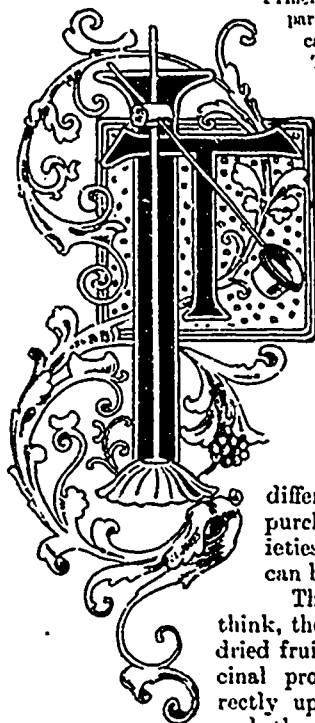


IN THE HOUSEHOLD.

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IT is at this season of the year that we begin to appreciate the various kinds of dried fruits from California and France, with which our stores are so plentifully supplied.

If for any untoward reason our supply of home-made preserves begins to dwindle, what a relief to think of the many different kinds that can be purchased, and also the varieties of ways in which they can be prepared for use.

The homely prune is, I think, the most useful of all the dried fruits, having certain medicinal properties which act directly upon the nervous system, and, though very generally despised, can be made into many healthful as well as appetizing dishes. Simply stewed they make a very refreshing dish, but care must be taken to do this properly. In the first place wash them very thoroughly, as they have necessarily passed through many hands before reaching your kitchen. Then put them to soak for about eight hours, when they will become swollen to their natural size. Put them into a saucepan with enough water to cover them nicely and add a little sugar and some lemon juice. The prunes should then be cooked very slowly and have very little liquid when done. Serve them with a good rich cream and they will not be disdained.

Another way, which is also very nice but rather more elaborate, is to take three-quarters of a pound of French prunes, put them to soak in plenty of cold water for two or three hours, drain them and put in a saucepan with one cup of water, one-quarter of a pound of fruit sugar, two dozen of blanched almonds and a small piece of stick cinnamon. Cover the pan and put over the back of the fire, where the fruit will just simmer for one hour. At the end of that time remove the cinnamon and add a good teaspoonful of butter, again cover and cook slowly for another half an hour. Take from the fire and stir in a wine-glassful of sherry. Pour the prunes into the dish in which they are to be served, and let them become cold, when served have whipped cream with them.

Many people object to the wine and in that case here is still another way in which they may be prepared.

Soak one pound of large, nice prunes over night. In the morning drain them and put into a saucepan with about a cup and a half of water, cook very slowly until the fruit is tender, then take the prunes up with a skimmer and place them in the dish in which they are to be served. If the water in the saucepan has boiled away very much add enough to make about a cupful in all, then add the very thin outer yellow rind of a lemon (the thick white skin would add a very bitter flavor, so be careful not to use it) and also the strained juice of the lemon. Sweeten to taste, about three tablespoonsful of sugar will be sufficient, then bring this to boil and add one-quarter of an ounce of gelatine, and when this has entirely dissolved remove the lemon peel and pour the

liquid over the prunes. This is usually an acceptable dish, particularly if whipped cream is served with it.

Prune bread pudding is also another very nice dish and very easily prepared. Soak one pint of stale bread crumbs in one quart of milk for two hours, then beat them until very fine with a fork. Beat two eggs light and add three tablespoonsful of sugar and one saltspoon of salt. Mix with the crumbs and milk, stir in a generous cup of prunes pitted and cut in quarters. Turn into a slow oven and bake for forty-five minutes.

Serve with a sauce made as follows:—

Beat the yolk until it is very light, then stir in two tablespoonsful of sherry and half-a-cup of powdered sugar. When these are well-mixed add four tablespoonsful of whipped cream, and lastly the well beaten white of egg, when it is ready to serve.

Another nice prune pudding to be eaten hot is made as follows:—Take half-a-pound of nice prunes, and after washing and soaking them, stew them in about a cup and a half of water until they are tender, which will take about half an hour. Then remove from the fire and strain all the juice off them, remove the stones and chop the prunes as fine as possible then add a scant half cup of sugar, and when it is well mixed with the fruit add the well-beaten whites of two eggs pour into a buttered pudding dish and bake for about fifteen minutes in a moderate oven.

Another pudding made in much the same way is prune meringue pudding, the only difference being that there are the whites of five eggs used instead of two, and it should be baked for twenty to twenty-five minutes in a slow oven, then eaten cold with a boiled custard.

The first of these two puddings is the simplest and nicest. English cookery books when giving recipes for these two puddings give instructions that the prunes are to be rubbed through a sieve, but that takes a long time to do, and they are almost as nice without; so that in this case "the game is not worth the candle."

Another excellent pudding is called prune puff. Mix half a cup of butter with two tablespoonsful of granulated sugar and the yolks of two eggs. When they are thoroughly beaten together, add one cup of sweet milk and about two cups of flour, to which two teaspoonsful of baking powder has been added, and stir all well together. Have a large cupful of nice fresh prunes ready cut into quarters. Butter a pudding dish, and put in the latter a layer of batter, then sprinkle over a layer of the prepared prunes, alternate, until all the materials are used. Place the dish in a steamer and steam two hours without lifting the cover. Serve hot with any nice sauce.

Prunes in wine jelly:—Take two heaping cups of good prunes, wash them well, soak and then put them into a saucepan with one pint of water. Cook slowly until the fruit is tender. Remove them from the water they were cooked in and take out the stones. If the water should have boiled away add enough fresh to make the original quantity (one pint), add three-quarters of a cup of sugar and the juice of one lemon to the water in which the prunes were cooked, bring to the boil and add half an ounce of sheet gelatine. When this is quite dissolved add one wine-glass of sherry and half a tablespoonful of brandy. Put the stoned prunes back in the mixture, and when it begins to get cold and thicken, pour into a mould and set in a cold place to harden. Turn the jelly out upon a nice dish and serve either with whipped cream or custard.

Fresh prunes pitted, cut into pieces and stirred into a thick custard are nice to put between layers of cake. Large fresh prunes make a nice after-dinner

sweet. Make openings in the side with a sharp pointed knife, and remove the stones, fill the space with a blanched almond and roll the prunes in powdered sugar.

The following is a suggestion for a 14th of February menu, written on heart shaped card:—

Consomme St. Valentine
Heart.

Beets. Potatoes (mashed).
Salad of Love Apples.
Love in a Cottage.

The soups are ordinary consomme with the savory custard for garnishing, cut in heart shapes; then either a beef heart or, what would be much prettier, a lamb's heart might be provided for each person, which, when stuffed and well cooked, somewhat resembles pigeon in flavor. Love apples is the old-fashioned name for tomatoes. For dessert make an ordinary cottage pudding and stamp out the portions with a heart-shaped cutter.

This is, of course, all very simple, but might be made quite elaborate, and is quite a pretty idea, I think.

We give recipes for various kinds of tarts, which aid largely in supplying the table with delicacies in the months when the fruit jars are nearly empty and fresh fruit is not in:—

Cheese Tarts

One cupful of curd drained dry, yolks of two eggs, three cupfuls of sweet cream, one half cupful of dried currants—washed and re-dried, a pinch of salt and pepper; sweeten to taste. When baked, ice with the stiffly frothed whites of eggs. Sit them in a hot oven two minutes.

Snow Tartlets.

Bake the paste shell, keeping them as white as possible; heap as full as possible with whipped cream, sprinkle with cocoanut or almonds grated. Or, lay a teaspoonful of stiff red jelly on each tart.

To make the whipped cream, take one pint of rich, sweet cream, as cold as possible; sweeten and flavor to suit taste; whip to a stiff froth with an egg-beater.

Lemon Tarts.

Peel and grate a good lemon, add two-thirds of a cup of white sugar, yolk of one egg, one cup of cold water, in which has been well-mixed a dessertspoonful of corn-starch; stir well together; cook in a new tin or porcelain pan; stir until it is a smooth jelly. This is good between layers of a cake. Fill the tart shells, ice with the white of one egg whipped to a froth with a spoonful of sugar, and set them in a hot oven one minute.

Apple Tarts.

Line round patties with paste; in each one place the half of a tart peeled apple (use those only you are sure bakes quickly), a tablespoonful of sweet cream, butter size of hickory nut, tablespoonful of sugar and a pinch of nutmeg. Put core side of apple down, and sugar, etc., on top. Bake until the apples are soft.

Cranberries.

Wash one quart of berries, drain them, add one pint of cold water, boil (closely covered) just ten minutes. Add one pint of granulated sugar, boil just ten minutes longer, keeping them covered. This jelly perfectly when cold, strained or otherwise. Cook in porcelain and stir with a wooden spoon, a metal destroys the bright color of the berries. The cranberry tart can be made of this, with strips of puff-paste laid across forming a diamond. It should be thick and the cranberry should be strained.

