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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

WEDNESDAY, May 31, 1933.

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

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SUBJECT: "Questions About Early Vegetables:" Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

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That eternal question of us housewives comes up again today--"What are some new and different ways to fix vegetables?" These new spring vegetables like asparagus and young onions, how shall we make them interesting and delicious for the family? That's a good question, for if you're going to make mealtime interesting, you have to put variety into the menus. The same vegetable appearing in the same way day after day won't be popular long. But if you know a lot of good and different ways to prepare vegetables as they come in season, you can serve them often and the family won't grow tired of them. As we've often mentioned before, one good rule for kitchen thrift is to feature fresh foods in season.

By the way, when I say different ways of serving I don't mean fancy ways. Simple styles are most becoming to vegetables--simple styles that bring out their best qualities. Nowadays we don't believe in dressing vegetables up or in disguising them. Instead we cook and serve them to bring out their own best flavor and color and to save all possible food value. We use simple ways of seasoning, too. We often serve vegetables raw in salads or sandwiches or as relishes and appetizers. If we cook them, we do it in the shortest possible time. We boil vegetables in a small amount of boiling salted water until just tender, no longer. Then serve them perhaps with cream sauce, occasionally with cheese or hollandaise sauce, often with just melted butter. The vegetable, you see, is the point, not the fixings.

When you serve vegetables buttered, you can use either plain butter or seasoned butter.

You can season melted butter with chopped parsley and a little lemon juice. That is called "parsley butter." It is excellent on many different vegetables. Suppose you have some spring onions or some asparagus. Boil either of these vegetables in a little salted water in an open kettle until just tender. Drain and add parsley butter for seasoning. Just before the vegetable is done, melt a little butter. Add lemon juice and finely chopped parsley. Pour over the vegetable just before serving. Parsley butter is also good on boiled potatoes, either new or old, on cauliflower, on carrots and on white turnips. Parsley butter also makes a delicious sauce for fish or for an omelet. Another delicious seasoned butter which you can make up in advance and store in your refrigerator to use when desired is savory butter. This is seasoned with minced green pepper and chopped parsley and then strained.

Where's that pencil of yours? Handy, I hope. For here are two short recipes that tell you just how to fix these two seasoned butters. You'll be needing these recipes all the year around, once you've tried them. First, savory butter -- enough to have on hand. Three ingredients:



1/4 pound of butter  
1 tablespoon of chopped green pepper, and  
1 1/2 tablespoons of finely chopped parsley

Put the vegetables with the butter in the upper part of the double boiler and heat for about 20 minutes to give the melted butter time to absorb the flavor. Strain into a glass jar and store in the refrigerator for use. Save the pepper and parsley you have strained out. They're good in soups and stews.

Parsley butter you make in much the same way as savory butter, only you always make it just before serving and you leave the bits of parsley in. This butter has a tart flavor. That's one reason it's so good with fish. Three ingredients

1/4 cup of butter  
2 tablespoons of lemon juice, and  
1 tablespoon of finely chopped parsley

This is enough for a large dish of vegetables. If you are cooking only a few, of course, you'll prepare less.

The menu today is a June fish luncheon--all in one course. If the man of your house hasn't been out with a hook and line and brought in some fish, you can always depend on the market or the fish you buy in cans. Here's the menu: Broiled or scalloped fish; then, corn fritters; Fresh asparagus or spring onions in parsley butter; Cucumber or tomato jelly salad; and, Iced tea. Once more: Broiled or scalloped fish; Corn fritters; Fresh asparagus or spring onions in parsley butter; Cucumber or tomato jelly salad; and, Iced tea.

Just time to answer one question. One housekeeper asks how to can mushrooms at home. First, be sure they are mushrooms. For safety always can mushrooms under pressure. Wash them thoroughly. Then peel them and drop them into water with a little vinegar in it--1 tablespoon of vinegar to each quart of water. Next, pre-cook the mushrooms. Place them in a wire sieve or colander, cover with a lid, and immerse for three or four minutes in boiling water which contains vinegar and salt. Use 1 tablespoon of vinegar and 1 teaspoon of salt for each quart of water. Pack the hot mushrooms into either glass jars or tin cans. Fill the containers at once with freshly boiling water. Add 1 teaspoon of salt to each quart container. Process quart glass jars at 10 pounds pressure, for 35 minutes. Pint glass jars or No. 2 or 3 tin cans need only 25 minutes of processing.

By the way, the Bureau of Home Economics at Washington, D. C. has information to help you with your home canning, jelly making or any other process of saving your surplus garden products for winter use.

Tomorrow: "Saving Clothes with Soap and Water."

