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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Thursday, October 8, 1942.

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

ANSWERS FROM:

Home economists of the
U. S. Department of Agriculture

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QUESTION BOX:

Recover old umbrella at home?
Any way to cook eggplant except fried?
Use sirup instead of sugar in sweetpotato pie?

--ooOoo--

Women are interested in ways to reclaim practically everything in their wardrobes these days, so as to make what they have do a few months longer. One housewife this week asks how to re-cover an old umbrella in order to save metal for war use.

Home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture will not only tell her how to do it, but also send her complete directions, including sketches, so that she's pretty sure to make a neat job of it.

The general idea is to take the old cover off carefully and use it as a pattern for cutting out the new cover. It only takes 1 yard of 39-inch plain material to cover an ordinary umbrella. Of course, if your fancy runs to plaid materials, you may need more to match up the design around the umbrella. Experiment first with an umbrella that is suited to a plain material. Any tightly woven fabric will do because it will repel water but a shower-proof material is even better.

Use pliers to loosen the end tip and the rib tips of the umbrella when you start to take the old cover off. Take off the 3 little circles that protect the fabric from the metal ribs, and save one to use as a pattern.

Now, rip out one of the wedge-shaped sections of the cover, or cut it exactly on the seam lines. Then iron it smooth. Cut a paper pattern with a quarter-inch seam on each of the two sides, and allow three-sixteenths of an inch for the edge hem.

Now plan the pattern layout on your material with the sections dovetailed so there won't be any waste. Cut as many small circles as may be required, in the different sizes. From that point on, you put your parts together just as the old cover went together. Don't forget to make a little stitched band, using the button and ring from the old cover. This is to hold the ribs when the umbrella is closed. If you want to see pictures of just how to sew and put on the new cover, write to the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. for the leaflet on recovering an umbrella.

Now we have several food questions. First one: "Is there any way of cooking eggplant beside frying it in slices?"

Yes indeed, the home economists reply. You can scallop eggplant, or you can stuff it. To make scalloped eggplant, you need, besides one large eggplant, butter or other fat, 4 tablespoons.....one green pepper, chopped.....one small onion, chopped.....~~canned~~ or chopped raw tomatoes, one quart.....salt, 2 teaspoons.....pepper,.....and one cup of bread crumbs.

Pare the eggplant and cut it into small even pieces. Melt 2 tablespoons of the fat in a skillet, add the green pepper and onion, and cook for a few minutes. Add the tomatoes, eggplant, salt and pepper, cook for 10 minutes. Place the mixture in a shallow greased baking dish. Melt the remaining fat in a skillet, stir in the bread crumbs, and sprinkle them over the eggplant. Bake in a moderate oven for 15 minutes, or until the eggplant is tender and the crumbs are brown.

Now to stuff eggplant, wash it thoroughly and cut it in half. Scoop out the flesh without breaking the shells. Cut the pulp into small pieces and cook in a small quantity of hot water for 10 minutes.

For the stuffing, add about one cup of cooked vegetables, like snap beans or peas, and also chopped onion and bread crumbs. Season with salt and pepper.

Fill the shells with this mixture and cover the top with crumbs, which have been mixed with a little melted fat. Place in a baking dish. Pour a few tablespoons of hot water around the shells to keep them from sticking. And bake in a moderate oven about 15 to 20 minutes.

Now for a question about pie. "Could I use sirup instead of sugar in sweetpotato pie and also in pumpkin and squash pie?"

Once more the home economists turn the "go" signal your way.... You can make sweetpotato pie or pumpkin or squash pie by your regular recipe except for substituting sirup for sugar. If you use corn sirup, the pie won't taste quite as sweet as usual, but if you use honey, maple or cane sirup it will be as sweet as when made with sugar. If you bake the crust before you put the filling in, bake it only to a light brown color because it will have to be back in the oven 30 minutes to set the custard filling. Sweetpotato pie is put together in the same general way as pumpkin pie, but takes less sweetening, whether sirup, honey or maple sirup, since the potatoes themselves are sweet. Any one of these pies is a good filling desserts, for fall and because they all contain eggs, so are useful to round out meatless meals.

More questions and answers next Tuesday.

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