

School for Housewives



EVEN if one is not a rigid churchman who eschews meat for Lent, it is well to have fish play an important part in the spring diet. Though we may not pin our faith to the old theory that fish food is brain food, we can be assured that the phosphates it contains and its digestible qualities prove very beneficial to the physical system that is relaxed by enervating spring days.

Not every one, unfortunately, likes fish, but, if possible, the taste for it should be cultivated. Probably if we were compelled to live on it, as were the old Homeric heroes, we might be inclined to complain as bitterly as did Menelaus; but as an occasional article of diet it should have a place in every family's weekly menu.

Nothing affords greater relief to the housekeeper sore beset by that ever-recurring thought, "What shall I give them to eat today?" than to have a family with a strong liking for fish. So fortified, she can provide soup or salad, a boiled or broiled or baked second course for dinner, croquettes or scallops for an entree, and even the "piece de resistance" of the family lunch. She can be happy, moreover, in the fact that she is feeding her flock with a healthful, digestible food.

GUIDES TO SELECTION

"But," some one cries, "I cannot digest fish. Nothing disagrees with me more quickly!" Which state should be attributed to some personal idiosyncrasy; to improper selection of the fish itself; to carelessness in preparation; or to bad methods of cooking, rather than to wholesale condemnation of a fish dietary?

For whatever the exceptional person may say, fish is both digestible and nourishing to the majority of people. Where could one find greater health and vigor, for instance, than in the small fishing settlements where little or no animal food is obtainable?

Of course, not every kind of fish has equal value in this respect; the amount of nourishment varies with the species. Thus, red-fleshed fish, such as salmon, are more nutritious than the white-fleshed, the latter, however, being more digestible. Cod proves the exception to this rule. The homely and cheap herring, strange to say, possesses more nourishment than almost any other fish.

FLABBY FISH ARE STALE

Not every one is a good buyer of fish. Too many housekeepers trust so implicitly to the dealer for selection that they cannot tell if a fish is fresh or stale. Yet really it is not very difficult to acquire this knowledge. A fresh fish should feel stiff and rigid—flabbiness is a sure sign of staleness. The gills should be red and the eyes bright and unswollen. These are much better tests than to judge by the smell in these days of cold storage. If, on being purchased, a fish is not found to be

quite up to the mark, it can be somewhat improved by washing in vinegar and water.

Nothing is more disgusting to a careful housewife than a badly cleaned fish. Nowadays one usually buys them ready cleaned; but even so, it is important to go over them carefully before putting away. Holding the fish by the head, scrape with a sharp knife to remove all scales, then either wash in cold water or wipe all over with a clean, damp cloth. It is a mistake to immerse a fish very long in water, even for the purpose of cleaning, as it is apt to destroy the flavor.

The after-treatment of the fish depends chiefly upon the way it is to be cooked. Probably more people fail in boiling it than by any other method. Always, if possible, use a fish kettle with a strainer, to avoid danger of breaking. The time-honored method of tying the fish in muslin and placing it on a plate at the bottom of a large kettle is, however, not to be despised. Boil in as little water as possible, and except in the case of salmon, which requires boiling water, put the

fish into lukewarm water, as the high temperature tends to break the skin, and with cold water much of the flavor is lost.

The length of time for cooking varies with the weight of the fish. One can usually tell when it is done by the flesh separating from the bone. It can scarcely cook too slowly, however, and, after being brought to the boiling point, should simmer gently for the rest of the time. On removing, strain carefully, and keep covered until ready for use. If lemon juice or vinegar is added to the water in which whitefish is cooked, the color is improved.

Half the success of the boiled fish depends upon its dressing and serving. Either a white cream sauce, with hard-boiled eggs, or a Hollandaise sauce, or one made of a good handful of spinach or watercress, pounded and rubbed through a fine sieve, heated over the fire with three tablespoonfuls of cream, one dessertspoonful of tarragon vinegar, yolks of two eggs, salt and pepper until it is light and frothy, makes a

pleasant change.

Always serve a boiled fish in a folded napkin and garnish it with parsley, hard-boiled eggs or, if a little color is liked, with lobster coral.

Broiled fish next to planked is probably the most palatable way it can be served. There is a decided art, however, in broiling. The broiler must be absolutely clean and rubbed with suet to prevent sticking; the fire should be clear and bright, and the fish itself must be wiped perfectly dry and brushed over with oil or melted butter and well seasoned. To cook with the necessary slowness it is well to raise the broiler on two bricks. If the fire is inclined to smoke, throw on a handful of salt.

PLANKING IN FAVOR

Planked fish are now in such favor that every aspiring housekeeper should own a plank. This should be of hardwood about two inches thick, and either grooved or slightly hollowed in the centre to retain the juices, and furnished with clips or wires to fasten the fish to it. The plank must be heated before using.

While the ideal way to plank is before an open fire, the upper grate of a very hot oven is a good substitute. Planking is usually associated with shad, but any good white-fleshed fish, as bluefish, whitefish or halibut, is equally good.

Frying is acknowledged the least digestible way to cook fish. It can, however, be done deliciously if the fish is either rolled in flour or dipped in well-seasoned egg and bread crumbs and done in very hot fat. The temperature should be slightly lower than when cooking such things as croquettes, whose interior has been previously prepared. Oil or cottolene is the best medium for frying, as lard is very apt to taste.

Besides these staple ways of preparing fish, delicious rechauffes, croquettes and salads may be made from left-overs. Escalloped fish in little individual forms or shells are good either for a family lunch or as a course at more formal affairs. It should always be served with sauce tartare, or, at least, with a rather acid mayonnaise.

Every one should own some of the interesting fish moulds, which

now are very inexpensive. These give most attractive forms in which to prepare left-overs, or, indeed, new creamed fishes. The sauces in which the fish is prepared should always be a little stiffer than when it is not to be moulded. A very attractive way to serve salmon, either fresh or canned, is in timbale moulds. It is also very artistic as a course for a dinner when chopped, creamed and moulded in the shape of a huge curled fish and served on a flat platter, covered with caper sauce and garnished with parsley and lemon.

Various bisques and fish soups are excellent Lenten fare, and should be more generally used than they are, as should also fish salads, chowders and creams. We are not very well acquainted in this country with the fish pies of which the English are so fond, but they provide a quite delicious way to utilize cold fish and cold mashed potatoes.

Indeed, the variety in fish fare is very marked, and gives small reason for complaint, should this sea or fresh water food be a matter of daily, or even more frequent, occurrence on the family board.

Fish Moulds are Useful for Rice and Salmon.

Fish Recipes for Lenten Fare

A Left-Over Fish Bisque.

RID COLD baked, or boiled, or broiled fish of bones and skin, pick into fine bits with a silver fork. Get from your fish merchant for a few cents a pint of oyster liquor. Put over the fire with a generous lump of butter, pepper and salt. Bring to a boil, add the fish, cook one minute and stir in a scant cupful of crumbs soaked in milk. Simmer for three minutes and serve. Pass sliced lemon with it.

Red Snapper Soup.

Heat a quart of white stock to a boil, stir in two cupfuls of the cold cooked fish, freed of skin and bones, and minced finely. Add pepper, salt, a tablespoonful of chopped parsley and a great spoonful of butter. Heat a cupful of milk to boiling, thicken it with a white roux and a half cupful of fine cracker crumbs. When the fish has cooked in the soup for five minutes, stir the liquid into the thickened milk and serve.

Planked Shad.

Have your fish cleaned and split down the back. Wash and wipe dry. Have ready a clean oak or hickory plank about two and a half inches thick, and of such a length that it will go readily into your oven. Set it in the oven till it is heated through. Rub your shad on both sides with an abundance of butter, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Lay it, open side up, on the hot plank, and fasten it firmly in place by putting a tin tack in each of the four corners. Lay the plank on the upper grating of the oven, and rub the fish with butter every few minutes until done. You can tell when this point is reached by testing with a fork. Carefully withdraw the plank and serve the fish on a hot platter. Serve with melted butter and ketchup with lemon and sprigs of parsley.

Shad Roe Croquettes.

Parboil and blanch. When perfectly cold break up and pass through a colander or vegetable press. Season with lemon juice, kitchen bouquet, paprika and salt. Have ready a cup of rice, rather thick drawn butter. Stir the rice into it, and add a

well-beaten egg, together with a tablespoonful of fine bread crumbs to give the croquettes consistency. Let the mixture get perfectly cold, mould into croquettes, dip in egg and bread crumbs and leave on the fire over night. In the morning renew the crumbs and fry in deep, heating fat, which has been brought gradually to a boil.

Salmon Loaf.

Flake cold boiled salmon and moisten it with a spoonful of cream, a half gill of milk and two beaten eggs. Stir in a handful of fine crumbs, the juice of half a lemon, a tablespoonful of butter, salt and pepper to taste, and a tablespoonful of minced parsley. Mix thoroughly, turn into a greased pudding dish, and bake in a steady oven for three-quarters of an hour; then turn out upon a hot platter. Serve with a white sauce. This may also be boiled in a large covered fish mould.

A Curry of Salmon.

Open a can of salmon two hours before using and remove all bits of skin and bones. Pour two tablespoonfuls of olive oil in a frying-pan and fry it in a minced onion. When the onion is brown, stir into the oil a tablespoonful of flour mixed with a teaspoonful of curry powder, and when these are blended add a large coffee-cupful of boiling water. Season and stir for a moment, and turn the salmon into the mixture. Cook for two minutes and serve. Pass sliced lemon with this dish.

Halibut Steak Baked With Tomatoes.

(A Creole recipe.) Make a rich sauce of tomatoes, fresh or canned, seasoning with butter rolled in flour, sugar, pepper, onion juice and salt. Add, if you have it, a sweet green pepper, seeded and minced. Cook fifteen minutes, strain, rubbing through a colander, and add. Lay the halibut in oil and lemon juice for an hour, place upon the grating of your covered roaster; pour the sauce over it and cover and bake twelve minutes to the second if the oven be good. Sift Parmesan cheese over the fish and cook five minutes longer. Serve upon a hot dish, pouring the sauce over it.

Imitation Caper Sauce.

Cut cucumber pickles into tiny cubes with a sharp knife. Do not chop them, as the bits must be of uniform size. Drain thoroughly and stir into hot drawn butter. Boil for one minute. Eat with fish or chops.

Beurre Sauce.

Beat the yolks of two eggs very light; put into a raised-bottom saucepan and set in one of boiling water; stir into it a few drops at a time, three tablespoonfuls of salad oil, beating as you stir; then, as gradually, the same quantity of boiling water; next, one tablespoonful of lemon juice, a dash of cayenne and salt. This is served with all sorts of fish; also with chops, cutlets and steaks.

Marion Harland

Family Meals for a Week

SUNDAY

BREAKFAST.

Fruit, cereal and cream; creamed fish au gratin, fried mush, brown bread and butter, tea and coffee.

LUNCHEON.

Baked ham, Welsh rabbit sandwiches, fruit salad, cream cheese and crackers, strawberries and cream, cake, tea.

DINNER.

Oyster bisque, brisket of beef à la mode, broiled sweet potatoes, curried tomatoes, cabinet pudding, with brandy sauce; black coffee.

MONDAY

BREAKFAST.

Fruit, cold oatmeal porridge and cream, fried shad, baked potatoes, brown and white toast, tea and coffee.

LUNCHEON.

Cold beef, baked curried tomatoes (a left-over), stuffed potatoes, custard pudding, bread and butter, cocoa.

DINNER.

Scotch egg soup, lamb's liver en cassé, sole, whipped potatoes, spinach, boiled veal, garnished with hard-boiled eggs; rice cream, with brandied peaches and light cake, black coffee.

TUESDAY

BREAKFAST.

Fruit, cereal and cream; fried bacon, baked eggs, cornmeal muffins, toast, tea and coffee.

LUNCHEON.

Hashed liver on toast (a left-over), potato soufflé (left-over), baked rice with cheese sauce, warm gingerbread and chocolate or coffee.

DINNER.

Browned potato soup, boiled leg of mutton, with oyster sauce; stuffed potatoes, sprouts, soufflé (a left-over), queen of puddings, coffee.

WEDNESDAY

BREAKFAST.

Strawberries, cereal and cream; mince of ham with poached eggs, potato biscuits, toast, tea and coffee.

LUNCHEON.

Oyster omelette, baked cream toast, lettuce and fruit salad, strawberries, spinach, whole-wheat bread and cheese sandwiches, bread pudding with strawberry sauce.

DINNER.

Bean and tomato soup; baked shad, with sauce; poached lamb chops, string beans, green peas, strawberries and cream and sponge cake, black coffee.

THURSDAY

BREAKFAST.

Fruit, mush and cream, fish croquettes (a left-over), Graham biscuits, toast, tea and coffee.

LUNCHEON.

Barbecued ham (a left-over), fried mush (a left-over), scalloped potatoes, macaroni salad (with peas and beans left over from yesterday), boiled rice, served very hot, with sugar and butter, or sugar and cream, cocoa.

DINNER.

Russian soup; second day steamed mutton, with tomato sauce (left over from Tuesday), asparagus, young beets, wine jelly and cream, cup cake, black coffee.

FRIDAY

BREAKFAST.

Berries, cereal and cream, fishballs, mince of ham, toast, tea and coffee.

LUNCHEON.

Oyster fritters, stuffed potatoes, Nonpareil corn bread, bread and butter (thin), water-cress salad, strawberries and cream, cocoa.

DINNER.

Clam chowder, baked halibut and lemon sauce, mashed potatoes, asparagus à la vinaigrette (a left-over), strawberry shortcake and cream, black coffee.

SATURDAY

BREAKFAST.

Fruit, hominy and cream, broiled ham (a left-over), Graham biscuits, white toast, tea and coffee.

LUNCHEON.

Scalloped halibut (a left-over), potato puff, hominy croquettes, fried potato, Swiss toast, with sauce, tea.

DINNER.

Macaroni soup, with Parmesan cheese, beefsteak and onions, rice potato, spinach à la crème, orange pudding, black coffee.