

# INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

## United States Department of Agriculture

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WASHINGTON, D. C.

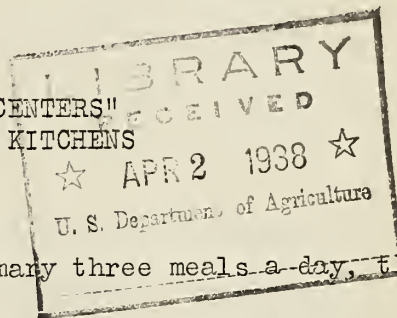
### THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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4/15/38

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FOUR MAIN "WORK CENTERS"  
IN CONVENIENT KITCHENS  
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As long as Americans eat their customary three meals a day, the kitchen will be one of the most important rooms in the house. And as long as that is the case, cheer and convenience will be the two requirements of every kitchen that is really satisfactory.

About this time of the year many homemakers are renewing kitchen cheer as part of their annual spring housecleaning. For cheer in a kitchen is made up of such details as freshly painted woodwork -- a pleasant view through shining window panes -- potted geraniums on the sill.

Convenience in a kitchen, on the other hand, is more difficult to arrange. It involves getting clearly in mind all the routine jobs to be done in the kitchen, studying the order in which these jobs are done, and then choosing and placing the needed equipment accordingly.

It's along about spring housecleaning time that many families check up on old kitchens with an eye to remodelling. Others look over kitchen plans in the blueprint for a new house. In either case there are some principles of arrangement that apply to old and new kitchens -- whether the equipment is movable or built in.



In the first place, a kitchen is a workroom -- a place to prepare and serve food. Therefore it should have a key position in the house. In small houses it should have a wall in common with the dining room and a door connecting the two rooms. In large houses the connection is often through a "butler's pantry" which has a door both on the kitchen and dining room side. From the kitchen it should be possible to get quickly to both front and back doors, to the cellar, the stairs, and the telephone.

Kitchens are compact and small as possible for efficiency in meal preparation. A rectangular kitchen is more satisfactory than a square one because it is more economical of floor space. It must be wide enough to allow for placing pieces of equipment on both walls. Unless the stove used is a wood or coal range, the kitchen should not be over eight or nine feet wide.

Ideally, the kitchen is well ventilated so that odors are carried away quickly. It is lighted both naturally and artificially so that the cook never has to work in her own shadow. There are as few doors as possible and those are planned so that they do not break into working spaces. All woodwork and furnishings are easy to keep clean.

It is a good idea to arrange the different pieces of equipment first on a floor plan of the kitchen drawn to a scale. This extra planning will save a lot of moving and changing about later. And it may save buying a piece of furniture that will not fit into the spot where it should go.

Arrange kitchen equipment with an eye to its uses. Group furnishings that are used for the same kind of work near each other. And as far as possible have storage space near the place where the stored articles are used most frequently. For this purpose several small storage units are more efficient than just one all-purpose kitchen cabinet.



There are at least four work centers in any kitchen -- one for preparing food to cook -- one for cooking -- one for serving -- and one for clearing away and washing dishes.

The food preparation center will naturally be around the sink. The sink usually is situated somewhere near a window, preferably so that the light comes over the shoulder of the person working at it. If the window is in the same wall as the sink it should not be directly in front of it unless it is a north wall or there is some protection from glare.

Near the sink should be cupboards for knives, stewpans, and other utensils that are filled with water before they go on the stove. Sometimes there is also a ventilated storage space for small quantities of raw vegetables under one of the drainboards. Somewhere near the sink will be the worktable for longer mixing jobs -- where cakes are mixed and desserts concocted. This worktable has storage space for flour and other staple foods need in mixing, for rolling pins, and similar equipment.

Of course the stove is the cooking center. Usually it is at a right angle to the sink. But it may be across the room in a narrow kitchen. A small preparation surface near the stove is a convenience. There thickenings may be mixed -- beverages made -- other short jobs done in connection with the cooking.

Storage space near the stove should provide room for frying pans, coffee percolators, spatulas -- all utensils used mostly in cooking.

After the dinner is prepared and cooked the next step is serving. For this there should be a serving center, sort of a collection place between the stove and the dining table where the final touches are put on the food to be served.

This center may be a plain table or one on wheels. Or it may be a drop shelf or a pass cupboard. If this center is large enough it contains storage



space for glassware and silverware, linen, mats for hot dishes, electric toasters, and other equipment used in serving a meal.

A pass cupboard between the kitchen and the dining room saves innumerable steps. In it are shelves for storing dishes and a shelf for serving -- both accessible from kitchen or dining room. Thus both in serving and in clearing off the table dishes may be passed through from room to room without going the long way around through the door each time.

The fourth center needed in every kitchen is for dishwashing. This also centers around the sink. For dishwashing purposes the sink should be as near the serving center as possible. It should have a flat surface to the right for stacking dishes and drainboard to the left since dishwashing naturally is done from right to left. If dishes are stored in a kitchen cupboard the best place for this is above the left drainboard, or within easy reach of it.

Another piece of equipment in most kitchens is a refrigerator. Since this is used in many operations -- preparing, cooking, and serving food -- a central location is best.

Another factor contributing to the convenience of a kitchen is the way the equipment "fits" the person who uses it. Right working heights minimize stooping and stretching.

The height of the sink and of working surfaces where short jobs are done should be such that the cook may work at them comfortably while standing. The best height will naturally vary with the individual and can best be determined by actually trying out equipment of different heights. It is also important that there be enough toe room at the bottom of worktables to allow for standing comfortably.

Equipment for work that takes longer should be lower, a height that may be used in comfort from a sitting position. And this equipment should have enough space underneath for the knees.





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## United States Department of Agriculture

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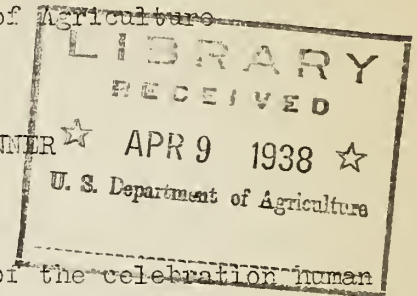
WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

MANY POSSIBILITIES FOR EASTER DINNER



Easter is always a day of rejoicing. As part of the celebration human

beings blossom out in new clothes -- the world in spring flowers and green leaves -- and the dinner table with something extra special.

This year there is added cause to rejoice. For the combination of a late Easter and an advanced season for a number of fresh fruits and vegetables has considerably increased Easter menu possibilities. And coming to market now is a large crop of early spring lambs to add to the wide variety of meat already available.

Generally speaking, fresh vegetables and fruits are abundant now and reasonable in price. Supplies of most canned fruits and vegetables are greater than usual. And all meat prices are lower than they were last Easter.

Traditionally, ham and lamb are the favored Easter meats. Both appear on dinner menus, but ham is an especial favorite for breakfast -- served in combination with eggs. Many butchers feature sales of large cuts of both ham and lamb at Eastertime. This is an economical way to buy them because they are both excellent sliced and served cold.

Lamb comes to market all year 'round but we have it in greater quantities in spring and fall. On the market now are both "fed" and "spring" lambs. The



former are lambs from ten to twelve months old. Spring lambs are smaller -- only three to five months old, fattened mostly on milk.

Naturally, cuts of spring lamb are smaller and lighter in weight than are those from the older fed lambs. Since all lamb is young when slaughtered all the cuts are tender and can be roasted, broiled, or cooked as tender meat.

Enterprising gardeners in some parts of the country will be able to supply spring onions, radishes and lettuce from their own gardens for Easter dinner. But for the most part, the Gulf, South Atlantic, and Western States are still supplying the fresh fruits and vegetables.

New potatoes are already plentiful and, for the shopper, reasonable in price. There is plenty of spring cabbage coming in from the Gulf States. April is a big month for carrots, and now Imperial valley in California is the big producer. Celery and lettuce are abundant now as they have been all winter.

Other vegetables coming to market now in fairly large quantities for the season are fresh green peas, snap beans, and greens. Spinach is especially plentiful and inexpensive this year. And the first new mature Bermuda onions coming in from Texas will add a bit of zest to many an Easter meal.

Fresh tomatoes are worthy of special mention this Easter. For there is an unusually large supply of them on the market for this early in the season. And asparagus has passed its early luxury-price stage and is now available for families with more modest food budgets.

Other fresh vegetable possibilities for Easter include beets, peppers, cucumbers, cauliflower, shallots, and radishes.

In the fruit line-up, strawberries are the big Eastertime news. This year strawberries are of good quality, and supplies are very heavy for the season. Citrus fruits, of course, are still available in considerable quantities. There



is an especially large supply of oranges now. And there are still plenty of apples in cold storage to supply the Easter and post-Easter demand.

With that array of food on the market, deciding upon the menu for an Easter dinner or breakfast will be an interesting game of picking and choosing -- the right combinations of food and those that fit into the family food budget.

Planning Easter menus is much the same as planning breakfasts and dinners every day. For even the best company meals must follow the fundamentals of good meal planning. They are simple, well-balanced, and have appetizing contrasts of color, of texture, and of flavor.

Following is a breakfast menu that checks on all these items.

Sliced oranges or grapefruit and strawberries  
Omelet with bacon or thin slices of ham  
Toast and strawberry jam  
Coffee                                      Milk for the children

And here is a menu for Easter dinner that includes foods in season now.

Roast shoulder of lamb with mint stuffing  
New potatoes with parsley  
Buttered asparagus or spinach  
Spring salad bowl  
Lemon sherbet and sponge cake

A roast is always a convenient and economical way to serve a large number of persons. The lamb shoulder in this menu may be boned and stuffed. If it is boned "flat" rather than "rolled" the pocket will hold twice as much stuffing. And the flat shoulder will have a larger surface exposed in the oven to brown.

Have the butcher bone the shoulder and remove the fell. Wipe the meat with a damp cloth, sprinkle the inside of the pocket with salt and pepper, pile hot stuffing in lightly and sew the edges together. Rub salt, pepper, and flour on the outside, and if the shoulder has only a very thin layer of fat covering, lay several strips of bacon over the top.



Place the roast on a rack in an open pan. Do not add water or cover the roast. Brown for 30 minutes in a hot oven (480 degrees F.). Then reduce the temperature to 300 degrees, or very moderate. If you prefer to use a constant temperature for roasting all the way through, have the oven at 350 degrees F. Cook until tender. Turn the roast occasionally so that it will cook evenly. It will take from two and one-half to three hours to cook a medium-sized, stuffed shoulder. Serve hot with brown gravy.

To make the mint stuffing that goes so well with lamb, melt 6 tablespoons of butter in a skillet. Add 3 tablespoons chopped celery, 1-1/2 tablespoons chopped onion. Cook for a few minutes. Add 1/2 cup fresh mint leaves, salt and pepper. Stir in 3 cups of bread crumbs and mix all together.

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# INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

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WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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### BUDGET FOOD MONEY FOR A WELL-ROUNDED DIET

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American families are getting "very good" and "poor" diets for the same amount of money. That's the paradoxical situation that exists in the United States today according to a study of what over 20,000 white city, village, and farm families not on relief get for the money they spend for food.

For instance, the study shows that somewhat more than one-third of the families spending about \$130 per person per year for food were getting diets rated good nutritionally. One-sixth of the families had diets that were definitely poor. And the rest were the in-between grade of "fair". About half the families had more than this amount to spend for food -- half less.

This study is also verifying other facts that we have assumed for some time. It shows that as more money is spent for food, there is a better chance to get a good diet. And it confirms what we also know in a general way -- that some families do not spend enough for food to get good diets however they apportion the money.

To nutritionists and homemakers these facts are especially significant. The fact that many families are getting inadequate diets even when they spend fairly generous amounts for food shows the importance of education in good food choices and habits. And it emphasizes that cost alone is no measure of the nutritional



quality of a diet -- that food money in many cases can be spent to better advantage.

Just how much money a family may best spend for food is an individual matter. Naturally it will depend upon the income of the family and other demands on that income. And it will vary with the size and make-up of the family.

Families with growing children often prefer to invest in food and save on other items in the budget. A well-rounded diet is especially important for the growth and development of children. Other families, with no growing children, like to cut down on food costs to save for something else they want -- a house -- travel -- or education.

However, it is well to remember in saving on food that there is a certain point below which it will be no saving to reduce food costs. For inadequate diets will eventually result in poor health or in the run down condition that comes from getting not enough "protective" foods.

There are no definite rules for determining how much of the income should be spent for food. But if a family of two, say, is getting an income of \$1000 to \$1200 a year they will probably spend \$6 to \$7 a week for food. Rightly laid out this would give them a diet with a very good margin of safety in the substances need<sup>ed</sup>/for good nutrition. A family of four would need to have an income of about \$2000 or \$2500 to make a moderate cost adequate diet a suitable choice.

Although there are no definite rules for determining how much to spend for food there are some pretty definite points on how to spend it. For to get the best nutritive returns from the money spent there are certain foods that must be included.

For example, let's take a family of two with an income of \$1000 to \$1200. Each week the diet planner in this family will probably have about \$6 to \$7 to spend for food. With a well-thought out spending program she can get an interest-



ing variety of food. And she can get a diet that will supply the different nutrients in sufficient quantities to keep her family in good condition with a surplus for safety.

In general, her food money will go for five different kinds of foods. They are milk and its products -- fruits and vegetables -- eggs, meat, poultry, and fish -- cereals, breadstuffs, sweets, and fatty foods -- and accessories such as tea, coffee, seasonings.

The first group of foods, milk and milk products, offers more than any other single group to good nutrition. A pint of milk for each adult and a quart for a child each day is generally recommended. But of course this will not all be taken as fluid milk. Some of it will be used in cooking. Part of it will be in the form of cheese and coffee cream.

Getting table cream off the milk will leave the valuable milk solids for use in cooking. It may be better to buy other milk for cooking in the cheaper forms such as evaporated milk. This leaves more money for vegetables, fruits, and meats. But however the milk order is varied, for the week it will be equivalent to about 7 quarts of fluid milk for these two.

In making out her orders for fruits and vegetables the diet planner will include enough for a serving of four specific kinds each day. There will be one serving of potatoes or sweetpotatoes, one of tomatoes or citrus fruit, one of leafy, green or yellow vegetables, and one of some other kind of fruit.

Beside these particular fruits and vegetables she will provide at least three to five servings of other vegetables during the week. All of her choices will be among the moderate priced vegetables and fruits -- not out-of-season delicacies. The weekly fruit and vegetable order will total about 6 pounds of potatoes or sweetpotatoes and about 19 pounds of other vegetables and fruits.



About 8 eggs a week will furnish enough for eating and cooking. Adults need at least two or three every week.

This family of two probably will have meat about once a day -- the amount depending on cut and price. On a moderate cost food budget the homemaker can afford the more expensive roasts, steaks, and chops occasionally. On other days, she will use less expensive cuts and at other times she may prefer to extend the meat flavor by combining the meat with cereals or vegetables.

At this moderate level the homemaker has a wide choice of the kind of cereals she buys. Bread and other baked products together with some flour and other cereals will appear in fairly generous amounts in the diet.

There should be a cereal dish in the diet each day and at every meal, bread and butter. About 2 pounds of butter and other fats will be needed each week. Sweets may be served as often as desired as long as they do not displace "protective" foods.

When the shopper has this moderate amount to spend, about 40 cents a week generally is enough to allow for accessories and seasonings. If these are not watched carefully, however, they can mount up to an item out of all proportion to their real value in the diet. They add to the palatability and interest of a meal, but many of them are lacking almost entirely in nutritive value.

That's the general pattern for spending the family food money when there is a moderate amount of money available. Keeping careful account of how the money is spent and checking up occasionally will help the homemaker work out a good division of her food dollar to take care of the food essentials.

The benefits of good diet were emphasized recently by Dr. Hazel K. Stiebeling of the Bureau of Home Economics. Said Doctor Stiebeling -- "The nutritive qualities of a diet greatly influence whether an individual enjoys really buoyant or merely passable health".



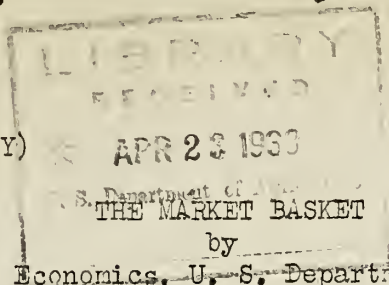


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**INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS**

**United States Department of Agriculture**

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APRIL 27, 1938 (WEDNESDAY)

WASHINGTON, D. C.



Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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APRIL BRINGS ASPARAGUS IN ABUNDANCE

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April, May and June bring asparagus in abundance to spring vegetable fanciers. More asparagus is on the market in April than any other month because it comes from California fields, which are the largest in the country, as well as from Southeastern States. Many local fields and home gardens yield their choice cuttings throughout the season.

Asparagus from a distance is arriving on the market in a better condition through the general use, for the first time this year, of a new precooling process, in addition to the usual careful refrigeration. The asparagus is cut and bunched in the warm fields, and is then plunged into a tank of circulating ice water. This sudden chilling checks harmful changes, loss of sweetness and increase in fiber, which begin immediately after the stalks are cut. This new precooling process has been perfected during the past few years through the joint efforts of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the California Agricultural Experiment Station.

The wise shopper knows that asparagus is cheapest and freshest when it is most plentiful and watches for the best time to buy. But she does not wait too long, for asparagus prices never fall to the level of those paid for carrots or cabbage. For asparagus is a perennial and monopolizes the field through the year,



although the cutting season is short. Much detailed care is required in growing, cutting and marketing this highly perishable, short-season crop.

The best asparagus is firm and fresh, rather than stringy or wilted in appearance. Stalks are fairly straight, tips are uninjured and tightly closed. Spreading tips and scales mean over-maturity. Growth may continue after cutting. Very crooked stalks usually indicate disease or injury. Such defects generally result in tough fibers. Most families prefer their asparagus green, and the home-maker selects spears with the largest amount of green color.

Asparagus is best "from the garden to the table". But if it must be held for a time before cooking, keep it cold, moist and tightly covered.

Asparagus needs thorough washing, for it is cut below the surface of the ground. Scrape off the side scales with a sharp knife to remove any traces of grit. Remove the tough butt ends to the point where they are cut readily with the tip of a sharp knife. Very thrifty homemakers sometimes pare the lower end of the stalk, thus making more of it edible. Sometimes, to make asparagus easier to serve, the stalks are bunched and tied loosely into individual portions. It will go farther if cut into 1-1/2 inch lengths.

Like other green vegetables asparagus is best cooked uncovered in a small quantity of salted boiling water -- and as quickly as possible. Special asparagus cookers are handy, but a large saucepan or kettle is entirely satisfactory. Stand the bunches upright, about half immersed in boiling salted water, and cover the utensil, just until the water returns to the boiling point. After the lower part of the stalks has cooked 10 to 15 minutes, tip the bunches over into the water. The tips and stalks should become tender at the same time and yet be firm enough to handle without crushing or breaking. Total boiling time 15 to 25 minutes, depending upon the condition of the "grass".



The luscious green stalks, perfect in outline, enticing in flavor, are served steaming hot, seasoned with golden melted butter or Hollandaise sauce. It is a dish favored by royalty since the days of Emperor Augustus Caesar of ancient Rome.

Although at its best served with butter or Hollandaise sauce, asparagus has the happy faculty of blending nicely with many other foods. It adds interest to those with bland flavors, such as rice and macaroni, and is especially delightful in combinations with milk or eggs.

The green color is preserved and the flavor is improved by cooking the asparagus in milk, especially when soup or creamed asparagus is being prepared.

Creamed asparagus in patty shells is a "company" version of an old favorite. The medium white sauce is best when enriched by stirring it into a beaten egg yolk. Bits of pimiento or pimiento cheese stirred into the sauce add color and flavor.

Cream of asparagus soup is prepared by sieving the cooked vegetable into its own juice, and stirring this into very thin white sauce. Serve immediately to prevent curdling as asparagus is more acid than most vegetables. Perfect asparagus souffles, timbales or custards are worthy of the best efforts of the most skillful cook. Pieces of left-over asparagus transform a hurry-up dish of prosaic scrambled eggs.

As for salad -- the attractive form and color, delicate flavor and blending qualities of asparagus combine to make it a favorite for salads. Some like it with a tart French dressing and a sprinkling of hard cooked egg. Others prefer the thicker mayonnaise or cream dressing -- perhaps with a dash of catsup for color contrast.

OFFICE

Asparagus salad assumes a "party" air when clustered stalks are passed through a hollowed out ring of red apple as a substitute for the usual pimiento



strip. This salad is at once novel, colorful, inexpensive and easy to prepare.

Very green asparagus is a good source of vitamin A, the greener the "grass" the more A it is likely to contain. It is a good source of iron, which is also frequently associated with green coloring. Green and white asparagus both contribute some vitamin C. Asparagus supplies valuable minerals and vitamins with a minimum of calories, for it is in a class with lettuce, radishes and cabbage as one of the more succulent vegetables.

For many years asparagus was served only on the tables of the wealthy. "Rust" reduced the yields on beds in all parts of the country so that growing costs were almost prohibitive. In 1910 the better "rust" resistant varieties, the Mary and Martha Washington, were produced through the joint efforts of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Massachusetts Agricultural Experiment Station. The new varieties were planted everywhere, and asparagus acreage for direct market shipment more than trebled in the 10-year period, 1918-1928. Prices were brought within reach of the people, and growing became commercially profitable.

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