

The Housekeeper's Page



LINEN has always been among the most prized possessions of the housewife, and it is little wonder, for fine linen combines with its usefulness a high degree of beauty. Among the ancient Egyptians and Hebrews, and later among the Greeks and Romans, fine linen was held in

high estimation. The weaving of linen has been carried on in Great Britain since an early period, the industry being much improved by the Flemish weavers who settled in the country about the eleventh century. In Ireland, the manufacture of linen has long been one of the leading industries, and the Irish linens are famous. The humid climate of the Emerald Isle is one of the factors in producing the excellence of Irish linens, as in some of the many steps in the process of manufacture of the flax into cloth, and its subsequent bleaching, a moist atmosphere is of decided advantage. The weaving of the beautiful, patterned damasks is to be counted among the arts. As is the case with most manufactures once carried on in the home, the weaving of linen has passed largely from the hand loom to the machine, although some beautiful linen is still spun and woven by hand.

It will not make the housewife think any the less of her store of linen to have some slight idea of the process of manufacture. The flax (a plant of the order Linaceae) is pulled up by the roots, and first treated to "rippling" which beats and shakes out the seeds. The stems of the plant are then steeped in soft water, and subjected to fermentation to get rid of superfluous resinous matter. After the "grassing," or drying, the flax stems are passed between fluted rollers which break up the woody portion, and this is then separated from the flexible fibres, which are to be spun into yarn. The long, superior fibres, called "line" are sorted out, by "heckling," away from the shorter, ravelled tow. The flax "line" is put through various frames and manipulated in order to form a long, continuous ribbon of uniform size throughout with all the fibres parallel. In spinning the flax, the fine yarn must be spun wet at a very warm temperature; the heavier, coarser qualities may be spun dry. The yarn is woven into linen of corresponding grades. When the cloth comes from the loom it is far from being of the snowy whiteness associated with linen. To attain this it must be bleached. In the days when the manufacture was one of the handicrafts, the linen was bleached on the grass by means of the sunlight, air, and moisture, the process requiring months for perfection, but now the machine woven cloth is treated chemically for the bleaching and finishing.

The great linen presses and chests of our ancestresses are not found as a rule in the homes of to-day, the modern housewife depending on renewing her supply when necessary or as a suitable occasion offers. It is advisable, however, to have always a good stock on hand, not only to avoid a shortage should there be any special demand, but also because the linen wears better not to be in too regular use. On the other hand, it should not be kept too long at a time folded away. Linen should be thoroughly aired before being put away, and the closet or cupboard where it is kept must be perfectly dry.



Selected Recipes.

Creamed Oysters.—Make a thick cream sauce as follows:—Heat a pint of cream over hot water. Put a heaping tablespoonful of butter in a saucepan and stir it till it melts and bubbles, but be careful not to burn it. Add two heaping tablespoonfuls of flour, and stir quickly till butter and flour are well mixed. Pour on a third of the cream, let boil, stirring as it thickens, then add another third of the cream, and so on, taking care to keep the sauce stirred smooth. Season with half a teaspoonful of salt, half a saltspoon of pepper, a few grains of cayenne and a pinch of celery salt. Pour half a cup of cold water over a pint of oysters; take out the oysters separately and look them over, removing bits of shell, etc. Put them in a saucepan without water, shake the pan slightly till the oysters are heated and sufficient water comes from them to prevent burning. Parboil until the edges curl and the oysters look plump. Skim them out, drain, and add the oysters to the hot cream sauce. Sprinkle bread crumbs browned in butter over the dish.

Potatoes in the half shell.—Select smooth, medium-sized potatoes, and scrub them clean with a vegetable brush. Bake them, then cut in halves lengthwise and scoop out the potato into a hot bowl, keeping the skins or shells intact. Mash smooth, season with salt and pepper, and

mix with a tablespoonful of melted butter and the same of hot milk, to every three potatoes. Beat the whites of two eggs stiff, and mix it with the potato. Fill the shells with the mixture, heaping it lightly on the top, and brown slightly in the oven.

Ham Omelet.—Beat the yolks of two eggs until light-colored and thick; add two tablespoons of milk, a spoonful of chopped parsley, and season with a saltspoonful of salt and a few grains of pepper. Beat the whites of the eggs stiff and dry, then cut and fold them lightly into the yolks. Heat the omelet pan, rub a teaspoonful of butter over it, and when the butter begins to bubble turn in the egg mixture and spread it smoothly over the pan. Cook until the omelet is firm underneath, but be careful that it does not scorch. Sprinkle over it three spoonfuls of chopped ham, fold it over, and serve hot.

Yorkshire Pudding.—This is a time-honored accompaniment to roast beef. Beat three eggs very light. Season with salt, and add a pint of milk. Put two-thirds of a cup of flour into a bowl, pour on part of the egg mixture, and stir to a smooth paste, then add the remainder, and beat well. Pour into a buttered pan and bake, basting the pudding occasionally with the dripping from the roasting beef. Cut into squares, and serve with the beef.

Steamed Raisin Pudding.—Put a pint of flour, three level teaspoons of baking powder, and half a teaspoon of soda into the flour sifter, and sift them together. Add a cup of milk and two tablespoonfuls of melted butter, and mix to a soft dough. Beat the yolks of two eggs, add half a cup of sugar, and beat into the dough. Add the whites of the eggs beaten stiff, and lastly a cup of raisins, stoned and cut into halves. The fruit should be floured so that it will not mass together. Steam the pudding two hours, and serve with lemon sauce or foamy sauce.

Golden Bavarian Cream.—Soak half a box of gelatine, or two and a half table-spoons of granulated gelatine, in half a cup of cold water till soft. Chill a pint of cream, and whip it, removing the whipped product into a cold bowl. When there is three pints of it set it in ice-cold water till wanted. Boil a pint of rich milk. Beat the yolks of four eggs, add half a cup of sugar and half a saltspoonful of salt, and pour on the boiling milk. Mix well, and cook in the double boiler a couple of minutes, stirring constantly. Add the soaked gelatine, and strain into a cold dish set in ice water. When it cools, add half a cup of strained orange juice. Stir till it begins to harden, then stir in quickly the whipped cream, and pour into moulds wet in cold water.

Salisbury Steak.—Use a slice of the best round steak, and cut away all fat and skin. Put the meat through a meat chopper, more than once if necessary to chop it very fine. Mould into a "steak" about an inch and a quarter thick, finishing the edges nicely. Put it into a wire broiler, and if necessary fasten a thin band around to keep the steak in shape. Broil over a clear fire for about five minutes, turning the broiler every eight or ten seconds. Remove the steak to a hot plate, sprinkle with salt, and serve at once, with a little butter.

Apple Fritters.—Make a batter as follows:—Beat the yolks of two eggs, add half a cup of milk, a tablespoonful of olive oil or melted butter, a saltspoonful of salt, a teaspoonful of sugar, and enough flour to make a batter of the right consistency. Just before using, mix in the whites of the eggs beaten stiff. Pare three or four good-sized firm apples, and core them without breaking the fruit. Cut crosswise into rings or slices a third of an inch thick. Sprinkle with sugar, lemon, and spice. Dip the slices, one at a time, in the fritter batter, and fry in hot fat. Drain, arrange on a dish, and sprinkle with powdered sugar.

Veal and Lettuce Salad.—Chop enough cold cooked veal to make two cups, and season with salt and pepper. Wash and dry the crisp leaves of a head of lettuce, and cut them into shreds. Chop two hard-boiled eggs, and mix lightly with the veal and shredded lettuce. Line the salad bowl with lettuce leaves, put in the salad, mounding it a little in the centre, and add mayonnaise dressing. Garnish with olives cut in pieces.

Lamb Cutlets.—Trim the cutlets neatly in uniform shapes, and remove nearly all the fat. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to season. Beat an egg well enough to mix the yolk and the white together. Brush each cutlet over on both sides with the egg, then cover with fine bread-crumbs, and fry in butter or dripping hot enough to send off a faint vapor. Drain on paper placed on a hot plate, and then arrange around a mound of mashed potato and green peas on a hot platter.

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Things Useful to Know.

Stale cake can be freshened and made almost like new by dipping it in cold milk and heating it through in a slow oven.

Sewing-machine oil stains on linen or cotton can usually be removed by wetting them with ammonia and rubbing the spots. This must be done before the garment is laundered the first time.

Milk stains or ice-cream stains on delicate silks can be removed by rubbing with chloroform, unless the stain has become set. The person using the liquid must be careful not to inhale the fumes. Covering the spots with powdered magnesia and leaving them for awhile will sometimes be sufficient.

To turn a firm jelly or cold pudding out of the mould, dip the mould in cold water for a moment, then invert it over a dish, when the contents will slip out easily.

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9187



9162

9187.—A NEW COAT MODEL.

White poplin with soutache braid for trimming was used for this design. The rolling collar may be omitted. The sleeve is a two-piece model with straight cuff. The design is suitable for velvet, cloth, pique, repp, linen and other coatings. The pattern is cut in 4 sizes: 4, 6, 8, and 10 years. It requires 1 1/4 yards of 44-inch material for the 6 year size.

9162.—SMALL GIRLS' SPRING FROCK.

This model has many desirable features. It will be found graceful and adapted to growing girls, and will develop nicely in chambray, gingham, linen, cashmere, flannel, or velvet. The sailor collar outlines a shield and the fronts are crossed to form a side closing. The fullness of the dress may be confined by the belt. The pattern is cut in 4 sizes: 6, 8, 10 and 12 years. It requires 4 1/4 yards of 27-inch material for the 8 year size.