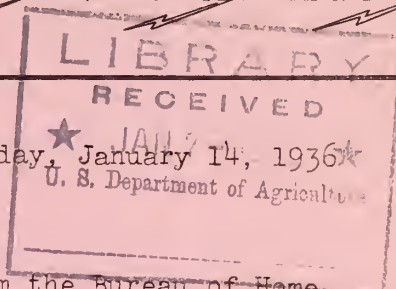


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3# HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Tuesday, January 14, 1936
U. S. Department of Agriculture

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

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Tuesdays may come and Tuesdays may go, but kitchen questions run on forever. Whether it's January or June, listeners, when I look over your mail, I'm sure to find kitchen inquiries in the majority.

Well, let's start with the questions and answers for this week. One question here I'm in a hurry to answer because it worries me. It comes from a young housekeeper who says she is on the committee to prepare a Mexican dinner for a club gathering. She has promised to make a large quantity of chili con carne and she wants to know whether her galvanized iron wash-tub will be all right to cook it in.

That letter made my hair stand on end, to put it mildly. But I was glad she asked; that at least indicated that she had some doubt as to that wash-tub as a suitable cooking utensil. Of course, the answer is: No, indeed. Galvanized iron will not do either for cooking or holding food. Galvanized iron is iron coated with zinc. And any solution from zinc is poisonous. If you cook acid food especially in contact with zinc, you are sure to dissolve some of the metal in it. Tubs and pails of galvanized iron are useful for the laundry and cleaning, but not for cooking.

Second question. This comes from a man. He writes: "Will you help settle an argument in our family by explaining the difference between a doughnut and a cruller? My mother used to call her fried cakes 'crullers'. My wife now makes what seem to be the same thing but she insists that they are 'doughnuts'."

Well, I suspect that both sides of the argument are right. I can back them both up with the information from the Bureau of Home Economics. The difference between the doughnut and cruller is a matter of origin, shape, and mixture. The cruller apparently originated in Holland, for 'cruller' is a Dutch word meaning that which twists or curls. So the original Dutch cruller was a twisted, ring-shaped fried cake with a hole in the center. But the English were responsible for the doughnut. And the true old-fashioned English doughnut was a yeast-leavened cake in the shape of a nut or ball -- no twist, and no hole in the center.

So much for country and shape. Now about mixture. As we were saying, the true old-English doughnut is made from yeast-leavened dough, but a cruller is a quick bread -- a mixture leavened by baking powder or sour milk and soda.

Third question comes from a lady who is cooking for an invalid. She wants to know how much nourishment meat broth contains and why invalid diets feature broth so much. As a matter of fact, meat broth contains only slight nourishment -- or food value. But it has other values beside food value. It is warm and cheering. Its flavor stimulates appetite. And you might say that it "sets up" the digestive system to receive other foods because it encourages the secretion of digestive juices.

Now to answer the New England lady who wants to know if the dish known as "chowder" was invented in New England. I'd like to say "Yes," because I think this listener would like to hear that answer. But as a matter of fact, chowders, though considered American, did not originate in this country at all. From all I can learn, they were first made by the fisher folk of Brittany. In this part of France long ago, everyone in the village brought a contribution for the main supper dish and added it to the common cauldron. The name "chowder" comes from the French word for the old French cauldron which was "chaudiere" (chow-dee-air). Our early colonists learned this dish from the French settlers. And the New England colonists were naturally the first to learn it. So chowders are associated with the history of New England.

Here's a question about another typically American food -- corn meal. A lady wants to know whether yellow and white corn meal have the same food value. Well, yellow cornmeal has more vitamin A than white corn meal, but otherwise the food value is about the same if the grinding process is the same. As for the flavor, that is somewhat different. White corn meal is milder in flavor -- more bland, you might say. Yellow corn meal has more of the corn taste. White corn meal seems to be the favorite in the Southeastern States and in some parts of New England. Yellow corn meal is most popular in the Northern States as a whole. By the way, yellow and white are not the only corn meal colors. In parts of the Southwest and Mexico, you can also find corn meal that is blue, black, and red. Red and blue varieties of corn are characteristic of this part of the country.

That seems to be all the food questions today. Now here's a query about the kitchen floor. A North Dakota lady inquires about a good finish for the surface of her kitchen linoleum. Well, she has her choice of wax or varnish. Use varnish on printed linoleum because wax sometimes tends to soften the paint that makes the printed finish. But you can use wax on either inlaid or plain linoleum. Many people believe that either wax or varnish improves the appearance of the linoleum, makes it last longer, and makes it easier to clean. You care for waxed or varnished linoleum just as you would a wood floor so finished. To clean waxed linoleum use a soft brush or a dry mop -- never an oiled mop. When the surface is more soiled, clean with a cloth wrung out of warm soapy water or some grease solvent. Some people use turpentine or gasoline but this is dangerous for the kitchen. Parts of the floor that have the hardest wear may need cleaning and then re-waxing. A soft brush or oiled mop are the utensils for cleaning varnished linoleum. In general, a varnished floor holds its color and luster better if you use no water on it, but if your kitchen floor becomes very dirty, wipe it up with a mop wrung out of warm soapy water, dry at once, and polish with your oiled mop. A good point to remember is that only a small space of the floor should be wet at a time -- that you should never flood a linoleum covered floor with water because this may loosen the linoleum from underneath.

There, listeners, that's all the kitchen questions we have time to answer today. Other queries we'll discuss next week.

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