

HINTS ON PASTRY MAKING.

The following hints on pastry making, by an old housekeeper, are worthy of study. The Americans are too much addicted to pastry, but since the taste is already formed, it remains only, in the preparation of such food, to make it as little injurious as possible by making it good.

The art of making paste requires a good memory, practice and dexterity; for it is principally from the method of mixing the various ingredients of which it is composed that paste acquires its good or bad qualities.

Before making paste wash the hands in hot water; touch the paste as little as possible, and roll it but little; the less the better. If paste be much wetted it will be tough.

A marble slab is better than a board to make paste on; both, together with the rolling pin, cutters and tins, should be kept very clean, as the least dust or hard paste left on either will spoil the whole.

The coolest part of the house and of the day should be chosen for the process during warm weather.

Flour for the finest paste should be dried and sifted, as should pounded white sugar.

Butter should be added to paste in very small pieces, unless otherwise directed.

If fresh butter be not used, break salt butter into pieces, wash it well in spring water to cleanse it from salt, squeeze it carefully, and lay it upon a soft cloth. Fresh butter should also be well worked to get out the buttermilk.

After the butter has been pressed and worked with a wooden knife on the pasteboard, press it very lightly with a clean soft cloth, to absorb the moisture. If good fresh butter is used, it will require very little, if any, working.

Lard is sometimes used instead of butter, but the saving is of very trifling importance when it is considered that, although lard will make paste light, it will neither be of so good color or flavor as when made with butter.

Dripping, especially from beef, when very sweet and clean, is often used for kitchen pies, and is, in this instance, a good substitute for butter, lard, etc.

In hot weather the butter should be broken into pieces and put into spring water, or into ice; but on no account put the paste into ice, else the butter in it will harden it, and in baking, melt, and separate from the paste.

The same thing happens in winter, when the butter has not been sufficiently worked, and the paste is rather soft; for, though the season be favorable to the making of paste, care must be taken to work the butter sufficiently.

In winter, paste should be made very firm, because the butter is then so; in summer, the paste should be made soft, as the butter is then the same.

It is important to work up paste lightly and gradually into a uniform body, no strength nor pressure being used.

It is necessary to lightly flour both sides of paste when you roll it, in order to prevent its turning gray in baking; but, if much flour be sprinkled on it, the paste will not be clear.

Attention to the rolling out is most important to make light puff-paste; if it be too light, it may be rolled out once or twice more than directed, as the folding mainly causes it to rise high and even.

Be sure, *invariably*, to roll puff-paste *from you*. Those who are not practised in making puff-paste should work the butter in by breaking it into small pieces, and covering the paste rolled out; dredge it lightly with flour, fold over the sides and ends, roll it out very thin, add the remainder of the butter, and fold and roll as before.

To insure lightness, paste should be set in the oven as soon after it is made as possible; on this account, the paste should not be begun to be made until the oven is half heated, which sometimes occupies an hour. If paste be left 20 minutes or more before it is baked, it will become dull and heavy.

Paste should be light, without being greasy; and baked of a fine color, without being burnt; therefore, to insure good baking requires attention.

Puff-paste requires a brisk oven; a moderate one will best make pies and tarts, pudding and biscuits. Regulation of heat, according to circumstances, is the main point in baking.

If the oven be too hot, the paste, besides being burned, will not rise well; and if it be too slack, the paste will be soddened, not rise and want color. Raised pies require the quickest oven.

When fruit pies are baked in iron ovens, the syrup is apt to boil out of them; to prevent this, set a few thin bricks on the bottom of the oven before it is heated; but this will not be requisite if the oven has a stone bottom.

DOMESTIC RECEIPTS.

FRENCH BREAD.—Take nice rice, $\frac{3}{4}$ lb.; tie it up in a thick linen bag, giving enough room for it to swell; boil from three to four hours till it becomes a perfect paste; mix while warm with 7 lbs. flour; adding the usual quantities of yeast, salt, and water. Allow the dough to work a proper time near the fire, then divide into loaves, dust them in, and knead vigorously. This quantity will make 13 lbs. 7 oz. of very nutritious bread.

BROWN BREAD.—Take equal quantities of Indian meal and rye flour, scald the meal, and when lukewarm add the flour; adding one-half pint of good yeast to four quarts of the mixture, a tablespoon, even full, of salt, and half a cup of molasses, kneading the mixture well. This kind of bread should be softer than wheat flour bread. All the water added after scalding the meal should be lukewarm. When it has risen well, put it to bake in a brick oven or stove, the former should be hotter than for flour bread; if a stove oven, it should be steamed two hours then baked one hour or more; when done it is a dark brown. The best article for baking this kind of bread is brown earthenware—say pans eight or ten inches in height, and diameter about the same; grease or butter the pans; put in the mixture; then dip your hand in cold water and smooth the loaf; after this slash the loaf both ways with a knife, quite deep. Some let it rise a little before they put it to bake. Many people prefer this bread made of one-third rye flour instead of one-half. When it is difficult to get rye, wheat flour will answer as a substitute. It adds very much to the richness and flavour of this kind of bread to let it remain in the oven over night.

GINGER BREAD.—Mix together $3\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. of flour; $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. butter; 1 lb. sugar; 1 pint molasses; $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. ginger, and some ground orange-peel.

RULES TO BE OBSERVED IN CAKE-MAKING.—1. In making cakes, use refined white sugar, although clean brown sugar does as well. 2. Use good sweet butter in every case. 3. Cake mixture cannot be beaten too much. 4. An earthen basin is the best for beating cake mixture, or eggs in. 5. A good regular heat must be kept up in the oven. 6. Use a broom splint to run through the thickest part of the cake; if done, it will come out clean, if not done, there will be some of the dough sticking to it. This rule applies to bread also. The following cakes will be found to come out all right with a fair trial.

SPONGE CAKE.—Sift 1 lb. of flour and 1 lb. of loaf sugar; take the juice of 1 lemon, beat 10 eggs very light, mix them well with the sugar, then add the lemon and flour: if baked in a pan two hours is necessary.

LOAF CAKE.—Take 2 lbs. of flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of sugar, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of butter, 3 eggs, 1 gill of milk, $\frac{1}{2}$ teacupful of sweet yeast, cloves and nutmeg for spice.

CREAM CAKE.—1 teacup cream, 2 teacups sugar, three well beaten eggs, teaspoonful saleratus dissolved in a wine glass of milk, piece of butter half the size of an egg, flour to make as thick as pound cake, add raisins and spice to taste; wine and brandy if you like.

THE DARNING MACHINE.

(See page 253.)

The accompanying illustration represents the darning machine, the invention of Mr. Hosmer, which in a couple of years has attained a wide and it would appear deserved popularity in the United States, and is now being introduced into this country. The drawing, which exhibits the needles out, is almost sufficiently explanatory in itself; but it will be enough to say that the part, A, drawn up by the loop seen at the top, and the stocking to be darned is adjusted between the two plates, through which the needles are made to pass, in corrugations provided for them, when the crank handle is turned. In front of the needle points and to the left of the engraving is an upright bar, supporting a cross piece containing as many knobs as there are needles, generally fourteen. The yarn is threaded through the eyes of the needles, one end secured to an end knob, and the portions between the needles drawn up in loops and passed over the respective knobs. The handle is then turned, the needles draw back the threads, and the bar bends over and allows them to escape off the knob; a slight forward motion of the needles shifted for another "stitch," or for crossing. The instrument is small and can easily stand on the sewing machine table; it cannot well get out of order, and if treated properly will last a lifetime. It stands alone as the only machine of the kind, and a brief inspection will show that it does at two threadings of the needles work, that would be represented by a great many stitches in the hand process.