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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

JANUARY 26, 1940

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SUBJECT: "KIDNEY, BRAINS, HEART, and LIVER." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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Today, I'd like to have you go bargain-hunting with me. No, I don't mean bargain-hunting at the January white sales or any of the furniture clearances. Instead, we're going to the butcher shop! And, strangely, enough, we're going to find that some of the most nutritious meats are the lowest in cost.

The other day I happened to be in a busy market and I had plenty of time to look around. So I started studying the butcher's price list. I noticed that the meat organs were among the low-priced cuts. Listed near the bottom there was -- hog liver, beef liver, veal kidneys, lamb kidneys, beef kidneys, calf hearts, beef hearts, and brains. In fact, calf liver was about the only one of those rather special meats that was expensive.

If you happen to live on a farm, where the butchering season is now in progress, you're fortunate to have these organs available fresh. But whether you get your meat from your own supply or from a nearby market, you'll probably be interested in these meat specialties. Liver-and-bacon or liver-and-onions are old favorites; but don't forget that the rest of the meat organs have pleasing flavors all their own.

And now for the reason why these meats are a bargain at almost any price. This is part of a release from the Federal Bureau of Home Economics. Let me read a bit of it...

"Even if the cost were much higher, kidney, brains, heart, and liver would deserve an important place on the nutrition bargain list. (That's because they furnish so much food value.)

"Of course, these organs are good protein foods--like other meats. But besides that, they are excellent sources of iron. And they're richer than muscle meats in some of the vitamins."

However, these meat specialties are prepared a little differently from other cuts of meat. Let's take beef kidney, for example. The first step is to wash it and then remove the outer membrane and as much of the fat as you can get off. If you're fixing heart, first wash it and then trim off the gristle and veins--from the outside and the inside. Brains, must also be washed--washed very thoroughly to take away any blood clots. But there's less trouble in preparing liver. You need only to wipe it with a damp cloth. However, many persons like to scald hog liver because it makes the flavor less pronounced.

Now for the actual cooking. This release from the Bureau of Home Economics also has some pointers on that. First it tells about the method for cooking the very tender organs. These tender organs are--liver, kidneys from young animals, and brains. The rule for these tender meats is to cook at a moderate temperature--and no longer than necessary. Be careful not to overcook if you want these meats to stay tender and to keep their delicate flavor.

One of the good ways to cook liver and kidneys from young animals is by broiling--over hot coals, under an electric grill, or under the flame of a gas oven. Calf or lamb kidneys, or any kind of liver will make a welcome addition to the mixed grill meal that is so popular at this time of the year. But if you're broiling these meats, remember that the flavor is best when they are cooked only until the red color has all disappeared.

Or, if you like, you can panbroil tender kidneys and liver on top of the stove. Bacon or onions can be cooked in the same pan and served with the kidneys or liver.

Then any left-over broiled liver can be ground or chopped fine, and used in a number of other appetizing dishes. Try baking the ground liver in a loaf or in

patties, with crisp bacon and tomato sauce added as a finishing touch.

Calf and hog brains are also tender meat and are usually panbroiled. Or, they can be browned and scrambled with eggs or added to an egg omelet. And they're also good in salad or as a creamed dish. Then you will want to keep them white and firm. So, simmer them for about 15 minutes in water with a little vinegar and salt added.

Now for cooking the less tender organs. Beef kidneys and the heart of any meat are cooked like any other cut in which the tough connective tissue must be softened. That means--cook them long and slowly with some liquid added.

This is what the Bureau of Home Economics recommends...

"To cook a beef kidney, cover it with cold water and heat slowly just to the boiling point. Pour off the water and rinse the pan. Repeat this process--bring the water to a boil and pour it off--about three times. Then add fresh water and simmer the kidney until it is tender.

"Chop the cooked kidney and use it like other meats in a stew or in a meat pie--under a cover of pastry or mashed potato. Kidney stew, made with onions and potatoes, is a great favorite. So is the traditional English steak-and-kidney pie, made with a biscuit crust. In making the gravy, blend the flour with some butter, or other fat, and then add the kidney stock.

"Beef heart must also be cooked at a low temperature for a long time. A favorite method is to stuff the heart with any good mixture of bread crumbs, celery, fat, and seasonings. Then brown the heart, and put it in a baking dish with a little water. Cover the dish and cook the heart in a very moderate oven until it is tender--that is, an oven of about 300 degrees F.

"Or you can also simmer the heart to make it tender. Then chop it and use it in such dishes as stew or chop suey. Or, make it into a shepherd's pie. To do this, put the chopped heart with the gravy between layers of mashed potato in a baking dish and brown it in a hot oven."

