

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Tuesday, February 4, 1933

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

Subject: "Budgeting Food Money." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics,
U. S. D. A.

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Hit-and-miss spending, buying as the mood or need arises without forethought, may be well enough if you have an overstuffed pocketbook. But for making ends meet when your pocketbook is thin, spending by a plan or budget is the best as well as the easiest way. To budget all household expenditures is good business, but to budget the food money is a protection to the family's health, particularly when family funds are low. A market list, made up weekly, and made wisely, will help insure a balanced diet as well as a balanced budget.

To make a successful food budget, you need to balance your money and your food supply. And the items in the food budget need to balance each other in nutritive value. The more limited the choice of foods, the harder it becomes to work out that kind of balance.

For example, let's consider a family with children that has no more than seven dollars a week to spend for food. That allowance will buy less in some parts of the country than in others, to be sure. But the question to decide is what foods must every budget provide in order to meet, within that cost, the requirements in nutritive value?

To answer that question, let's first think over the different kinds of foods that the body needs. It needs foods for energy. It needs foods for body-building and maintenance. And it needs foods to help regulate body functions and to build resistance to disease. So your budget must provide for the carbohydrates, fats and proteins needed for body fuel. And it must provide for the proteins, minerals and vitamins for body building and protective purposes. For convenience, we can put foods in five groups: milk and milk products; vegetables and fruits; bread and cereals; fats and sugars; meats, fish and eggs. If the budget is to balance, it needs foods from each of these five groups. But how much of each.

The specialists answer by suggesting that familiar rule for spending food money:--Divide each food dollar in five parts (not equal parts, however.) Now for a family of five with three children the weekly allowance for food is seven dollars, say, then their food budget will balance by spending the money this way: One-third of the seven dollars -- that is, about two dollars and thirty-five cents -- will go for milk and cheese; One-fourth -- or one dollar and seventy-five cents -- will go for vegetables and fruits; One-fifth -- one dollar and forty cents, or less -- will go for cereals, bread and beans; One-eighth -- eighty-seven cents -- or less, will go for fats, sugar and molasses. The remainder -- sixty-five cents or more -- will go for other foods, such as meat, fish and eggs.

Have you a pencil handy? Well, then suppose I go over that sample budget so you can take those items down and test them on what you are spending for your family's food. I'll repeat the food-spending rule first. The rule is: Divide

each food dollar into five parts--or divide what you have to spend for food each week into five parts. Then, spend one-third of your money on milk and cheese; one-fourth on vegetables and fruits; one-fifth, or less, on cereals, bread and beans; one-eighth or less for fats, sugar and molasses; and the remainder on meat, fish and eggs.

The nutritionists suggest a few points to remember when you are buying food. They say that milk does more for the body than any other food; that dried beans and peas are many-sided foods and for this reason are good buys for low-cost diets; that potatoes have several kinds of food value so are economical foods; that you need tomatoes and raw cabbage and also greens, and as many other vegetables and fruits as you can afford.

Now let's consider our weekly economy menu. If you have any New England blood in your veins, you'll appreciate this menu especially, for the main dish--in fact, the main part of the meal, is what the New Englanders call a "boiled dinner"--corned beef cooked with a variety of vegetables, which makes almost a whole meal in itself. Boiled dinner, then, served with horseradish for spicy flavor and Corn bread. For dessert, good, old-fashioned apple pie.

Here's the recipe for "boiled dinner." It calls for eight ingredients.

4 pounds corned beef,	3 parsnips,
4 quarts cold water,	5 carrots,
3 large onions,	3 large potatoes, and
2 large turnips,	1 small head cabbage.

I'll repeat that list of eight ingredients. (Repeat.)

Wash the beef, and prepare the vegetables and cut them in halves or quarters. Cover the beef with the water, bring to the boiling point, and drain. Cover the meat again with 4 more quarts of water and let it simmer until tender. Take the meat out of the water. If the liquid is too salty, pour off part of it and add sufficient fresh water to have a least 3 pints of well-flavored broth. To this broth add the onions first, then 30 minutes later the rest of the vegetables, and cook for 25 to 30 minutes longer, or until the vegetables are tender. Serve the boiled dinner on a large platter, with the reheated meat in the center and the vegetables drained and placed neatly around it. By this method the vegetables are tender and yet not overcooked, as is sometimes the case in a boiled dinner.

Tomorrow: We'll plan a dinner using inexpensive canned vegetables.

