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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Wednesday, November 29, 1944

Subject: Marketing for Fruit Cake Supplies.

Information from food supply specialists of War Food Administration.

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To market, to market to buy a ...no...not a fat pig. This time of year most of us are thinking about the holiday goodies we're going to make...and especially about fruit cake. So today...let's consider the fruit cake its ingredients and the supply thereof.

Say you already have your fruit cake recipe. Say that besides the usual cake makings, it calls for raisins, for dates or figs or both, for prunes, for citron, candied orange peel or candied grapefruit peel and nutmeats. Chances are it'll call for all this and more too. All right. You want to know your chances of finding these ingredients when you embark on the shopping trip. Well...here's the latest on that. I got it from the food supply specialists of the War Food Administration's Office of Distribution.

As for the dried fruits...the raisins, dates, figs and prunes...some of them come under a War Food Order. The order calls for packers to hold their entire pack of prunes and raisins until it's evident that Government requirements can be met. Any dried fruits they have above the war needs are released for civilians.

Now holding the dried fruits until it's evident that Government requirements will be met is fine with us. After all, we know that dried fruits are pretty important to our fighting forces. They contain a lot of food value. They're easy to ship. And they're good. At the same time, if we civilians are going to get any of the dried fruits, we like to get them soon. In time to use in our Christmas fruit cakes.

Well...we are--we're getting our share of this year's dried fruit pack now.

Early in October, the War Food Administration told packers of dried fruit, principally prunes and raisins, that they could release sizeable amounts of the 1944 pack into civilian trade channels immediately. Those raisins and prunes'll be at the store for the holiday trade. In fact, nearly all the civilian share of raisins for the whole trade year...which ends on the first of next September... has already been released. So...when you go to your store now, you should be able to find a lot more raisins and prunes than you found last year at this time. Later on...well...we don't really want so many of them during the warmer months anyway.

But what about figs and dates? The prospects for them are good too. There's no war food order controlling their distribution. And while the general supply of dried figs this year is expected to be somewhat smaller than it was last year, we're getting most of them early. So you can put down a check mark by them in your recipe. You should be able to find figs all right.

The date story is even brighter. Our civilian share this year is considerably larger than it was in 1943. You see...last year, the only dates we were able to get were grown here in the United States. But now, we've again started importing them from Iraq. And we have a lot more.

In summing up the dried fruit supply situation, those who know tell us.... that while...for the year as a whole...we can expect a smaller share of dried fruit than we got in '43, we will be able to get more now than we found during the last holiday season. Sounds encouraging for homemade fruit cakes, doesn't it?

Candied orange peel and candied grapefruit peel along with other candied fruits add sparkle to the holiday festivities. Perhaps you're one who makes them at home every Christmas. But have you ever tried your homemade candied fruit peel in fruit cake? Many recipes call for them. If you haven't done so before now, you might like to use the homemade candied orange peel and grapefruit peel in your

cakes this year. They'll take the place of the less plentiful candied fruits you're accustomed to buying, like pineapple.

Next about those nut meats. A quick glance at the crop report tells us that the pecan crop this year is a record one. And the walnut crop seems to be even better than last year. So if you're wondering whether or not to include nuts "in" this season, the answer is definitely...yes...do.

Well...that seems to be the line up. We should have very little trouble finding the fruit we need for that annual cake-making we indulge ourselves in around Christmas time. As for the manpower situation, I don't know. Maybe you can get the children to help cut the fruits up for you. It gives them a personal interest in the outcome of the cakes, you know. At least, I know. Many's the bowl of fruit I've cut up when I was a youngster.

There's one last thing I want to mention. You've probably noticed that the commercially made fruit cakes are under price ceilings. But had you realized that the ingredients you buy in your store have a price top on them too? If those price ceilings aren't posted in your grocery store...(and grocers aren't required to post several of the fruit items)...you can ask about them. Do so by all means if you have any doubt about the price you're paying. Most grocers are glad to discuss their ceilings with you.

So all things considered, this looks like a fine year for fruit cakes. I hope you have the best of luck with yours.

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