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nomemakers' chat

QUESTION BOX

Total food for '42?

How can housewives help the food situation?

Honey instead of sugar in cake?

Does freezing spoil canned food?

February 10, 1942

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Officials and scientists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture

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This week a number of letters in the mailbag ask questions about food.

First, here are a couple of questions about the war and this country's supply of food.

The first letter says: "Will there be enough food for American families during 1942 in spite of all the food that is being shipped to our allies?"

Officials of the U. S. Department of Agriculture say it's their best opinion that there's no need to worry about the total food supply in this country during the coming year. They believe there will be plenty to eat and to spare to the other United Nations who need American food. You might have to substitute one food for another sometimes, but every good housewife has had plenty of practice in adjusting menus.

Now the second letter here waiting for answer comes from a city housewife.

She says: "Tomen on farms are going to have a chance to help produce the crops that will provide food for the army and for our allies. But what can women like me who live in town do to help this wartime food situation?

Department of Agriculture officials say you and every other housewife can do a great deal to help the food supply by the way you buy food and plan meals. One way to help is to use <u>fresh</u> fruits and vegetables wherever possible in place of canned goods. This year the United States should have plentiful supplies of fresh fruits and vegetables—more than ever before. You can help by using the fresh

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instead of the canned food. Tin is not too plentiful, you know. And our fighting forces have to have many canned foods—evaporated milk, tomatoes, peas, canned meat and so on. Housewives can help by getting a wide variety of <u>fresh</u> fruits and vegetables into their family meals—and using potatoes and sweetpotatoes as well as dried beans and peas, dried fruit, and other foods that don't have to be packed in metal. You can also help by using fresh, or frozen, or smoked meat instead of meat canned in tin. Save the tin for the food that must be canned for our fighting forces, and for shipping to other countries.

Then, for energy foods you can use more bread and cereals. Much of the bread and flour these days is enriched with minerals and vitamins. So you get some other important elements while you're getting energy.

Every housewife can help by cutting down on waste in the kitchen. Most people today agree that we've been a very wasteful nation in recent years. We've had so much we've been careless with our food and with many other resources. From now on remember that a pound of food saved is as good as a pound of bullets made.

Now here's a letter with a question about honey. The letter asks: "Is it possible to substitute honey for sugar in any cake recipe?"

The answer is: Yes, many women make cake and also quick bread with honey. But you must allow for certain special properties of honey when you measure the ingredients for the cake, when you mix the cake, and when you set the temperature of the oven for baking. You see, honey is 3 different kinds of sugar chemically while cane sugar is only one. So honey behaves differently when you combine it with other ingredients.

One important point to remember when you are using honey instead of sugar in a recipe is that honey is one-fifth water while cane sugar is dry. So when you use honey instead of sugar in a recipe, you need to cut down on the liquid in the recipe.

And in mixing the ingredients, you mix the honey with the other liquid and add it as

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you always do the liquid in a cake mixture. Another point to remember is that high heat changes the flavor of honey and easily turns it to caramel. So a cake made with honey needs to bake in a slower oven than a cake made with sugar. Here's stil another point: You can use honey for half the sugar the recipe calls for, or for all of the sugar. Sometimes you get better results by using honey for half the sugar instead of all of it. And here's the last point to remember in cooking with honey: Honey takes up moisture easily, even from the air around it. Sometimes this is an advantage; sometimes not. Fruit cake, steamed pudding, and soft cookies keep moist longer when they contain some honey. That's an advantage. But honey in frosting for your cake, or in hard cookies, or hard candy may make these foods too soft and sticky.

By the way, anyone who is using honey for cooking will be interested in a free leaflet published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture called "Honey and Some of Its Uses." You can order this leaflet by name or number. It is Leaflet No. 113. A postcard addressed to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. will bring you a copy as long as the free supply lasts.

Now for the last question today -- one that comes up every winter. A house-wife writes: "Some of my canned food in the cellar froze during a recent cold snap. Is canned food that has been forzen safe to eat?"

The answer is: Yes, as long as spoilage organisms haven't gotten in the can and caused spoilage to start. Spoilage organisms can get in if the freezing swells or bulges the can so that the seams spread and cause tiny leaks where the air and bacteria can reach the food. You need to examine carefully any canned foods that have frozen to see if you can find any tiny leaks. Sometimes the seams spread so little that no leakage shows yet bacteria can get in. Better use up canned food that has frozen as fast as possible after freezing.

And that's all the food questions today.

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