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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Tuesday, October 31, 1944

QUESTION BOX:

How Make a Meat Loaf Stick?
Floor Wax on Shoes?

Answers from the Bureau of Human Nutrition
and Home Economics, U. S. Department of
Agriculture

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This is question box day for homemakers with answers from home economists of the United States Department of Agriculture.

Our first question is from a homemaker who's been using utility grade meat. She says, "I can't seem to bake a meat loaf that stick together. What's the secret of a meat loaf that won't fall to pieces when you slice it?"

Food specialists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture say the binder in the meat loaf is the important ingredient. To make the binder, you may use a very thick white sauce or you may use bread crumbs with a liquid, or cooked rice or mashed potatoes.

Any of these make good binders for meat loaf. Incidentally, the crumbs or rice or potatoes also help keep the loaf from becoming too hard. And they keep the meat from packing too.

Measure your proportions and mix everything thoroughly. Real, old-fashioned kneading with the hands will do the trick. Use a good binder and knead the meat and binder thoroughly and your meat loaf won't fall to pieces when you slice it.

Good proportions for a meat loaf that makes 5 or 6 servings are 2 pounds of raw lean meat, 4 tablespoons of flour, a cup and a half of milk and a cup of soft bread crumbs or mashed potatoes.

I'll repeat those proportions: 2 pounds of raw lean meat, 4 tablespoons of flour, a cup and a half of milk, and a cup of soft bread crumbs.

For good flavor in your meat loaf, try a combination of two or more kinds of ground meat. Beef and pork, or veal and pork. Dice and fry a quarter of a pound

of mild salt pork until it's light brown and crisp. Then mix it with lean ground beef.

Cook the celery, onion and other seasonings in the salt pork drippings to develop their flavor.

Add the binder - the white sauce or bread crumbs with a liquid or the cooked rice or potatoes. And don't forget to knead the loaf with your hands. Then mold the loaf on a piece of tough white paper and lift paper and all onto a rack into an open pan. Don't add any water. Don't cover the pan. Just let the loaf bake in a moderate oven at 300 degrees Fahrenheit. It'll take about an hour and a half to bake this size loaf.

Another way to bake a meat loaf is to pack it in a greased pan and bake like a loaf of bread in a moderately hot oven - 375 to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. The moderate heat in the oven keeps the meat from losing its juice too rapidly. The meat cooks evenly from the center to the outer edge and the meat loaf gets a nice rich brown without burning.

The other question in today's mail box is from a young woman who wants to get the most out of that new pair of shoes she buys next month. She says, "I've been told that ordinary floor wax helps preserve dress shoes. Anything to this?"

Clothing specialists of the Department say that ordinary floor wax, rubbed on sparingly after you polish the shoes, will help preserve them. For heavy work shoes, use warm tallow or wool grease or castor oil.

Keep the shoes you buy with the new ration stamp after November 1 in good condition by getting off to a good start during the breaking in period, when the shoe's adjusting to your foot.

Here are some tips from the clothing specialists. Protect your shoes with overshoes in bad weather. If you happen to get caught in an autumn rain minus rubbers give your shoes a first-aid treatment just as soon as you can.



Clean smooth-leathered shoes carefully and then give them a very light coat of castor oil. Put this on before they dry out. Then stuff the toes with paper or use shoe trees to keep the shoes in shape. Let the shoes dry at room temperature with a good circulation of air. Don't give the shoes the "hot foot" by trying to dry them in an oven or setting them on a radiator or near an open fire. That weakens the leather and makes it brittle. After the shoes are dry, polish them and give them a light coating of wax.

Suede shoes take a beating in rainy weather. It's hard on them to put galoshes on over them and it's hard on them to get wet. If they do get wet, dry them slowly and then brush them gently. You'll find that rubbing the slicked-down places with fine sandpaper will help restore the velvety suede look of the leather.

First aid treatments help wet shoes but a good slogan to keep in mind is "Keep'em dry if you'd keep'em walking".

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