

waste much time when next they are needed, aside from risking a mouldy or rusty taste in your food.

A good-sized bread or moulding board, white as snow, perfectly dry and smooth, should be placed on the table. It keeps the flour, sugar, etc., that may fall from the white table—and is readily lifted with all the soiled dishes on it, to the sink for washing, thus saving much litter, and many steps. Learn to cook without gathering a large number of things about; after a little practice you will be surprised to see how few things are really needed, and how much confusion and how many steps can be avoided by a little management.

In making cake, dry and sift the flour, roll the sugar, if at all lumpy (granulated sugar will not lump), and put it in separate bowls or pans. Wash the butter, for cake or pastry, and put it into cold icewater; weigh or measure the sugar and milk needed. Raisins should be stoned, the citron cut in thin slices, and currants washed and picked over, covered closely, and put away in a cool place the night before they are needed.

These materials all collected, butter the pans. If for cake, line them with clean white paper, well buttered. Use butter, instead of lard or drippings, as they may give an unpleasant taste to the under crust. Cake baked in butter-lined pans does not burn so readily on the bottom. If the cake does not require long baking, unbuttered paper will answer, as it will peel off readily when the cake is cool. Have some clean paper at hand to cover the top of the cake, if it begins to scorch.

The white paper used to print our newspapers on is as good for buttering and lining cake-pans as the more expensive letter-paper, and is also very nice to cover shelves with, or lay in the bottoms of drawers. Two or three dozen sheets will last a good while, be of little expense, and very convenient for many purposes.

Eggs that are to be used in cake should be put into cold water, in summer, while you are making your preparations, until ready to use them. Then break each one separately into a cup, to see if it is good; but by breaking all into the dish you beat them in, you risk ruining the whole by one bad egg. If good, turn it into the dish, and proceed the same way with the others. Have your nutmegs grated, and all other spices ready.

These preliminaries attended to, and it takes but a few minutes to have all in readiness when you have done it rightly and methodically, begin to put the materials together. First beat the butter and sugar together, till white and creamy; then beat the eggs—the yolks and whites separately always, as whites require longer beating than yolks. Strain the yolks after beating,

and add to the well-beaten butter and sugar; then the spices; stir in the flour gradually, before using the sweet or sour milk needed. If you use soda and cream of tartar, the latter should be sifted with the flour, and the soda dissolved in cool milk or water,—never in hot water—should be added after the milk. If prepared flour is used, no soda or cream of tartar can be put in at all. Beat the batter very light, flour the currants and raisins and stir in; then add the whites, beaten stiff, the last thing. After they are added, the batter must not be beaten hard—only enough to have it thoroughly incorporated with the dough. In beating the whites do not stop after you begin, till quite stiff, else they will “go back,” and then they will not come up light again.

In raised cake, put in the fruit, rolled in flour, just before you put into the oven. Spread it over the top lightly, and press it in only a little way down, else it will all sink to the bottom and be worthless.

Only practice and watchfulness can teach you how to judge correctly when cake, bread, etc., are done. If ever so perfectly made, it will be heavy if taken from the oven until thoroughly baked. When obliged to turn pans round in the oven, do not move them roughly, and never, if possible, take cake, bread or biscuit out of the oven to turn. The air striking on them will make them heavy and solid.

Cake made with sour milk, or buttermilk, should be put into the oven the moment it is put together, unless like cookies, or hard ginger-bread, it is to be moulded or rolled. In that case it is quite as good to be kept over night, or for some hours, before baking.

In making pastry use the best butter you can find. Poor butter is bad enough anywhere, but nowhere so detestable as in pastry. If made with lard it looks nicer, but is by no means as good, and certainly much more hurtful than when shortened with two-thirds more butter than lard. Use the hard as little as possible in making pastry; either rub in the shortening quickly, or chop it into the flour, so as not to heat it by your hands, particularly in warm weather. Wet always with cold water. Don't touch it with your hands after you are ready to put in the water, but stir together with a knife quickly and lightly, turning it at once on to the board and roll out. Moulding will make it tough. Bake in a moderately hot oven to a delicate brown. If scorched or hard baked it will be bitter and disagreeable. If your oven does not bake as well at the bottom as the top the bottom crust will be very heavy and unhealthy.

Before rolling out, let your pastry stand on the ice, or in a cold place for an hour, as it makes it much more flaky.—*Christian Union*.