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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, February 3, 1933

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Citrus Fruits." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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Maybe you remember the time--not so long ago, either--when an orange was a special treat, when oranges only came on special occasions--in stockings at Christmas, perhaps, or as a reward for very good behavior, or as a birthday treat. Who would have thought, in those days, that oranges would ever become so plentiful and often so cheap that they would be counted as a regular part of the baby's diet or that many families would begin each day with an orange or a glass of orange juice all around at breakfast?

Of course, oranges in some parts of the country are still a luxury. Many families have to count themselves lucky nowadays if they can provide so much as an orange for the baby once in a while. But this year oranges--and also their relatives grapefruit--are plentiful and prices are at their lowest during these winter months. Many stores are featuring the citrus fruits, making bargain offers of fifteen oranges to the dozen.

All the citrus fruits, but especially oranges, are valuable additions to our diet, especially at this time of year when other fruits are not plentiful. You remember the stories of how sailors and passengers on long sea voyages so often fell ill of that terrible malady--scurvy. This disease set in after the supply of fresh foods had given out when the diet was mostly of dried, smoked and salt food. Then someone discovered that lemons or oranges would store well on shipboard and that they not only cured but also prevented scurvy. When the Arabs brought lemons from the Far East into Europe and when lemon trees were transplanted from the gardens of Omar in Arabia to the Mediterranean lands, sailors had a remedy for scurvy. We know now that scurvy results from the lack of vitamin C. The scientists say this vitamin is necessary for good "tooth nutrition" and that bleeding gums, loose teeth, sore joints, loss of appetite with loss of weight and fatigue are symptoms of a lack of it. In extreme form these are the symptoms of scurvy. Oranges, lemons and grapefruit are all rich in vitamin C. They are also rich in vitamin B, which gives good muscle tone to the digestive tract. But oranges have still another vitamin to their credit. They are also rich in vitamin A, the vitamin we talked about last Monday, which builds resistance to infection and is necessary to general well-being. Yellow foods and green foods are generally good sources of vitamin A. Since the orange is a deeper yellow than the other citrus fruits, this may account for its richness in this vitamin.

Oranges, lemons and limes probably all originated in India or Indo-China and came westward to Europe with the Mohammedans. Some historians say that the Crusaders brought these strange new fruits back with them after the wars. Oranges were first cultivated in Europe in the 15th century. But grapefruit received its first recognition in the United States. Since 1900 it has become more and more popular as a breakfast, salad, and dessert fruit. Where did it get its name? Well, if you've ever seen grapefruit growing you'll remember that the great pale yellow balls grow in clusters which at a distance suggest bunches of huge grapes.



Most of us present-day cooks could hardly imagine preparing meals with out citrus fruits. We use them in so many ways. They make appetizers and sauces, salads and desserts of all kinds; filling and frostings; breads, biscuits and beverages; candies and marmalades and garnishes. Although the pulp is the part of these fruits we eat the most, the rind has many uses, and in oranges the rind happens to be richer in vitamin A than the orange pulp. You can make a delicious confection by candying orange or grapefruit rind. You can use orange or lemon peel for flavoring desserts or for making orange or lemon biscuits or muffins.

Wherever a tart flavor adds to a food you can count on citrus fruits, especially lemon. A thin slice of lemon in a bowl of thick bean or pea soup makes the soup much more delicious. Lemon served with fish is an old tradition. The fish seems to need just that dash of tartness to set off its own flavor.

Lemons have other convenient uses in the kitchen. They are good for bleaching purposes. If you are cutting up bananas, apples, pear or fresh peaches for a fruit salad or fruit cup, add lemon juice to keep these diced fruits from turning dark. Old-fashioned housewives have always used lemons for keeping their hands white, and for taking out rust stains from linen. One friend of mine saves lemon rinds after extracting the juice. She dips these rinds in salt and uses them to clean her tarnished copper or brass.

One more lemon hint. Put a few drops of lemon juice in the water when you are poaching eggs. It will help the white of egg coagulate and keep the egg from separating.

There. Let's consider the menu now. Here's a menu for a Friday dinner. Salmon croquettes; Buttered peas or green beans; Creamed celery; Graham rolls; and, for dessert, Lemon pie or lemon tarts; and, Coffee.

Once more: Salmon croquettes; Buttered peas and green beans; Creamed celery; Graham rolls; and, for dessert, Lemon pie or lemon tarts; and, Coffee.

Monday we'll talk about ways to cook cereals and I'll give you a new and very inexpensive recipe for cheese mush and bacon.

