

FOOD VALUES OF FISH.

SOME COMPARISONS OF FISH WITH OTHER FOODS.

THE value of any food to the body is reckoned upon its yield of digestible nutrients, chiefly in the form of protein, fat, starch and sugar. The market demand for it frequently depends upon its cost.

Fish yields a great deal of protein (the chief body-building material) and in many cases at considerably less cost than meat, eggs, and milk.

Conserve the land products by eating the products of the sea. There is no way in which meats can be saved so well as by using fish in the place of meat. We have been large meat eaters and have on occasions used fish as a change or as a lenten dish on one day of the week instead of meat, but we have not considered it as a steady article of diet. Most fish, properly cooked, are digested with more ease than meat, and are completely absorbed, so that we can substitute fish for a large part of the meat now eaten with profit and increased health.

The energy yielding value of a food is reckoned in calories. A calorie is the unit of heat or energy generated in the human body by the assimilation of a certain amount of food. In other words, the heat necessary to raise four pounds of water one degree Fahrenheit, is one calorie.

The energy value of fish, especially of the oily fish, compares favourably with other foods. Generally speaking fish has about the same percentage of digestibility as meat, the non-oily kinds being more easily digested than the oily ones.

The calorie rating of different foods is not a complete measure of their value. A better test is the proportion absorbed by the human body as tissue-and-blood-building elements. From this point of view fish foods rank very high.

CLASSIFICATION.

Fish may be classified as:—

Oily—as Salmon, Trout, Mackerel, Herring, etc.

Non-Oily—as Haddock, Cod, Hake, Pollock, Halibut.

In the oily fish the fat is mingled through the flesh, and in the so-called non-oily, the oil is contained in the liver, and is therefore removed when the fish is dressed for cooking.

PURCHASING.

Fish appears on the market in the form of fresh, salt, dried and smoked, shredded, frozen and canned fish. Most markets offer Smoked Salmon, Haddock, Trout and Herring, shredded Codfish, salted and dried Cod, Hake and Pollock, while Herring appears also in the form of Kippered Herring and pickled Herring. There are many brands of canned salmon, differing in appearance and in price, but while some of the cheaper brands of canned salmon are somewhat less attractive in colour and shape, their food value is about the same. In purchasing fresh fish, see that the eyes are bright and prominent, that the flesh is firm, and the gills red.

Many fish such as Skate, Red Cod, Ling Cod, Burbot, Cusk, Mullet, Catfish, Silver Hake and Gray Fish, are of excellent food value, but there has been comparatively little market for them because they have not been well known.

WHAT TO DO WITH FISH IN DANGER OF SPOILING.

Fish will keep longer cooked than raw, so that surplus fresh fish can be cooked by steaming, boiling or baking, and then this can be reheated when needed; or they can be baked in a granite pan with the addition of a quantity of weak vinegar, salt, pepper and a bay leaf. This pickled fish is excellent either hot or cold. Any left-over fish (not pickled in vinegar) can be used to make creamed fish, scalloped fish, fish pie or fish chowder.