

HOUSEHOLD.

Something About Potatoes.

A good cook! A good cook is not, as some think, one who can, on a special occasion, get up the most elaborate dinner; but one who can and does best prepare every day the commonest articles of the every day meal. The best teachers of cookery lay the greatest stress on the importance of the proper cooking of vegetables and meat. They deplore the fact that some of our oldest housekeepers do not really know how to cook even potatoes well. Here are some valuable hints from Miss Corson on how to cook potatoes. In ordinary households she says the potato is as regularly served upon the daily table as bread, but it is generally cooked without regard to variety, probably because, like bread, it can be eaten without satiating the appetite. Beyond boiling, baking, stewing and frying potatoes, the average cook seldom goes; but occasionally the bright thought strikes some seeker after culinary novelties that this commonplace fruit of the earth has capacities hidden from the multitude, and a most enjoyable dish is the consequence. Beyond the successful boiling and baking of potatoes, advances lie open to the most delicate and savory methods of serving our chief carbonaceous food. An entire dinner can be based upon it; true, it resembles the soldier's "stone" soup in that it demands adjuncts, but they are of inexpensive character, such as eggs, milk, cheese, butter, drippings, and scraps of meat or fish remaining from large dishes. With such comparatively small helps the entire menu can be filled, from soup to dessert. It is not, however, our present purpose to enter upon such details, but to present some rather unusual uses of the potato as a vegetable esculent. To make ripe potatoes mealy the one point to be remembered is that they must be taken from the water as soon as the starch cells are so far cooked that the cell walls are ready to burst; if drained at that moment all superfluous moisture will escape in the form of steam, leaving the interior dry and floury. It does not matter whether the water in which the potatoes are placed for boiling is cold or hot when they are put into it, but they should be drained as soon as they can be readily pierced with a fork, covered with a folded towel, and put where they will keep hot without burning; in ten or fifteen minutes they will be in good eating condition, and can be kept so for hours, hot and dry. The addition of salt to the water in boiling improves their flavor.

In baking potatoes care must be taken to remove them from the oven and break the skins when they are tender enough to yield to pressure; baked potatoes are at their best when just done; beyond that point they deteriorate; they harden near the skin, and gradually lose their light, mealy consistency. When the intention is to fry, boil or stew whole cold potatoes, they should not be mashed, but simply peeled, and suitably sliced when ready for cooking.

Potato and Ham Fritters.—To a pint of mashed potatoes add a cupful of flour, a high seasoning of salt and pepper, two or three tablespoonfuls of grated cold cooked ham, two raw egg yolks and enough cold milk to form a stiff batter. Put over the fire the frying kettle half full of fat, and while it is heating lay ready the skimmer and some brown paper in a dripping-pan; beat the two whites of egg to a stiff froth and lightly stir them into the batter. When the fat begins to smoke put the batter into it by the tablespoonful; as the fritters become light brown, take them up with the skimmer and lay them on the paper, the pan being placed in the oven to keep them warm; when all are thus fried, transfer them to a hot dish covered with a napkin, and serve them hot. A few parsley or celery leaves garnish the fritters nicely.

Potato Turnovers.—Prepare mashed potatoes as directed in the preceding recipe, omitting the milk; lay the mass upon a floured board, roll it out half an inch thick and cut it in circles with a large cup; upon each round put a tablespoonful of any cold meat, poultry or fish, freed from bones and chopped; season the meat; wet the edges of the circles with beaten egg, and close each one like a little turnover. Either fry them as directed above, or brush them with beaten egg, and color them a little in the

oven. Serve the turnovers hot, upon a napkin.

Potato Pie.—Prepare mashed potatoes as for the table, or use that remaining from a meal; use any cold meat stew, or fricassee of fish or poultry, removing all bones; line the bottom and sides of a baking dish with the potato; put the meat within, highly seasoned; cover it with more potato; there should be sauce to moisten the meat; brush the top with beaten egg, brown the pie in the oven, and serve it hot in the same dish in which it was baked.

Scalloped Potatoes.—Slice cold, boiled potatoes; put them into a baking dish in layers, with a little cheese grated among them, and enough white or brown sauce to moisten them; dust the top with sifted crumbs seasoned with salt and pepper; dot the crumbs over with butter, and brown them in the oven. Serve the scalloped potatoes hot, in the dish in which they were baked.

Cream Potatoes.—Put cold sliced potatoes over the fire in a saucepan, with enough cream sauce to cover them; season them palatably, heat them, and serve them hot.

Cream Sauce.—Put over the fire in a thick saucepan a tablespoonful each of butter and flour, and stir them until they are smoothly blended; pour in half a cupful of milk and stir that smoothly with the butter and flour; continue to stir in milk until a pint has been used, and the sauce is quite free from lumps; season it palatably with salt, white pepper and a little grated nutmeg, and boil it for a moment; then use it.

White Sauce.—This is made like cream sauce, using hot water in place of milk.

Brown Sauce or Gravy.—Stir together over the fire a tablespoonful each of butter and flour until they begin to brown, but do not allow them to burn; then gradually stir in a pint of boiling water, season with salt and pepper, stir it smooth, boil it, and it will be ready to use either in preparing scalloped potatoes, for warming cold boiled potatoes, or in combination with freshly boiled or baked potatoes. If the sauce is palatably seasoned it adds greatly to the flavor of the potatoes.

Dark Cake Without Eggs.

- One cupful of raisins, chopped fine.
- One-half cupful of sugar.
- One-half cupful of butter.
- One-half cupful of molasses.
- One egg.
- One cupful of sour milk.
- One teaspoonful of soda.
- Spice of all kinds.
- Bake in a loaf.—Housekeeper.

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