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THURSDAY, November 20, 1941

QUESTION BOX

What varieties of soybeans
for table use?
Is oatmeal a whole-grain cereal?
How make oyster stuffing?
How make cranberry muffins?
Bright colors for children?

ANSWERS FROM:

Home economists of the U.S.
Department of Agriculture

--ooOoo--

Once again the answers to all the questions in the mail box today come from home economists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Questions on soybeans, oatmeal, stuffing for turkey, cranberry muffins and colors for children's winter clothes have all come up. We'll take them in that order.

Here's a query about soybeans. "Does it make any difference what kind of dry soybeans one buys for table use?"

Yes, it does, the home economists say. When they tasted a number of different varieties of dry soybeans, they found that some varieties required longer cooking than others. You have to soak all varieties overnight before you cook them. Then you drain them, add fresh water, and simmer until tender.

Here are the names of 6 varieties that will cook tender in about 2 hours: Easycook, Chusei, Rokusum, Jogun, Hokkaido and Kanro. Varieties that are good but require more time are Mammoth Yellow, Dixie, Hahto and many others. Using a pressure cooker shortens the cooking time considerably. At 15 pounds pressure you can cook soybeans in 15 to 30 minutes.

Now for a question about oatmeal. "Is oatmeal a whole-grain cereal? We are trying to use more whole-grain cereals for breakfast, and my family is very fond of oatmeal."

Then you will be glad to know that the nutritionists of the Department of Agriculture class oatmeal among the important whole grain cereals. It is a good food for iron, calcium, and vitamin B. In fuel value-- that is, calories-- oatmeal is slightly higher than any of the whole-grain cereals. To bring out all the fine nutty flavor and avoid a pasty texture, don't stir your oatmeal much. Cook it slowly, over a direct flame, or protected by an asbestos mat. Loosen it a little from the bottom with a fork or knife blade, but keep the grains whole, as you do with rice.

So much for oatmeal. Next comes a question about oyster stuffing for turkey: "How many oysters should I use in stuffing for a 10 to 12 pound turkey and should I cook them before putting them in the stuffing."

The answer is: Allow a pint and a half of oysters and 2 to 2-1/2 quarts of bread crumbs for stuffing a 10 to 12 pound turkey. You will also need three-fourths of a cup of fat,----- 1/8 cup of chopped parsley,--- 1 tablespoon of chopped onion,--- 1/2 teaspoon of savory seasoning,--- 1/4 teaspoon of celery seed,--- and 1 to 2 teaspoons of salt.

As to cooking the oysters, just heat them gently for a few minutes, until the edges begin to curl. Then drain off the liquor that cooks out. Cook the parsley and onion in the melted fat for a few minutes, and then add with the drained oysters, to the bread crumbs and dry seasonings.

For your bread crumbs you will need about 2 loaves of bread, 2 or 3 days old. Cut the loaves in half, and fork out the inside, leaving the crusts. Pick the pieces of bread apart with the tips of the fingers until all the crumbs are fine and even in size. Have the crumbs ready when the oysters are drained.

How to make cranberry muffins is the next question. The home economists point out that the trick of making any muffins lies in stirring the mixture as little as possible. The special secret in making cranberry muffins is to roll the

berries in a little extra sugar before adding them to the batter.

Here is the full recipe, with 8 ingredients. One egg... 3/4 cup of milk.... 4 tablespoons melted fat.... 2 cups sifted flour.... 4 teaspoons of baking powder.... 1/4 cup of sugar.... 1/2 teaspoon of salt.... and 1 cup of cranberries. Beat the egg slightly, and add the milk and melted fat. Pour into the sifted dry ingredients, all at once. Roll the berries in 2 more tablespoons of sugar, and fold into the batter. Don't stir any more than necessary. Bake in greased muffin pans at 400 degrees Fahrenheit for about 30 minutes, or until light brown.

And that brings us to the last question. A mother asks: "Is it practical to give in to the children's love of gay colors for winter coats, sweaters, and playsuits? When I was a girl dark things were considered more suitable in cold weather."

Dark colors keep nobody any warmer, say the home economists, and your children's love of soft red, forest green, or gay blues is not only a normal and natural choice, but actually a means of protecting them from the hazards of present day traffic that may not have existed when you were younger. A motorist can see a gay color a long way off, when a drab brown or gray coat might not be noticed until it is too late to slow up. If you mean by "practical" that dark clothes need less cleaning, perhaps it's true that spots don't show as plainly, but they're there just the same. So let the children wear the colors they like and make them a little safer going to and from school and at out-door play.

That finishes the questions.

