...1 teaspoon salt...2 cups cold water...1 cup milk...2 or 3 eggs, separated....2 tablespoons melted fat.

Mix together the corn meal, soya grits, salt, and cold water. Let the mixture come to a boil and boil 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Add the milk, beaten

egg yolks, and melted^o fat. Beat the egg whites stiff and fold into the mixture. Pour into a well greased baking dish and bake in a moderate oven (350 degrees) for about an hour. Serve at once from the baking dish. You noticed that the recipe says "2 or 3 eggs." Two eggs will do very well. Three eggs make a nicer, fluffier dish of spoon bread.

If you'd like to know some other good ways to use soya grits and flour, the U. S. Department of Agriculture has a new free folder on the subject. Write for "Soya Flour and Grits." Address your request to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

Now for the next question: "I notice my meat dealer sometimes sells oxtails and they don't require any ration points. How do you cook them?"

The home economist say it takes 2 or 3 oxtails to serve a family of 6. The bones are fairly large with a small amount of meat on each. When you simmer the oxtails slowly to make the meat tender, you also soften the gelatinous material on and between the joints. This gives body to the broth you cook the meat in. If you let the stock get cold it will "jell" firmly.

At this time of year you are likely to be interested in hot oxtail dishes like oxtail soup or stew. The recipe for the soup is similar in some ways to stew. In either case you first make the meat tender by slow cooking.

Here's the way to make an oxtail soup, using 2 or 3 oxtails: Wash the tails and cut them into short lengths. Brown the pieces in fat, put them into a large kettle, cover with water, add a bay leaf, and simmer until the meat is tender enough to fall off the bones. Strain off the broth, and add to it about a quart of diced vegetables, including onions, carrots, turnips, and potatoes. Cook the vegetables in the broth until they are tender but not broken. Chop up the meat to serve in the soup, or put one joint of the oxtail, with the meat on it, in each soup plate. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and, if you like, Worcestershire sauce, chopped parsley, and a thin half-slice of lemon in each portion. A soup made like this is practically a whole meal in itself. For stew, use less water, add the vegetables after 2-1/2 hours, then season and thicken the gravy.

