

School for Housewives

CAKE MAKING IN THE HOME KITCHEN

Creaming Sugar and Butter.

HOME-MADE CAKE, if properly compounded of the best materials and properly baked, is far superior to the best products of the confectioner's skill. "Baker's cake" is not to be named in the same breath or in the same day with it. It is richly worth the housewife's while to learn how to make cake, even though she may practice the art rarely, if at all.

The average hired cook puts ingredients together "by guess." In which, the trick of the trade she is imitated by mistresses who should know and do better.

It is not a month since the wife of a well-to-do man informed me that she had the most satisfactory results in cakemaking when she "just flung the materials together any-which-way, and trusted to luck to bring them out right."

It is less than a fortnight since I overheard her lamenting to a neighbor that her last batch of cookies was not fit to eat.

"But you can't always depend upon cake and bread," she sobbed. "So much depends upon luck,



Beat Yolk and White of Eggs Separately.



Place Brown Paper over Cake Before Baking.

after all." The French, who teach cookery to the rest of the world, measure every ingredient, even spices. The direction "a pinch of this and a dash of that" are idle words to them.

Begin operations for cakemaking (be you veteran or novice in the art), by getting together everything that will be needed in the work. Measure flour, sugar, milk, butter, spices and fruit—if fruit is to be used—and count your eggs.

Arrange all in order upon the mixing table, within reach, together with the utensils you will re-

quire. Have mould or pan buttered and near by. You save time, strength and temper by following this rule.

Sift the flour with baking powder, if the latter is to go into the cake, and set aside with a cloth thrown over it to keep out dust and dampness. The eggs should be very cold, and uniform in size.

Begin mixing by creaming the butter and sugar.

Do you know what that means? A proffreader who, as the manner of such is, thought he knew what the author meant better than she could express, once "queried" the term in one of my cook books.

Next, beat the yolks of the eggs to a smooth lightness.

Do not stop while they froth and bubble. Beat the bubbles out of the mass. These go into the creamed butter and sugar, and are thoroughly incorporated.

Next comes the milk, if milk is used, as in plain cup-cake. Stir in quickly. Never put sour and sweet milk into the same batter.

Lastly, add the flour, alternately with the whites, which should have been beaten to a standing froth. In this part of the work the play of the egg-beater or spoon should be almost horizontal, "folding in" the flour and whites with long, sweeping strokes. As soon as the ingredients are fairly worked into a lumpless,

creamy whole, stop beating.

Except in the case of certain brands of pound cake, much beating, after the flour goes in, toughens the cake.

Do not try your "prentice hand" in the fine art of cakemaking upon a loaf. Begin with layers, baked in shallow pans, with filling of some kind between, or with small cakes baked in pat-pans.

Care and experience are essential to success in making and baking large loaves of cake.

You must be acquainted with the moods and tempers of your oven. All ranges are not alike with respect to the power of holding heat steadily for a given time.

Many cooks insist that the old-fashioned coal stove was more trustworthy in this matter than the modern and cleaner gas range.

You must have sustained heat for your cake, an even temperature from start to finish. If you have no thermometer, test the heat by holding your bare arm in the oven. If you can keep it there in tolerable comfort while you count twenty slowly you may confide the batter to the oven. Beyond this degree it would be likely to burn whatever goes in. Below it, the dough would not rise readily.

Lay a sheet of thick white or brown paper over the batter (never newspaper) for the first half hour. This is to hinder the formation of a crust before the heart of the cake is cooked; in which case it cannot gain its full height without bursting the premature incrustation.

BEAT OUT BUBBLES

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Test Heat of Oven With Bare Elbow.

Sometimes it rises with sufficient force to do this, and forms ridges and hillocks on the surface. Often, streaks and strata of indigestible heaviness are the result.

If fruit is to be added to the batter or dough, prepare it before you begin to work upon the butter and sugar. The currants should be cleaned, raisins seeded and citron shredded. All should be dried, mixed together and well dredged with flour.

FROSTING FOR CAKE

In separating the whites from the yolks, see to it that not a drop of yellow mingles with the clear albumen. It will ruin all so far as the meringue is concerned. The whites will refuse obstinately to stiffen into a snowy heap.

Break them in a cool, clean pitcher. Throw two table-spoonfuls of powdered sugar upon them, and begin to "fold" this in with long, slow, horizontal strokes of the whip. Two minutes later add the same quantity of sugar, and proceed in this way until you have used a pound of sugar for the whites of four eggs.

In thirty minutes the frosting should be ready for the cake.

This method, as I have said in "Common Sense in the Household," was taught to me forty years ago by a friendly confectioner. It is easier and safer than the old way of whipping the whites stiff before putting in the sugar.

Pour the frosting by the spoonful over the cake, letting it run from the top down the sides. If too thick to settle evenly, smooth with a broad-bladed knife dipped in cold water. Dry in a sunny window.

These general directions for the manufacture of cakes may be modified indefinitely to suit the taste of the housewife. As a foundation, they hold good in every case. The variations of minor principles are innumerable.

Marian Harland

.....THE HOUSEMOTHERS' EXCHANGE.....

A NEW JERSEY man and a brother have sent in a kind and full reply to the query about quince trees that will not bear.

The quince blooms early in the spring—too early for the safety of the tree unless it is planted in a sheltered corner where the blossoms will not be swept off by the spring storms before they have fairly filled out and are ready to fall.

My "experimental" quince tree was peculiarly situated. It stood on the west side, leaving all the fruit on the east. Our husband, after the storm, came upon it. I set up a screen, nailed to three posts sunk in the ground, and covered the tree with a sheet of glass. I removed the screen, and the fruit was saved.

Another year the storm came from the east and struck the blossoms from that side, leaving only the sheltered western branches in bearing. Now, if I should have a quince tree, I would say to my inquiring correspondent that my quince was planted on the sunny side of the garden, and they deserve it. The quince, bright, golden fruit is the pride of the family.

If the quince tree be in hard and sterile soil, let him lift it out. It has no tap-roots. Then dig a deeper and wider trench, rear the tree, and fill the hole with good loamy soil, well mixed with cow manure, broken leaves and mud-worms. Before planting the tree, smear the roots well with cow manure previously wet with water to a paste.

This must all be done before the buds begin to start. A tree thus treated will yield yearly from \$5 to \$10 worth of fruit—often more. Each tree should be kept well pruned, and the inside crossing branches and the main stem be cut to admit the sunlight.

In due time the bees and flies will do the rest. J. B. (Atlantic City, N. J.).

Useful Hints

Let me tell the Exchange of a sure and an easy way of removing any foreign substance from the eye.

Wash a hairbrush thoroughly and make it into a loop. Dip this loop in vinegar and insert it under the eyelid. A few drops of fresh cream will allay the consequent inflammation.

We have tried the above many times, and have never known it to fail.

Secondly, here is a recipe for a delicious orange cake.

Two cups of granulated sugar; two cups of flour; half a cup of butter; two table-spoonfuls of baking powder; the yolks of five eggs; and the juice of two lemons and grated rind of one orange. Bake in jelly-cake tin.

Filling for the Orange Cake. Beat the white of one egg stiff; add the juice and the grated rind of half an orange and stir in sugar to the consistency of jelly. Spread between the layers and upon the top of the cake.

I have several fine recipes for home-made candies, if you would like to have them. My mother and I enjoy your Corner.

We should be charmed to have your candy recipes. This is the height of the season for domestic candy-making.

Thanks and Queries

Through the Exchange I would thank the housemother from Indiana who kindly sent me the stocking pattern. I have not her address.

For years I have been wanting—yes, longing—for a good recipe for tartar. The kind the bakers make. Can you procure it for me?

I am happy to give in our column the correct way of laying a table? Should the teaspoons be placed or passed? Small dishes are not used for vegetables, are they? Should soup be served in bowls or in plates? Are vegetables passed or served by the host, or are they passed by the hostess? If there be no maid, what is the best way of serving dinner or tea? I should also like to know in what order the courses are served. For instance, chery, cheese, etc. If jelly be used with meat, is it placed at each plate?

Do the same customs prevail in Canada as in the United States?

Mrs. M. J. A. (Almonte, Can.).

I must draw a long breath before attacking your list. And, with the help of that, I am at a loss how to answer all queries to your satisfaction.

Do you mean by tartar, those baked in small pate-pans, or in pie-plates? The composition is the same in both cases. A really excellent puff-paste is filled with mince-meat, or preserved fruit or jelly, and baked. There is no particular art in the manufacture, except that confectioners usually make French puff-paste.

The proper way of setting the dinner, luncheon and breakfast table has been given in detail in our Exchange at various times. Your best plan would be to get a first-class cook-book of late date and read in that what you would learn of setting and serving tables.

Teaspoons are usually laid with the knives, forks, etc., beside the plates. It saves time and trouble in serving. Of course, in serving tea, coffee and chocolate, the spoon is laid in the saucer beside each cup.

I am happy to say that the American fashion (which never prevailed in other Christian countries) of serving vegetables in what Bayard Taylor ridiculed as "individual bird-baths," has disappeared from the face of the earth, unless, indeed, it may survive in the third-rate back-country hotel.

Soup is always served in plates at dinner. Consommé, or some kinds of broths, as clam, or oyster, or chicken bouillon, may be served in bouillon cups at luncheon.

Vegetables are passed from person to person by the waitress, or butler. There is no maid, the dishes may be set on the table and served by members of the family. This involves far less confusion and awkwardness than when some one connected with the family has to rise between courses to change plates, etc. Celery is set on the table and passed unconsciously, as are other hors d'oeuvres, including jelly. Cheese

accompanies salad, with crackers, or crackers and cheese go around last, and I fear these are but sketchy hints. But the matter is too big to be handled at length in our "cribbled, cabined and confined" Corner.

As to the last query, I fancy conventionalities in this respect are the same in Canada as across the border. On both sides of the boundary line we get our social and domestic customs from the Mother Country.

Tiny Items of Big Value

I herewith offer just two tiny items of big value.

The first water into which clothes are plunged when taken from the boiler should be blue, as it is the color of that water they absorb. The result, after two washings, is surprising whiteness.

Should the compressed yeastcake be crumbled dry into the flour, there will be no more heavy bread, even on the coldest night. I had plenty of failures before I did this, and have had none since I learned the truth fourteen years ago. I think that in this way the yeast retains all its gases.

A HOUSEMOTHER (Philadelphia).

Your last item is decidedly new to me.

I have always supposed that compressed yeast ought to be thoroughly dissolved in lukewarm water before it is mixed with the flour. Will other housemothers look into this novel (and apparently reasonable) suggestion and report?

For Broken "Fragiles"

And still another cement for broken fragiles: Dissolve a teaspoonful of powdered gum arabic in one of hot water. Mix with it enough plaster of paris to make a thick paste. Apply with a toothpick to the broken edges. Put aside to harden for a few days. Fractured china and glass thus cemented will withstand even hot water.

Mrs. R. E. L. (Montgomery, Ala.).

We will accept your word that the cement may be depended upon, but the process seems too simple to be true. You should have patented it and earned much gold for your purse and a wealth of gratitude from the mistresses of "free-handed" maids.

Whitening Linen

May I give a simple formula for whitening linen that has yellowed?

Shave a small cake of white soap very thin in a gallon of boiling water. Pour this over a quart of milk that is about two days old (let this season and stir well). Put the linen into the mixture, and leave it there four hours. Then wash and boil in the usual way. E. L. L. (Chicago).

A variation of the bleaching process often and strongly commended in our Corner—viz., soaking in soured milk. It is safe, cheap and within the reach of any housewife.

Questions Answered

Kindly tell some of us how to serve caviar. Also, how it is to be eaten—with the fork or with the fingers?

And what does "canape Hilkoft" mean? I have a book on the subject called "Kitchen French," but the term is not there on a menu. I have the little book with me, and I will try to find it for you.

Lastly, how does one serve Roquefort cheese? Is it eaten with the fork or taken up with the fingers?

W. D. R. (Logansport, Ind.).

Caviar is generally spread upon thin, delicate strips of toast, and served as a preliminary appetizer to luncheon or dinner. A pretty way of preparing it is to cut an equal number of slices of

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brown and of white bread, very thin, and divide into strips a little over an inch wide. Butter neatly and spread the white bread with the caviar paste. Press a slice of each kind of bread together, enclosing the caviar, and pile, crosswise, on a plate. They are usually eaten with the fingers, after the manner of sandwiches. Caviar toast is eaten in the same way. A "canape" is, as a rule, a strip or slice of toast with spread upon it. Sometimes it means strips of pastry covered with grated cheese and heated until the cheese is called "cheese fingers." The French name would be "canape."

The pastry is eaten with a fork; the toast is taken up daintily with the fingers.

Roquefort cheese is eaten with crackers, as one would handle other cheese, as the odor is strong, and clings, as the odor is strong, and clings.

"Hilkoft" is probably a proper name applied capriciously to the canape served in some particular hotel or restaurant.

Cooking Sweet Potatoes

Here is the recipe for cooking sweet potatoes in southern style requested of you by "A. O. G."

Into a large, flat-bottomed saucepan put half a cup of butter and two table-spoonfuls of sugar. When it is hot lay in raw sweet potatoes, pared and cut in halves lengthwise. Prepare enough to cover the bottom of the saucepan. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and put in loosely another layer of potatoes. Pour in enough boiling water to half cover the lower layer of potatoes; the heat is gentle. When the lower layer is brown, remove to the top, letting the next stratum brown in its turn.

If ham is wished as an accompaniment, fry as much as is desired, and cut into bits over the potatoes, using the drippings instead of butter in frying.

This is my own suggestion.

Will some consistent ones give me a recipe for vinaigrette sauce for cold asparagus?

Mrs. N.

Will the editor do as well as a constituent in the present instance? Asparagus is a vinaigrette is a frequent visitor to our table. And this is the way we prepare it:

Asparagus a la Vinaigrette

Roll the asparagus stalks until tender and cut into four or five inch pieces. Lay on a chilled platter and pour over it this dressing: Six table-spoonfuls of vinegar, a table-spoonful of oil, a half a cup of salt and sugar, and a dash of paprika. Let it stand on the ice for ten minutes before serving.

Or, pour over the cooked asparagus, white sauce, breaded and baked bananas, serving each with a glass of champagne.

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mustard, half a teaspoonful of sugar, salt and pepper to taste. Put the mustard over the fire and stir to a quick boil. Pour upon the asparagus and let it stand for an hour before serving.

The second recipe is especially delicious. We often make it on Saturday for a Sunday night supper.

Thank you heartily for the sweet potato dish. It is, I think, just what the querist wants.

Why Bread Splits on Top

Will some good breadmaker tell me what causes bread to split open on top while baking, and how it may be avoided?

NOVICE (Terre Haute, Ind.).

Again I venture an explanation: If the bread be baked covered for the first hour, it will not split or crack on top. If the oven be kept steady. The cracks are caused by unequal baking.

Wants Bulbs and Cuttings

If any of our eastern readers can spare roots or seeds of flowers, it wouldadden this gift be added books or magazines telling how to care for house plants—ferns, palms and other potted plants—I should be doubly grateful.

Mrs. M. J. (New Castle, Del.).

I am moved to make room for this request by the sight of my own window-sill filled with green and growing things, and my own beloved Warthan case—now in its thirty-fifth year, filling a window into which the sun beams coyly at this season. In it flourish wood ferns and tradescantia and diverse other creeping plants, and the miniature bit of woodland scenery is a ceaseless joy. Who will gladden the "gray life" of our supplant by a package of seed or of roots?

Aerated Bread