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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

TUESDAY, January 6, 1942

QUESTION BOX

How make liver and kidney appetizing? :
Coarse or fine flour for whole-wheat bread?:
Does storage temperature affect vitamin C :
in canned vegetables? :

ANSWERS FROM

scientists at various State Experiment Stations

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Most of the questions in the mailbag today are on the very important subject of food for the family--food that is low in cost yet high in food value. These are days when homemakers generally have the job of economizing on food without cutting down on the vitamins and minerals and other elements in food which their families need for good health.

Here are the letters waiting for answers today. The answers come from scientists at various State experiment stations.

First, a letter from a mother who's problem is cooking liver and kidney so her family will like it. She writes: "I know that meats like liver and kidney are high in iron and vitamin value and generally low in cost. But I can't get my family to eat anything but calf liver which is expensive at our market. Maybe you can give me suggestions on cooking these meats so they'll be more appetizing."

Answer to this letter comes from the Minnesota Experiment Station. Food scientists there say you can cook any kind of liver--beef, pork, or lamb liver as well as calf liver--so it will be delicious. The liver from very young animals is naturally more delicate in flavor and texture than the liver from older animals. Liver from pork or lamb generally has a stronger flavor that some people dislike. But you can remove most of that strong flavor by scalding the liver with boiling water. Beef and calf liver do not need this scalding. However, if you are going to grind any kind of liver, you may want to make it firmer and easier to handle by dropping it in boiling water and simmering for 2 minutes, or by dipping it in melted butter, or bacon fat,

and panbroiling.

Since your family have formed a prejudice against the inexpensive kinds of liver, you may be wise to dress the meat up with other foods that will disguise the liver "taste and look." Vegetables like onion, celery, carrots and tomatoes are all good for this purpose. A well-seasoned brown sauce made with some bacon fat and bits of bacon is good with liver. So is a Spanish sauce with green pepper and onions.

The Minnesota Experiment Station suggests a recipe for braised liver that might be just the thing for your family. Dredge the liver with flour and then brown it in bacon fat. You can cook several pieces of bacon until crisp, then remove them from the pan and put in the floured pieces of liver. Cook the liver very slowly until it is brown on both sides. Now in the bottom of a casserole put chopped celery and thin slices of carrot and onion. Lay the pieces of liver on these vegetables and the crisp bacon on top of the liver. Add a little water to the pan you browned the liver in and then pour these drippings over the liver in the casserole. You can also use a half cup of beef stock if you happen to have it on hand. Add salt and pepper. Now put the casserole in a slow oven and bake for about an hour, basting often.

Many of the rules for cooking liver so that it will be appetizing apply also to kidney. You can buy kidneys from veal, lamb, pork and beef on the market. Beef kidney is largest; veal kidney most expensive. Beef kidney needs a little special preparation. You need to simmer it in water, and change the water several times to remove any strong flavor. Kidney like liver is good cooked with such flavorful foods as bacon, onion, celery, sweet pepper and tomato. Kidney stew made with a rich brown gravy, or beef and kidney pie, also made with a brown gravy, are famous and very popular dishes. Veal, lamb or pork kidney is delicious if it is allowed to stand in oil and vinegar an hour or so and then is broiled under or over a direct flame. But to break down your family's prejudice against these meats, you'll probably be wise to serve them first with sauce or with vegetables that will disguise them somewhat in

both flavor and appearance.

So much for the question about persuading the family to like liver and kidney. Now a question about another food that gives you a lot of value for your money--whole wheat. This letter says: "I am starting to make whole wheat bread for my family. Will you advise me as to whether to use finely ground whole-wheat flour or the more coarse flour?"

Answer comes from the Wyoming Experiment Station. Scientists there report that finely granulated whole wheat flour milled from hard wheat made better bread than the more coarsely granulated flours. They also report that the coarser the whole wheat flour, the larger the proportion of white flour you have to use to make a nice light loaf.

Now for a question about vitamins in canned vegetables. A housewife says: "I understand that vegetables may lose considerable vitamin C as they stand in storage. Does the temperature of the room where they are stored have anything to do with this loss of vitamin C?"

Yes, the temperature of the storage room seems to affect the loss of vitamin C in canned vegetables. Scientists at the Massachusetts Experiment Station recently tested the effect of storage on the vitamin C of canned tomato juice, peas and spinach. They found that after a year's storage at room temperature the vegetables had lost from 10 to 25 percent of their vitamin C. But stored in a cold room--36 degrees, just a little above freezing--these vegetables lost only 5 percent of their vitamin C. So the old idea of keeping your canned goods down in the cold cellar was right for more reasons than one. A cold storage place was a help in saving vitamin C. That's all the questions for today. More on Thursday.

