

The Country Cook

Tried and tested recipes will be welcome for this column. Recipes will be published, on request, for any dish. Address all correspondence "The Country Cook, Grain Growers' Guide, Winnipeg."

We are largely a nation of meat eaters, in fact most of us eat entirely too much meat for the good of our health. There are a number of vegetables that are excellent substitutes for meat and if properly cooked and served give variety to the menu. The Japanese, who have great powers of endurance, are practically vegetarians.

Vegetables are divided into four classes, viz., those rich in nitrogen, muscle and tissue building foods; those containing carbo-hydrates, starch and sugar; fatty vegetables, nuts and olives; and the vegetables containing water and mineral matter, such as carrots, cabbage, turnips, spinach, cress, lettuce and tomatoes. In the first class, the vegetables with a goodly quantity of nitrogen, we have peas, beans and lentils, these contain protein in a more concentrated form than meat, and are acted upon in the stomach the same as meat. In the carbo-hydrates we have rice, white bread, potatoes and the ordinary macaroni. These are largely digested in the mouth and the small intestine. The fatty vegetables are acted upon by the secretions from the pancreas and gall. The succulent vegetables are valuable chiefly for the mineral salts they contain and their action on the bowels.

Good Cooking Essential

Vegetables are often very badly cooked and so lose much of their flavor and food value. As a rule they should be cooked in uncovered vessels. Underground vegetables such as parsnips, carrots and turnips should be cooked at a low temperature, by which means they retain their flavor and color. Rapid boiling toughens the fibre and makes them more difficult of digestion. All underground vegetables should be cooked in unsalted water. For instance, turnips are white, sweet and palatable if cooked slowly in unsalted water, while if they are boiled rapidly in salted water they are pink, coarse and "strong." Starchy vegetables, on the other hand, should be cooked rapidly. Rice cooked slowly is wet and soggy, but properly cooked, each grain is separate and the whole is white and fluffy. Have ready a large kettle partly filled with boiling water, wash the rice and add it slowly to the water so as not to stop the boiling. Boil rapidly for thirty minutes, drain (the water that comes off the rice is excellent added to soup), pour over the rice some cold water and set the rice in the oven with the door open, tossing it occasionally with a fork.

The Humble Potato

I do not suppose many people are as ignorant about cooking potatoes as a woman I once knew. She was an excellent cook in many ways, but when it came to potatoes she would not cook them properly, nor could she learn. She always put them on at least one hour before dinner, and, if by any chance the meal was postponed for another half hour, those potatoes simmered merrily on, and by the time they came to the table one could wring the water from them.

Potatoes cooked in the following way will be dry and white and mealy to the core. Throw the potatoes into a kettle of boiling unsalted water, boil rapidly for ten minutes, then cook more slowly until nearly done. Be sure the water is boiling all the time. Just before the potatoes are done, add a cup of cold water. This cools the outside and gives the centre a moment longer to cook. When the water reaches the boiling point again, drain, sprinkle with salt and shake lightly over the fire.

Wholesome Cabbage

Cabbage is another very much misunderstood vegetable. It is more easily digested raw than cooked; boiled for hours with meat it is about the most indigestible thing one can eat. Boiled from half to three-quarters of an hour in slightly salted water it is excellent

and quite easily digested. Soak the cabbage in cold water (no salt) for one hour, shake, cut in quarters, or if very large in smaller pieces, put in boiling water to which has been added one teaspoonful salt, and cook until white and tender; if cooked too long it loses its color and becomes indigestible.

Onions should always be cooked in salted water.

Baked Beans

Baked beans are not used to the same extent in the West as in the East. It is difficult to cook them well with hard water, and this may be one reason why they are not used more. In fact, all vegetables containing casein, such as beans, peas, split peas and lentils, will not soften in hard water. The salts of lime in the water render the casein dense and difficult of digestion. A little soda added to the water will do wonders toward making them tender. Baked beans are a very handy thing to serve at threshing time. They are easily prepared, will keep for several days in a cool place, and can be sent out to the field as a luncheon dish in the crock in which they are baked, and so retain their heat.

Wash one quart of beans, soak over night, in soft water if possible. In the morning put on the range and simmer until tender, but not broken. Drain. Cut one pound of fairly fat pickled pork into cubes, parboil for two minutes. Have your bean crock ready, a small butter crock will do if a proper bean crock is not available. Put in a layer of beans and a layer of pork, and so on until the crock is full. An onion put in the centre of the crock improves the flavor. Add one teaspoonful mustard and if needed a little salt, quarter teaspoonful pepper, four tablespoonfuls "Domolco" molasses. Fill the crock with boiling water and bake for six or eight hours.

Steamed Brown Bread

Baked beans are good served with steamed brown bread. Mix together three cups of sour milk, one cup of "Domolco" molasses and two level teaspoonfuls soda, add two teaspoonfuls salt, three cups of corn meal and two of Graham or whole wheat flour. Beat until perfectly smooth. Put in mould sprinkling a few raisins and currants in, steam for three or four hours. Serve hot.

Suet Pudding

As the weather gets cooler we can relish the more hearty foods. Suet pudding will keep for weeks and is very handy to fall back on in case of emergency. A correspondent, who sent us some excellent pickle recipes for the last issue, sends the following for the benefit of her sister farmers. Two cups suet chopped fine, four cups flour, one cup raisins, one cup currants, one teaspoonful pepper, one teaspoonful salt. Rub all together thoroughly, tie in a piece of muslin, put in a kettle of boiling water and boil for two and a half hours. When cooked, drain, turn out of the muslin onto a platter and serve with the following sauce:

One pint of boiling water, one coffee cup sugar, two tablespoonfuls flour mixed with a piece of butter the size of a marble. Mix this well with the sugar and put in the boiling water; add one tablespoonful vinegar and half teaspoonful cinnamon or nutmeg, stir well and serve with pudding.

Suet Pudding No. 2

The following is my own recipe for suet pudding:

One cup of suet chopped fine, one cup molasses, one cup sour milk or buttermilk, three cups flour, one small teaspoonful soda, half teaspoonful cinnamon, quarter teaspoonful cloves, quarter teaspoonful nutmeg or allspice, one small teaspoonful salt, one cup of raisins or raisins and dates. Steam three hours. Serve with the following sauce: One tablespoonful butter mixed with one teaspoonful flour, one and a half cups boiling water, one small cup brown sugar. Flavor with lemon juice or extract and a dash of nutmeg.

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