The Western Home Monthly

Winnipeg, July, 1913.

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Household Suggestions

Cooking Vegetables

The usual method of cooking vege-tables in a large quantity of water, which is afterwards thrown away, is not to be recommended, as it means the loss of much valuable saline matter. Where the cooking liquor is not used, as with such vegetables as peas, turnips, beans, etc., etc., it is well to add a little sugar to replace that which has been lost in the boiling. Root vegetables are al-ways improved by the addition of a little butter when being served.

It is difficult to give a definite time for the cooking of either root or green vegetables, as so much depends on their age and freshness. Green vegetables should be cooked rapidly in .boiling, salted water; they should not be covered while cooking as this tends to make while cooking, as this tends to make them lose their f color. Some cooks add a little soda to the water in which green vegetables are cooked, but this is neither needful nor advisable.

Just as soon as vegetables are tender they should be removed from the water, as too much cooking causes the flavor to deteriorate. The exception to the rule of cooking green vegetables in boiling water is spinach, which requires no water other than that which clings to the leaves after washing.

Spinach needs more washing than any other vegetable because it grows in a sandy soil close to the ground. To prepare it for cooking, remove the roots and dead leaves; then wash by placing it a little at a time in a large vessel of cold water, toss it about, and trans-fer it to fresh water. Repeat the process till all the sand is removed, and the last water is perfectly clear. From six to ten waters may be needed to ac-

complish this properly. When preparing cabbage, cauliflower, dandelion and beet greens, remove all the dead leaves, wash thoroughly, then let stand in cold, salted water for an hour before cooking. This draws out any insects that may be hidden among the leaves.

Cabbage should be cut into quarters when being cleaned; cauliflower is sometimes divided into small flower stalks, and when this is not done it is wise to make a crosscut in the stalk, otherwise, being hard, the center is not likely to be sufficiently cooked as soon as the rest of the plant.

Beets need no preparation before cook-ing, and should be boiled without even cleaning. If the skin is broken they will "bleed" and lose much of their attractive color. The tops should be cut off several inches above the root, and the beets cooked till tender in boiling water. Young beets will cook in about an hour but old ones take much longer. Green vegetables are sometimes prepared for the table by blanching-that is, cooking in fast boiling water from five to twenty minutes, having the saucepan uncovered. The water is then drained off, and the cooking completed by adding a little butter or drippings, seasoning, and a little stock, after which the saucepan is covered and the cooking continued very gently till the vegetables are tender. This method gives a much better flavor than where they are simply boiled in a large quantity of water. There are several ways of eliminating at least a part of the odor of cooking vegetables. One is to discard the mist cooking water after five minutes, replacing it with fresh water; a second plan is to place a small piece of charcoal in the pan with the vegetables; or, with onions or greens cook a slice of red pepper, fresh and dried, in the same pan. Cucumbers, when they begin to get old, lend themselves to many kinds of cookery. They are very good stuffed and baked, and are prepared by cutting into halves, simmering till tender, then removing the seeds and filling the cavity with a savory forcemeat of bread crumbs, a little onion, lemon rind, or any seasoning preferred, together with half as much meat finely minced, as you have crumbs. Moisten with gravy, stock, or milk before filling the cucum- pound of butter, one tablespoonful of

pour a little white sauce over them. and bake twenty minutes.

If you prefer to fry the cucumbers, cut them after peeling, into thick slices, and cook till golden brown, after which place them in a saucepan with a minced onion, seasoning, and enough stock to cover. Cook slowly for three-quarters of an hour, and add a little lemon juice just before serving. Served with steak, or lamb chops, these are excellent.

Puff Paste and How to Make it

There are many good cooks who will tell you frankly that they cannot make good pastry. Either it is tough or it is greasy or possibly it has both faults. We need none of us think very hard to remember pies and tarts we would rather not have been invited to eat. And yet, the making of pastry began away back when the first cook dis-covered that by adding oil and honey to the meal for her flat cake she could make it into a tempting dainty. Somewhere in the beginning of the middle ages butter began to take the place of oil, salt was used as a flavoring and it was discovered that eggs imparted lightness and richness to the pastry. Then began the use of pastry as an enclosure for meat followed quickly by its combination with fruit and cream. In those days of groaning boards heaped with everything edible there was no lack of opportunity for its use, and up to the middle of the nineteenth century every chef vied with his fellows in the construction of wonderful pastries and confections, huge in size, and elaborate in design and decoration. In recent years our talent in this direc-tion has been limited to small pastries, which if less imposing still afford scope for ingenuity, taste and manipulative skill.

The quality most to be desired in pastry is lightness, and when it is thoroughly understood that this depends al-most entirely in the amount of cold air in the pastry when expansion takes place in the oven there will be few failures. The difference between puff paste and short paste is that in the former there are thin layers of air and pastry alternating, while in the latter the air is mixed in irregularly.

A frequent cause of failure with pastry is the use of the ordinary household flour, which, while more valuable as food than the fine starchy flour, contains a larger proportion of gluten and makes tough pastry.

The butter used for pastry should be good and sweet. For ordinary pastry, good clarified fat is better than lard or

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dripping.

Rich short crust is lighter when made very stiff using little water, but a plain crust unless it is sufficiently moistened will be hard and tough. The consistency of the butter determines the amount of water to be used in making puff paste; when the butter is soft the paste must be equally so, otherwise it is impossible to keep the layers separate and the paste is deprived of some of its flakiness.

The fat or butter should never be rubbed in with the palms of the hands but lightly and thoroughly with the finger tips. A knife is best for mixing as it is cooler than the hands and paste should be kept as cool as possible.

Paste should never be rolled backwards and forwards, but in short forward rolls, lifting the pin between the rolls. Puff paste should never be rolled off the edges, as this forces out the air; thin the edges by a little pressure or by an inward roll. Care in this respect and allowing the paste to stand between the turns and so giving the butter time to harden and keep the layers separate will ensure success with puff paste. Paste to which baking powder has been added should be got into the oven as speedily as possible, otherwise the effect of the baking powder will be lost.

Puff paste:-One pound of flour, one bers. Lay the halves in a baking dish, lemon juice, Wash and squeeze the