

## Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



# homemakers' chat

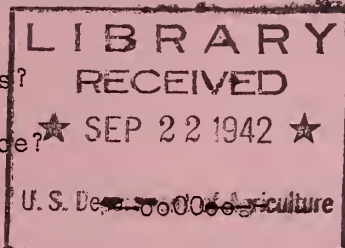
FOR USE IN NON-COMMERCIAL BROADCASTS ONLY

U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

TUESDAY, September 15, 1942

9  
3Hh  
QUESTION BOX

How save food value in potatoes?  
Secrets of good gravy?  
How remove grit from grape juice?



Answers from  
scientists of the U.S. Dept.  
of Agriculture

Once again questions about food take up most of the space in the week's mailbag. Many of these questions are about economical ways to use food.

For example, here's a letter about getting the most food value from potatoes. The letter says: "Is it scientifically true--or just one of those notions about food--that you save food value by cooking potatoes in their jackets, or at least peeling them very thin?"

The answer comes from food scientists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. They say it certainly is true that cooking potatoes in their jackets saves food value. It is also true that, if you must peel the potato, you save by peeling very thin. Prized minerals lie close beneath the surface.

The food scientists offer 5 easy rules for getting the good from potatoes. Here are the rules:

First, cook potatoes in their jackets.

Second, if you must peel, peel thin.

Third, peel potatoes just before you cook them. Don't let them soak or you will let minerals and vitamins "soak out".

Fourth, store white potatoes in a cool, dark, airy place where they won't freeze.

Fifth, store sweetpotatoes in a dry place not too cold.

So much for saving food value in potatoes. If you want further information about cooking potatoes, you are welcome to a new free folder on the subject. It's



called "Potatoes in Low-Cost Meals." And it comes from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. Once more--the name of the new folder on potatoes is: "Potatoes in Low-Cost Meals." And a postcard to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. will bring it to you--as long as the free supply lasts.

to  
Now let's go on/the second question. A housewife writes: "My cooking problem is gravy. I know that good gravy makes meat go farther. I know that it adds a lot to many meat dishes. But I have never learned how to make good gravy. Sometimes ~~my~~ gravy is too thick, sometimes it's too thin, sometimes it's lumpy, and sometimes it separates. Very often it's poor in color and flavor. Can you give me some help toward better gravy?"

Meat cookery scientists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture have the answer to this question. They say: "The secret of making thickened gravy that is free from lumps and will not separate is to blend flour with fat in equal quantity, and then add cool or lukewarm liquid gradually while stirring or beating the mixture over low heat." That's a long rule to take in all at once. Let's go over it, step by step. First, you need equal amounts of flour and fat. (Too much flour or too much fat will spoil the gravy.) Second, you mix the flour and fat together--blend them, as the food scientists say. And then, after they are blended, you add the liquid which should be cool or lukewarm but never hot. And you add this cool or lukewarm liquid gradually--not all at once. As you add it, you keep stirring or beating the mixture on the stove. And you have the heat low, as you stir. In other words, good gravy can't be thrown together any old way. You need the right proportions of fat, flour and liquid. And then you need to mix slowly and carefully and cook slowly and carefully.

a  
The food scientists say that you use/<sup>a</sup>tablespoon and a half to 2 tablespoons of flour and the same amount of fat, for each cup of liquid. The liquid you use for gravy may be juice that cooks out of roast or braised meat; or it may be broth



made by stewing bones; or it may be tomato juice, the liquid from cooked vegetables, or water, or milk, or cream--or a mixture of these.

As for the flavor of the gravy, that often depends on how you season. The food scientists advise using different seasonings, along with salt and pepper. They suggest trying tomatoes or chopped parsley to add extra flavor to gravy, or chopped celery and chopped celery leaves, or chopped onion, or grated horseradish, or any favorite seasoning herbs. Some cooks like to add a bouillon cube for an extra touch of flavor and color. To get more color and also more flavor in gravy, try ~~browning~~ browning the flour before you use it to thicken the gravy.

Now from this question about making gravy, let's go on to one about making grape juice. A housewife wants to know how to make grape juice at home which will not have gritty dark sediment in the bottom of each bottle.

Here's what the New York State Experiment Station has to say about this gritty sediment or argols: After the juice has been pasteurized, let it stand for 3 to 6 months in a cool cellar or dry storage to allow for crystallization and settling of the argols. The argols or crude tartrates in the bottom of the jar are heavy purple-brown sediment, sometimes resembling crystals of sugar or rock candy. When the argols have settled, the juice is ready for rebottling and re-pasteurization.

You can pour the comparatively clear juice above the sediment or siphon it off. The juice from the bottom of the jar you can filter through a double-layer cheesecloth or jelly bag.

The idea is to heat the juice first, then let it stand a few months for the crystals to form and settle, and then strain and heat again.

That's all the questions for today. More on Thursday.

# # #

