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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Thursday, January 8, 1942.

QUESTION BOX:

Difference between vitamins and calories?

How make tomato bread?

Recipe for prune-apple jam?

ANSWERS FROM:

Home economists and chemists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--oo0oo--

With unfailing regularity Thursday brings questions in the mail--questions we have asked the home economists and chemists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture to answer for us. One letter today asks about vitamins and calories, another about tomato bread, and a third about midwinter jam. Here's the first question:

"Please explain the difference between vitamins and calories."

Well, the home economists say both ----- vitamins and calories--are used in describing foods, but you can't really compare them at all. Vitamins are extremely potent chemical compounds occurring in minute quantities in natural foods. They are essential to growth and health. Calories, on the other hand, are units of measurement of the fuel value of foods.

There are many different vitamins, and each one is helpful to the body in different ways. Some foods have only one vitamin in noticeable amounts; others are rich in several vitamins. To get all of them we need to eat sufficient amounts of these different foods. Nutritionists have worked out good diets that will supply the necessary "vitamin alphabet" in the right amounts at several different income levels. You can get information about a diet supplying the vitamins you need from home economists, extension agents, public health nurses, and many others, or write to the U. S. Department of Agriculture for it.

Now about that other familiar word -- calories. "Calorie" is the term used to measure the fuel or energy value of a food, just as the word kilowatts measures

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the fuel value of electricity. Calorie is a unit of measurement not a substance, you see. When we talk about "high calorie" foods we mean foods that the body uses as fuel to release energy for muscular work. When the body is not active enough to use all the energy provided by high-calorie foods, it stores up fat. That's why people who are trying to reduce their weight avoid eating foods of too great calorie value -- that is, the starches, sweets and fats. Some foods are high in calories and also provide some of the vitamins. Today nutritionists say if you make sure of getting foods that supply the vitamins and minerals you need, you don't have to bother about calories. Calories will practically take care of themselves. In other words, if you eat enough milk, cream, butter, meat, eggs, green leafy vegetables and yellow-fleshed fruits and vegetables, you will get all the calories you need for ordinary activities.

Next question is about a new kind of bread. At a friend's house the other day I had cream cheese sandwiches made of an attractive pink bread made with tomato. Can you tell me how to make that pink bread?

Some years ago chemists in the U. S. Department of Agriculture experimented with bread colored with tomato juice. They suggest using your standard recipe for yeast bread but substitute tomato juice or canned tomatoes for the liquid the recipe calls for. The tomato bread has a fine flavor -- the tomato in it adds a little vitamin value.

And now we come to our last question. The writer says: "One of my Christmas gifts was a jar of delicious jam made from dried apples and prunes. I should like to make more for my family. Could you give me a recipe for such a jam?"

Yes, cookery scientists have just recently been trying out some new combinations of dried fruits and have worked out a new recipe for prune and dried apple jam--a spread you can make in midwinter, from supplies you can get anywhere-- in the city grocery store or the cross-roads emporium.

To make this jam, you'll need: One pound of dried prunes..... one pound of dried apples..... 4 cups of sugar.... 4 cups of water, as well as the water in which the fruit has been soaked or cooked..... and half a teaspoon of salt. If you like a touch of lemon with prunes, you can add 2 or 3 tablespoons of lemon juice when the jam is nearly cooked.

Wash the dried apples first, and then soak for 3 hours in 4 cups of water. Wash and simmer the prunes, covered, in 2 cups of water for 25 minutes. Drain, but save the water. Remove the pits and put the prunes back in the water you saved. Cook the dried apples in the same water in which they were soaked. Simmer 10 minutes covered, and 5 minutes uncovered.

Now you're ready to put the two fruits together. Add the liquid in which each has been cooked and the water and sugar and salt in the proportions given. Boil together 30 minutes, stirring frequently to prevent sticking. You'll have about 5 pints of jam when it's done. Pour into hot sterilized glasses.

And with that recipe we must stop for today. Next Tuesday, more questions and answers.

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