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Housekeepers' Chat

Friday, February 6, 1931.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: Questions and a Simple Sunday Dinner. Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletin available: Beef on the Farm.

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The big problem for me today is where to begin, because I have such a variety of things to talk about. So many questions have been coming in that I'd like to discuss. And then there is that dinner menu and to go with it, the best recipe for sweet potato puff you ever tasted.

Well, let's answer questions for a few minutes and after that continue our chat about the menu and the potato puff.

The other day I had a letter asking two questions, one about molasses and one about corned beef. But the writer signed herself only as "a friend." No name, no address. If I should try to answer over the air all the questions my friends ask, I am afraid I would be talking all day and all night and would have no time to chat to you about anything else. Some of those questions that come in require detailed answers so they are referred to the specialists in the Bureau of Home Economics who are glad to write letters in reply. So if you want a reply, don't forget to attach your name and address when you write me.

Now I'll answer the question about molasses. "My family does not care for the taste of molasses. Is there anything I can use in place of it in cooking?"

Molasses is an unrefined form of sugar. It is the liquid left after the cane sugar crystals have been removed and it has a characteristic flavor, due partly to the natural substances in the sugar cane that do not appear in the white sugar and partly to the process of sugar making. Some authorities urge the use of molasses because of the iron and other minerals it contains. There are many varieties of molasses, dark and light, strong and mild. If your family does not care for the taste of the dark strong molasses, perhaps they will enjoy another kind. In recipes calling for molasses no other syrup can be used successfully as a substitute, because such recipes are made to feature the molasses flavor and contain soda because molasses has a small amount of acid.

The next question is "What is corned beef?"

I feel like referring this question to Jiggs and his friend Dinty Moore. Jiggs, everybody knows, is one of those people who has a violent affection for corned beef and cabbage. There are other people who feel the same way about corned beef hash. Corned beef is meat preserved with brine and dried. It is usually cut from the rump, chuck or plate or other of the lean, less tender cuts of beef and the process of preserving makes it tender. Like chipped beef this is an inexpensive meat and has its own characteristic flavor and color.

One of my friends tells me that she had an accident the other day and spilled ink on a table cover that she prizes very highly. How can she remove it?

The first thing I would do in a case like this would be to get out my bulletin on stain removal and read what it says about ink stains. Because of the difference in the composition of ink, it is impossible to find agents that are equally effective in removing all ink spots. It is best to try various agents beginning always with the simplest and that least likely to injure the fabric. Soap and water will take out some ink stains. Soaking in milk for several days is also a remedy. The bulletin also tells how to use oxalic acid, followed by ammonia, potassium permanganate and other materials. Ink on white cotton or linen fabrics can be bleached out, if it resists other treatment. With colored or silk fabrics the problem is more difficult. Keep a stain removal bulletin on your shelves and you will have this information right at hand whenever spots and stains occur.

Our menu today begins with baked ham and ends with a fruit salad for dessert. An inexpensive and simple dinner menu, but interesting and satisfying. Here it is: Baked Ham; Sweet Potato Puff; Panned Kale or other cooked greens, Crisp Celery; and Pineapple and Tokay Grape Salad.

An economical way to buy ham, especially at this season, is to buy at least a half a ham at a time which will weigh about four or five pounds. Many markets are offering special prices on whole or half hams just now and by purchasing this way, you can often save as much as half, on what the price per pound of what it would be if purchased in slices. A good thing about ham is that it keeps so well. For the baked ham follow the directions in the green cookbook.

Now the recipe for sweet potato puff. Sweet potatoes and ham are both favorite foods of the Old South and are an excellent combination together. A puff is an excellent way to fix sweet potatoes for a change. Five ingredients for this tempting-looking, light, fluffy dish.

5 or 6 medium-sized sweet potatoes
2 eggs
2 tablespoons of melted butter or other fat
2 tablespoons of hot milk
1 teaspoon of salt

Let me repeat those (REPEAT)

Boil the sweet potatoes in their skins. When tender remove the skins and any discolored portions, and press the potatoes through a ricer. There should be about 1 quart of the potato pulp. Beat the yolks and whites of the eggs separately. To the potato add the yolks, fat, milk, and salt, beat well, and fold in the well-beaten whites. Pile the mixture lightly into a greased baking dish and bake in a moderate oven (350 degrees F.) for 45 minutes, or until light and fluffy and brown on the top. Marshmallows may be put on the top of the sweet potatoes a few minutes before the end of the baking. They will melt and brown slightly and make a sweet crust over the top.

The kale may be cooked in an open kettle in boiling salted water until tender, or it may be cooked according to the directions for panned kale given in the radio cookbook.

For the pineapple and tokay grape salad, cut up slices of pineapple. Then wash the attractive reddish, firm grapes. Cut each grape in half the long way. Remove the seeds. Grapes of this variety can be peeled but we advise leaving the skin on because the color makes the salad especially attractive. Mix these two fruits, add salad dressing. Serve on crisp lettuce. Cooked tart salad dressing and French dressing are both suitable for this salad. A dressing made by combining mayonnaise and whipped cream, unsweetened, in equal parts is delicious with any fruit salad. Successful salads whether served at the beginning of the meal, as the Californians often do; with the main course; as a salad course; or as dessert, always are cool, crisp and tart in flavor.

Monday: Feeding Father.

