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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

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QUESTION BOX:

Safe to handle fuses?
How make fruit fritters?
Green peach pie wholesome?

U. S. Department of Agriculture

ANSWERS FROM:

Home economists of the U. S.
Department of Agriculture

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Questions today feature the letter F. They are about fuses, fritters and fruit pies. The answers to these questions come from home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Whether your house has just been wired for electricity or has had electricity for years, every adult in the family should understand what the fuse-box is for, and what to do if a fuse blows out. Our first question today is from a woman who feels a little uncertain about fuses. She asks, "Is it safe to handle fuses if one blows out?"

Yes, say the home economists who specialize in household equipment, it's perfectly safe for you to open up the fuse box and change fuses, if you go about it in the right way. Fuses, you know, are circuit breakers. They're the safety valves in the electrical system. Keep extra ones on hand in case one blows out. Of course, you should have enough circuits, each controlled by a fuse, to carry all the appliances you have. Put a list of the lights and outlets on each circuit near the fuse box.

When a fuse blows out it's usually an indication that there is a short circuit or an overload. Take out the fuse in the fuse panel, one at a time, and notice which lights and outlets are "dead".

If the trouble has been an overload, merely putting in a new or bigger fuse will not correct the trouble, and is very dangerous. Disconnect the appliance that makes the total current too high for the fuse in that line, and connect the appliance on another suitable outlet in a line fused high enough to carry the total load.

If the fuse is large enough for the load and still blows out, a broken wire somewhere is causing a short circuit. Unless you understand how to locate the break, and repair broken wires you will need an expert to correct this.

Now here's a question about fruit fritters--peach fritters and other kinds. This letter says: "Will you give me some information about fritters made with fruit? I want to know how to make fritters, and when to serve them at the meal. I also want to know whether I can use leftover fat for frying them."

In reply to that letter the home economists say: Some leftover fat might be all right to fry fritters in, if you "pan-fry" or sauté the fritters rather than frying in deep fat. Such leftover fats as ham or bacon fat, chicken fat or lamb-fat --the kinds ordinarily leftover in the kitchen are not suitable for deep-fat frying, but are all right for pan-frying. Another consideration is whether the flavor of the fat will be pleasing in combination with fruit in fritters. A peach fritter fried in mutton fat, for example, would not be very appetizing. In making best use of leftover fats, you see, you have several points to consider.

But let's get back to fritters and when to serve them, as the letter asks. Since fritters are hearty in themselves, they fit best in a light meal. You might serve fritters with cold sliced lean meat, meat that is rather dry and mild in flavor. Fritters fit in either as a luncheon or dinner dish. You can serve them along with meat, or for dessert with a lemon or fruit sauce.

The best fruit fritters are slightly tart, made from such fruits as peach, orange, apple or tomato. As you probably know, you make them by dipping pieces of fruit in batter and then frying.

Here's the recipe for the batter to cover the fruit: Sifted flour, 2 cups.... baking powder, 3 teaspoons....salt, 1 teaspoon....sugar, 2 tablespoons....2 eggs beaten up....milk, one and a fourth cups....melted fat, one tablespoon. That's just the batter. You'll also need fat suitable for frying and pieces of fruit.

Here's how you mix the batter: Sift the dry ingredients together. Mix together the beaten egg, the milk, and the melted fat. Then add this liquid mixture gradually to the dry ingredients, stirring only until the batter is smooth. Dip the pieces of fruit in the batter, and drop them in deep fat heated to 365 to 370 degrees Fahrenheit. Or drop them in shallow fat in a pan. Remove the fritters when they have fried to a light brown on both sides. Drain them on absorbent paper. Keep hot until ready to serve.

And that's the answer to the letter about fritters. Maybe you remember the old song that went: "The undertaker titters when you eat banana fritters." Nutrition scientists say that song is a good joke, nothing more. Fritters are a rather hearty food, but a wholesome food, and delicious if properly made.

Let's go on now to a question about green peach pie. Writes a city housewife: "I've been having trouble buying ripe peaches at the market. The peaches look ripe but turn out to be hard and green. I know unripe fruit sometimes is harmful to eat. Could I use these peaches safely if I make them into peach pie?"

That letter may remind you of another old song: "A little peach in the orchard grew...a little peach of emerald hue....Warmed by the sun and wet by the dew...It grew...Into the orchard came those two....Johnny Jones and his sister Sue....John took a bite and Sue a chew...Then the trouble began to brew...From that peach of emerald hue."

But that song is not the answer to the letter. The answer is: You can make green peaches into very good pie, and they are perfectly wholesome used that way. The only drawback to using peaches for pie before they are ripe is that they need more sugar than other peaches. You can also use hard or unripe peaches in a peach cobbler or deep-dish pie. Slice them into a baking dish, sweeten and cover with a rich biscuit dough rolled out about one-fourth inch thick.

This is a good year for peaches, and you can make many different good dishes from them. In fact, whiel they're in season, you can serve them almost every day in a different way.

That's all the questions for this week. More next Tuesday.

