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U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, April 5, 1933.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "An Economy Sweet." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics,
U.S.D.A.

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The housewife who buys wisely and gets her money's worth in groceries knows her foods. She knows where to find bargains among the different classes of food she must choose from. For example, suppose she is stocking up with foods for sweetening purposes. Of course, she'll include some plain white granulated sugar. But she'll also buy some brown sugar and molasses, because she knows that in some ways these unrefined products are better buys than white sugar. They supply several values where sugar only supplies one, and they are low in cost.

White sugar is valuable as a fuel food and for its flavor. But it is not a building food, nor a protective food. This is true of cane sugar and beet sugar alike. Refined sugar from either source is a pure carbohydrate, and contains no protein, and practically no minerals nor vitamins. Molasses and brown sugar and cane syrup have more food value because they have more of the original substances from the sugar cane. Molasses is a by-product of the cane sugar industry. Molasses contains beside sugar such minerals as calcium. Here are two reasons why molasses and molasses candy make better sweets for children than sugar and sugar candy. First, molasses is a less concentrated sweet. Second, it contains minerals as well as sugar. More than this, molasses gives a pleasing flavor. The quality of molasses depends on the quality and treatment of the cane juice from which it came. The best molasses is the syrup left after only one crystallization has been taken out. Molasses is generally dark brown in color but the choicest grades are a bright amber tint. Such molasses is produced in Louisiana, Porto Rico, the Barbados and other special centers. Probably the very finest grade on the market comes from the Barbados. The fine grades of molasses are labeled Barbados, Porto Rico, Louisiana, and so on. Ordinary grades are often called simply "open-kettle" molasses. Blackstrap molasses is the poorest variety and the darkest in color. This is the final or exhausted molasses of raw sugar manufacture.

Now about using molasses in cooking. Molasses is an old-time stand-by that is just as useful today as in grandmother's time. Many of our favorite American dishes depend on it. So do many of our best low-cost dishes. Molasses combines especially well with other low-cost foods like sour milk and cornmeal. In many recipes molasses provides the sweetening, the flavor, and the color. Molasses is an important ingredient in many inexpensive cakes and cookies, in quick breads and puddings as well as in candies, sauces and syrups. I don't need to remind you of gingerbread and spice cake. I don't need to mention molasses and ginger cookies, or Boston brown bread, steamed corn bread, dark muffins and so forth.

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I don't need to suggest Indian puddings and steamed suet pudding, or molasses candy and popcorn balls. The list of molasses good things -- nice wholesome sweets, good for all members of the family except the smallest youngsters -- proves the usefulness of molasses without my saying a thing.

Because molasses contains a small amount of acid, most recipes calling for it will also contain soda. Molasses cookies, cakes and breads often contain sour milk and molasses and soda.

For breakfast many people like molasses, either cold or hot, as a syrup for griddle cakes, waffles, fried hominy or French toast.

Perhaps you've guessed by this time that you're to have an inexpensive molasses recipe today. This is in answer to a request. One of my friends says she has several gingerbread recipes but none that quite suit her. I hope this one will. You can make gingerbread with either sweet or sour milk, depending on what you have on hand. A blend of three spices -- ginger, cinnamon and cloves -- gives gingerbread the flavor most people like best. Well, here's the recipe. Twelve ingredients:

- 1/3 cup of fat
- 1/2 cup of sugar
- 1 cup of molasses
- 1 egg
- 3 cups of sifted soft-wheat flour
- 4 teaspoons of baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon of soda
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- 1 teaspoon of ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon of cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon of cinnamon, and
- 1 cup of milk.

Twelve ingredients. I'll repeat them. (REPEAT)

Cream together the sugar and fat. Add the molasses and beaten egg. Sift together twice the dry ingredients. Add them to the first mixture alternately with the milk. Bake in two shallow pans in a moderate oven (350 degrees F.) for 30 to 40 minutes.

You can use one cup of sour milk instead of the sweet milk. In that case use 1 scant teaspoon of soda instead of the half teaspoon now called for, and use only 2 teaspoons of baking powder instead of four.

Now our simple Wednesday menu featuring this gingerbread. Omelet -- any kind you like; Buttered string beans; Lettuce sandwiches; and, for dessert, Fruit up, and Gingerbread.

Thursday: "Economy in Wash Dresses." More news for the home dressmaker.
