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U. S. Department of Agriculture

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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, November 27, 1933.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY.)

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

--ooOoo--

The important event on our calendar this morning is planning the Thanksgiving dinner. I know this is only Monday. But Monday isn't one day too early to get the menu down in black and white -- on paper, so you can refer to it during the week whenever you need to. And along beside the menu, you'll want your market order and your plan of work. With guides like that to follow, you can breathe easy for the rest of the week and you won't have any last-minute hurry, worry and confusion. What's more, this guide, all carefully planned on paper, will prevent last-minute panics because the sugar supply has run low or because the table linen has a spot on it.

Let's write out our menu first. Then you can work out your own market order to suit the size of your own Thanksgiving party. And, finally, you can set down your plan of work to make the meal preparations go smoothly and quickly.

Most housewives I know, who are preparing their own Thanksgiving dinners this year, are interested in economy. They want a meal that cuts down on money as well as time. So the Menu Specialist has planned an easy-to-cook-and-easy-to-pay-for dinner. This is to be a good-looking, good-tasting and satisfying meal, but not a heavy, expensive outlay of food, such as old-time hostesses often featured. Most of us have learned in recent years the wisdom of that old saying-- "enough is as good as a feast." We've found out from experience that a simple dinner is better for all members of the family, young and old, and that it makes for more happiness afterward than a table groaning with food.

Though turkey is the traditional Thanksgiving dish, many of us may find that chicken or even a meat roast will fit in well in place of turkey, especially in an economy meal. So the Menu Specialist suggests that the first item on the menu might be roast stuffed chicken or baked ham. You can dress up that steaming platter of chicken or ham with a few sprigs of green -- parsley or watercress or fresh leaves of celery, both the bleached and the green for contrast. By the way, garnishing like seasoning gives better effects if you do it in moderation. A few touches of green make the platter much more attractive than a mass of green. I'll never forget a Thanksgiving turkey I once saw which was surrounded by so much parsley that the poor bird looked as if it had been set upside down on a great green nest. And I'll never forget the struggles of the carver to keep those decorations on the platter and off the tablecloth.

Even a plain everyday food like baked potatoes can be fixed up to look like something special for an occasion like this. So our menu features potatoes on the half shell. Know how to fix them? Well, just bake some good sized potatoes. Then cut them in halves. Scoop out the inside, mash and season it with salt, pepper and butter, add a little hot milk, beat until light, and return it to the shell. Then set these half-shells back in the oven to brown over the top.

For the sake of appetite, for the sake of appearance, as well as for the sake of minerals and vitamins, you'll want a green vegetable at your dinner. I suggest green snap beans, buttered. You can use your own home canned beans, if you like; or commercial canned beans; or fresh beans, if you have them in your market. Snap beans are among those vegetables that almost everyone likes; they're usually inexpensive; and they're a valuable food.

Bread at this meal? Well, that depends on your own preference. If you serve bread, you'll find that very crisp rolls or biscuits or even bread sticks will go best for this meal. If you butter the rolls in the kitchen, that will do away with the need for bread-and-butter plates at the table.

There's the first course and a very simple one -- roast chicken or ham; potatoes on the half shell; green beans buttered; crisp rolls.

Now about the salad. One of the prettiest and most inexpensive of fall salads is cider gelatin salad. Little individual molds of amber jelly in which you see white pieces of finely chopped celery, green bits of chopped parsley or green pepper, and the red of chopped pimiento. To make enough of this cider jelly for six, use two and a half cups of clear tart cider and two tablespoons of gelatin. A very little salt in the mixture will bring out the flavor. You mold the vegetables in the cider jelly when the mixture begins to set. Then you pour and chill it in little individual molds. Turn it out on lettuce the last minute and serve with it either French dressing or mayonnaise.

That brings us to dessert. Pie is the old stand-by Thanksgiving dessert. But the pie I'm about to suggest is something that especially suits this holiday -- it is raisin-cranberry pie with a crisscross or lattice top. Many people think plain cranberry pie is too tart. And many people think that raisin pie is too sweet. But put these two fruits together in a filling and they'll please everybody. So now the menu goes like this: Roast stuffed chicken or baked ham; potatoes on the half shell; green beans buttered; crisp hot rolls; cider gelatin salad; cranberry and raisin pie; and coffee.

Now if you're ready, I'll give you the recipe for cranberry-raisin pie. Eight ingredients:

2 cups cranberries	1/4 teaspoon of salt
1 cup of seedless raisins	1 1/2 cups of water
3/4 cup of sugar	1 tablespoon of butter, and
2 tablespoons of cornstarch	Pastry

Once more. (REPEAT)

Bake the lower crust of the pie while you are washing and picking over the cranberries. Discard any imperfect ones. Wash and drain the raisins. Mix the cornstarch, sugar and salt thoroughly. Add the water and boil this mixture over direct heat for about 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Add the cranberries and raisins. Cook and stir about 5 minutes. Then add the butter. Now pour this mixture into your lightly baked crust. Then make a lattice of thin pastry strips over the top. Bake for about 20 minutes in a moderately hot oven -- or until the crust and strips are lightly browned.

Tuesday: "Questions and Answers." I'll answer the lady who asked for pointers on buying blankets.

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