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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHATS

Friday, May 13, 1932

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Questions and Answers." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

The Little Bride Across the Street was on the phone.

"Hello, Aunt Sammy," said she. "Please tell me some good way to use up left-over meat. I have a couple of chops here and some scraps left from a roast. And I haven't an idea what to do with them."

"Why not make stuffed green peppers? There's one of the nicest ways to use up left-over meat that I know of. Any kind of meat will do for this good dish. You can use the tough ends of steak or scraps of cold boiled or baked ham or the meat from cooked chops, roasts or even from stew. Either a mixture of meats or just one kind will do. Too often left-over dishes lack flavor or taste like the food as it was originally served. But stuffed peppers have their own special flavor. The peppers themselves provide flavor. And then the stuffing is seasoned with onion and chili sauce, catsup or left-over meat gravy."

"It sounds very good, Aunt Sammy, but I've one objection to most of the baked green peppers I've tasted -- the pepper shells didn't seem to be done and were rather tough.

"That's just why the Recipe Lady always suggests boiling the pepper shells for five minutes in lightly boiling salted water before stuffing and baking them. Then the peppers are tender."

"Where can I get a recipe?" inquired my little friend.

"Right in the green cookbook on page 55. That's a fine left-over recipe, a good way to use up both meat and cooked rice and bread crumbs."

"And what shall I serve with these peppers?"

"Well, the Menu Specialist suggests creamed new cabbage and buttered carrots. That makes a most attractive dinner plate. Plenty of contrast in color, flavor and texture. The green stuffed peppers, the light-colored cabbage with a dash of red paprika on top and the yellow carrots. Isn't that a nice combination?"

"I should say so. And now, if you don't mind, please may I ask one more question? What shall I have for dessert with this meal? Something hot, crusty with a dash of sweet would suit me."



"Well, since you're using your oven anyway, why not have hot biscuits with honey, or fresh strawberry jam?"

"Just the thing. I'll choose fresh strawberry jam. I made some just yesterday. And there's my menu: Stuffed green peppers, creamed new cabbage, buttered carrots and hot biscuits with strawberry jam."

Thanks to the Bride and the Menu Specialist, we have our week-end menu planned, too, so I can spend the rest of the time answering some of the questions that came in on the mail during the past week. Lots and lots of letters there were.

Whenever my mail is extra large I think of Richard Steele's wife, Prue, back in the 18th Century, who according to the story, got letters both day and night. Only, most of hers came from her husband. There never was a man to write letters to his wife as he did. You would think he would have had enough writing to do with all his work on those early journals, the Tatler and the Spectator. But it is said that even if his wife was only in the next room, he would scribble her a note and send it in by a servant. Or, if he chanced to imbibe too much at a club, he would write her a very short letter, saying, "Dear Prue, Sober or not, I am ever yours."

But to get back to those questions. Here's a lady who wants to know how to make the five-minute cabbage she has heard me talk about frequently. A very appropriate question for today since we're having cabbage on our menu. Five-minute cabbage, by the way, would be quite suitable for that menu.

Cabbage, you know, is one of the vegetables that loses most easily some of its valuable properties in cooking. Long cooking destroys the vitamin C which is so rich in this vegetable. It also spoils its flavor and color and its pleasant crisp texture. One of the saddest sights to me is a dish of brownish, mushy, strong-smelling cabbage, the so-called "boarding house" variety. A good vegetable gone wrong by poor cooking.

But five-minute cabbage retains its crispness and is delicate in flavor and color. Seven ingredients for this dish:

2 cups of milk  
1 and 1/2 quarts of shredded cabbage  
1 cup of cream or rich milk  
3 tablespoons of flour  
3 tablespoons of melted butter and salt and pepper.

I'll repeat those. (Repeat)

Heat the milk. Then drop the shredded cabbage in it and cook for 2 minutes. Add the cup of cream or rich milk, the blended flour and fat, and the seasonings. Cook rapidly for 3 or 4 minutes and stir constantly. That's all.

Question Number II. "Is it dangerous to eat fish and ice cream at the same meal?"

There's a question that comes in very frequently, in one form or another. Some people ask about cherries and milk, or pickles and milk or cucumbers and



something else. In spite of all that we know about food in these modern days many people cling to these old ideas that certain food combinations are dangerous. My opinion is that the prejudices and fears many people suffer from are much more harmful than any food combinations I know of. The nutrition specialists say that any two good foods may be eaten in the same meal quite safely. Any dangers arise from over-eating or from food that is not fresh or is badly prepared. Eating when one is tired or upset emotionally may also cause trouble.

I have a friend who was once very fond of lobster. One day he ate a very big and very hearty meal. And when the lobster was served he took an extra helping. He topped off all these courses with a rich dessert. Later, when he had a digestive upset, he wondered which one of the foods he had eaten had poisoned him. Then he thought of the lobster and decided that that was the villain.

"Never again," he groaned, "will I touch one bite of lobster."

The innocent lobster, you see, got all the blame for his gluttony. As a matter of fact, lobster, when it is fresh, contains perfectly good protein with very little fat and should be easy to digest. But it was impossible to convince my friend of that.

Lobster and ice cream is another combination that many people are afraid of. This was once a favorite combination for parties. And if people were sick after the party the chances are that over-eating, late hours and weariness brought on the nightmares or digestive troubles. Unless, of course, either the lobster or ice cream had been kept just a bit too long. If one of these proteins is even slightly tainted the combination may bring on a digestive upset. If they're both fresh there'll be no difficulty. Then, too, we must allow for the fact that there are a few unfortunate people who are sensitive to certain foods. Some people really cannot eat cucumbers or strawberries or some other foods without suffering a distinct reaction. But these people are the exceptions.

Before you let an unfounded fear rob you of good food, remember that a varied diet is one of the best ways to keep in good health. What cousin Susan calls a "picky-and-choosy persnickity diet" by which she means a diet of few foods, may be the cause of many of the ills that come from food lacks.

MONDAY: "Economy Day With an Economy Menu."

