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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, November 6, 1931.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Low Cost Meals." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics and the Bureau of Plant Industry, U.S.D.A.

Bulletin available: "Adequate diets for Families with Limited Incomes."

---ooOoo---

Pocketbooks this season are of many different varieties. Some are fat, some are thin, some large, some small and some medium-sized. It's not difficult to plan good meals when the family pocketbook is large and fat. And most housekeepers can do very well on a medium-sized purse. But those who have the problem of buying food and feeding their families on a very limited pocketbook--well, they have a problem that takes skill and a knowledge of the foods needed for good health, and they need to know how to market wisely and how to prepare inexpensive foods in an appetizing way. The family's health and efficiency, you know, may depend on what is served on the table three times a day.

Specialists at the Bureau of Home Economics have spent a good deal of time this year planning well-balanced healthful diets for families with limited incomes. Retarded growth, soft or badly formed teeth, poorly shaped bones, indigestion, premature old age and lowered resistance to disease are a few of the possible results of a poor diet. Even in the most prosperous times many families do not have the right diet to insure good health because they do not select their food wisely. Many people who eat big meals are found to be undernourished. It's not enough to fill the family up. They must be fed the right foods to supply all body needs.

All of us have read in recent years since the discovery of those important things called vitamins, of the so-called deficiency diseases, caused by lack of the foods supplying vitamins. We no longer hear of so many cases of such diseases as scurvy and beri-beri, but rickets and pellagra are still with us.

It has been estimated that 200,000 people in this country suffered from pellagra in 1929. This was largely among people whose diets consisted chiefly of salt pork, cornmeal and molasses. They were doing without such valuable foods as milk, fruits and vegetables.

Even where wrong food does not cause these definite diseases, it shows

MEMORANDUM

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itself in less, conspicuous ways. One of my neighbors, for example, prides herself on being very particular about her food. She can't eat this and doesn't care for that. Yet she complains about her lack of appetite and her poor digestion. In fact she always has some little ailment to worry about. And she can't understand why she has such poor health!

Then, I know a man who says that a meat-potato-pie-and-pancake diet is all he wants the year around. He doesn't care for fruits or vegetables. And he is a chronic grouch, - none of his relatives can get on with him.

I don't say that the poor disposition and small chronic ills that so many people suffer from are entirely due to the food they eat or don't eat. But I'm very sure that food is a big item, well worth the consideration of anyone who wants to be healthy, wealthy and wise - and happy beside. That goes especially for the children in the family, since they need food for growth and development as well as for upkeep and repair.

Are there any rules to guide in planning low-cost meals?

The specialist have many helpful suggestions to answer this question.

First, they suggest that when there is little money to spend for food, the diet should be built around the grain products and milk, with enough vegetables and fruits to supply the necessary additional vitamins and minerals. Lean meat, fish poultry and eggs, which are more expensive, should be used sparingly. The fruits and vegetables chosen should be those that are in season and where possible, less expensive in price. Tomatoes, cabbage, carrots and onions are all inexpensive vegetables and well worth using frequently for family meals.

Needless to say, simple meals are most economical. It is less expensive to serve generous amounts of a few foods at each meal than to try to have many different dishes. That doesn't mean that the family food has to be monotonous and lack variety. No indeed. Variety can come in the course of the day rather than the meal.

There is a recent publication on this matter of planning meals to suit a very slim pocketbook, in case you are interested. Write for miscellaneous publication number 113. The name of it is "Adequate Diets for Limited Incomes."

So much for general principles. Special hints for using meat wisely are to be found in the series of meat leaflets I have so often mentioned to you.

As I promised you yesterday, our dinner for today is an economy meal. It illustrates how a low-cost meal can be delicious, satisfying and as well-balanced as an expensive one.

This dinner is also a green cookbook meal. Every dish has a recipe in the cook book. Fresh pork with shredded string beans for the main dish; then, potato salad on lettuce; Stewed prunes and apricots for dessert; and Oatmeal cookies. Four items on that menu and all to be found between the green covers of the radio recipe book.

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The main dish is an inexpensive combination meat and vegetable dish. Fresh string beans combined with some of the cooked, chopped pork left from another meal. See page 43 in the cookbook.

Now about the potato salad. Here's a dish that can be simply delicious or simply--beg pardon, I mean simply the contrary-- all depending on how it is prepared and served.

In the first place the potatoes should be thoroughly cooked so that they are well done but not soft or crumbly. Avoid dingy or grey looking boiled potatoes for potato salad. To go with the potatoes you'll need something to add flavor and something to add crispness and color if possible. Minced onion is a favorite flavor. Then there's chopped green pepper and crisp pickle for flavor and color. And then there is celery for flavor and crispness.

Add the minced onion to the diced potatoes. And then add the cooked salad dressing hot. Yes, that's what I meant. Add the salad dressing hot.

Then cool the mixture. All the time it is cooling, you see, that salad dressing will be flavoring the potatoes and that delicate onion flavor just enough but not too much-- will be spreading evenly through the mixture. When it is cold, add the green pepper, celery and chopped pickle. Serve on crisp lettuce leaves or even on crisp celery leaves. If you want a little more bright green color, add chopped parsley to the potato mixture and put a dash of bright red paprika over the top.

Speaking of parsley, why not add a pot or a box of that to your house plants this winter? A little kitchen garden right in your own home. You can then have a supply of fresh parsley whenever you want it whether the snow is deep outside or not.

I called up and consulted W.R.B. on this matter only this morning. He says that the parsley plants can be brought in from the garden. Dig up the plant carefully, saving all the roots possible. Plant it in a pot or in the window box, pressing the earth firmly around it. Then cut off all the leaves, yes, every single one. This will allow the plant to make a fresh start when it gets adjusted to its new home. Keep it in the shade and well watered for several days until it starts growing. Then let it flourish in the sunny window on the south.

Parsley won't prosper quite so well inside as out, but it will grow well enough to furnish fresh green trimmings for your winter meals.

Monday: Some facts about Fish.

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

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INFORMATION

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

November 6, 1931.

TO PROGRAM DIRECTORS:

In the Housekeepers' Chat programs for the week beginning Monday, November 16, one release was dated Thursday, November 17. This, of course, should read Tuesday, November 17.

Sincerely yours,

Morse Salisbury

Morse Salisbury
Chief of Radio Service.

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