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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Tuesday, April 19, 1932.

FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY

Subject: "Preserving Eggs for Home Use." Material prepared by A. R. Lee, Bureau of Animal Industry, U. S. D. A. Recipe for English Muffins from Bureau of Home Economics.

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Before I planned this talk on "Preserving Eggs for Home Use," I consulted information from Mr. A. R. Lee, of the Federal Bureau of Animal Industry, who knows a great deal about the subject.

We all know that the production of eggs in the spring greatly exceeds that of any other season. Since eggs are highest in the fall and early winter, it's advisable to preserve them in the spring. The highest winter egg prices are usually double the lowest spring egg prices.

An egg is best, of course, when it is strictly fresh; but eggs preserved when fresh, and properly stored, will keep in good condition, and are excellent for cooking purposes. They are also satisfactory for table use.

Eggs produced during the spring are of the best quality, and when preserved will keep much better than eggs produced and preserved during the summer.

There are two methods used in preserving eggs for home use: the water glass method, and the lime water method. Both methods are good. The water glass method is the more convenient for most people, particularly for those who live in towns and cities. The lime water method may be more convenient on farms where lime is being used for other purposes, and where water glass is not so easy to get.

Regardless of the preserving method used, the eggs must be fresh and clean, and, if possible, infertile. The reason for using only fresh eggs is apparent. Eggs deteriorate rather quickly, and should not be held any longer than necessary before they are preserved. Do not wash eggs which are to be preserved. Washing removes the protective coating on the shells, supplied by nature to protect egg quality. The injurious effect of washing eggs is not so great when they are to be preserved in a liquid, but it is much better not to wash them. Examine them carefully for cracks, as cracked eggs are likely to spoil the whole lot put up in the same solution.

Here is Mr. Lee's explanation of how eggs are preserved in water glass. He says that sodium silicate, commonly called water glass, may be bought at most drug stores. Sodium silicate comes in a liquid form, and is diluted with water before being used.

In using the water glass, first boil nine parts of water, and mix this with one part of water glass. Place this solution in a clean crock, glass jar, or galvanized can. A five-gallon crock will hold fifteen dozen eggs for preserving. Add the eggs until they are within two inches of the top of the solution. The eggs may be put in all at one time, or they may be added from time to time, until the container is properly filled. Cover the crock, or jar tightly, to keep out dust and bacteria, and to prevent evaporation. Keep the eggs in a cool dry place.

Galvanized pails, or large cans are also used for the water glass solution, but should not be used for the lime water solution.

Now let's go over the lime water method of preserving eggs. Prepare the limewater by dissolving two or three pounds of unslacked lime in five gallons of cold water, which has been boiled. Let the limewater settle; then put the eggs into the clear liquid. Keep at least two inches of liquid over the top layer of eggs.

Eggs may be taken from this solution as soon as you want them, for cooking or for the table. You will find that neither the whites nor the yolks of preserved eggs are as firm as they are in fresh eggs, and preserved eggs are much more difficult to poach. Eggs preserved in water glass should have a pinhole punched in the large end, if they are to be boiled, to keep the shells from bursting.

It is very important to keep dirt and micro-organisms from getting into the preserving material. The object of boiling the water is to kill microorganisms. To keep the preserving solution clean, and in good condition, seal the cover of the receptacle, or cover it tightly with waxed paper.

I suppose you're wondering if you can use the same solution two years Mr. Lee says because of its comparatively low cost, and the fact that it does not usually keep in good condition for more than one year, the use of the same solution is not advised.

There are other methods of preserving eggs for home use, besides the water glass and limewater methods, but these two give the best results. Some of the other methods are packing eggs in salt or in bran, or coating them with vaseline, waterglass, or paraffin.

Do you know how eggs are preserved commercially? They are broken out of the shells, then placed in cans, and kept frozen solid until they are to be used. These eggs are used chiefly by bakers and confectioners. Another commercial method used extensively is called "processing." This consists of dipping the eggs, for a few seconds, into a solution of odorless mineral oil, heated to a high temperature. Eggs so treated are usually placed in cold storage, and come out of storage in better condition than untreated eggs.

This concludes our discussion of preserving eggs for home use. If you want more information than I have given you, write to me, and I'll give your question to Mr. Lee.

Time now to answer a couple of questions. The first one: "How can you tell when an egg is good?"

Here's an answer from H. A. Jull, chief of the poultry husbandry work for the United States Department of Agriculture. Says he:

"It's easy to tell a bad egg -- sometimes without looking. But when you ask me how to tell a good egg -- that's different.

"Now there are many good eggs on the market sold under the names of nearby hennerys, extras, specials, firsts, milk white new lays, and other distinctive terms. These terms are sometimes confusing. But after a few tries you can tell which brand or trade name of eggs to rely on for quality. Here is how you test eggs for quality:

"Break two or three eggs out of a dozen into a flat plate, and note whether the white is thick enough to stay near the yolk and stand up around it like a layer of clear, firm jelly. If the white runs all over the plate and appears very watery, the egg is poor in quality or somewhat stale.

"Also notice the yolk and see whether it stands up well or whether it is flattened out. If it lies flat, the egg is not quite so good in quality as when the yolk stands up round and firm. Also notice the odor. Any off-odor generally means off-flavor. The color of the yolk -- whether it is deep or pale yellow -- depends on the feed of the hens and is not often an index of quality.

"The quality of an egg also shows up in cooking. It takes an egg with a good, firm white to poach well. And you'll get larger, lighter sponge cakes and fluffy omelets if you make them with high quality eggs. For making custards and for scrambled eggs, there's no harm if the whites are slightly watery."

So much for a test of egg quality. Now our other question for today.

"Will you please send me a recipe for English muffins -- the kind of muffins which are made with yeast, and baked on a griddle?"

Here's the recipe, for English Muffins, made with six ingredients:

1 cup scalded milk, cooled	4 cups flour
1/2 cup lukewarm water	1-1/2 teaspoons salt, and
1 cake compressed yeast	2 tablespoons melted butter

Six ingredients, for English Muffins: (Repeat ingredients).

Soften the yeast, in the lukewarm water. Make a sponge of the milk, yeast liquid, butter, and 1-1/2 cups of the flour. Mix well. Cover, and put in a warm place to rise. When this sponge is very light, add the remaining flour which has been sifted with the salt. Beat this soft dough to make it elastic. Again cover, put in a warm place to rise. When double in bulk, toss the dough on a floured board, lightly work in a little flour, roll the dough out into a sheet about one inch thick, cut in large rounds, and let them rise for about 1 hour. Bake slowly on both sides on a lightly greased griddle. After they are cold, split, toast, and butter the muffins and serve hot; or if preferred split and butter them when freshly baked, and serve at once.

Tomorrow: "Backyard Playgrounds."

