

## Government of the Province of Saskatchewan

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

## THE FARM KITCHEN AND HOME-MADE COOKER

BY

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*THE KITCHEN*

1. *Desirable Qualities.*—The kitchen should be airy and sunny and should be constructed and fitted up in such a way that it can be kept clean without too much labor. It is not well to have it too large so increasing the amount of work necessary to keep it in good condition and causing an unnecessary amount of walking in the performance of duties. On the other hand, it is well not to have it so small that the movements of the housekeeper have to be cramped and it should not be so small as to be difficult to keep airy; a stuffy kitchen is very tiring. There ought to be space enough for the worker in the kitchen to sit down and sew or read or merely to sit down during intervals of waiting, however short they may be.

There seems to be a quite general impression that it is not essential to aim at attractiveness in the kitchen appointments; that, as the homelier duties are performed there, it need lend itself only to utility. But, it must be borne in mind that the housewife, and others of the household often also, spend a large part of their lives there and surely it is worth while to have the surroundings as cheerful and pleasant as is practicable. It will make a wonderful difference in the worker's attitude toward her work and in her general habit of mind and disposition whether her kitchen surroundings are agreeable or otherwise. Victor Hugo says, "The bee is a housewife; her song is a grumble." I wonder if the working surroundings have not something to do with making her song a grumble.

(1). *Fittings.* It is well to have the walls and ceiling of a kind that are easily cleaned and kept free of dust; colors cheery and soft, clean and cool-looking. Painted or tinted walls in soft colors answer the purpose very well. Sanitas or papers with varnished surfaces are prettier and daintier, are durable and kept clean with less effort than painted walls. If varnished over they keep their colors unfaded and are all the more easily washed off. Blue and white as colors seem to fulfil all the conditions necessary provided the blue is of a soft, neutral tint. Some of the patterns in these colors are very beautiful as are also some of those in green and white. Often green and white patterns have touches of brighter color, very desirable for cheeriness, especially if the kitchen happens to be not a very bright one.

Sanitas is very satisfactory. There is no danger of tearing or cracking and it will, with care, keep in nice condition for almost any length of time. It can be bought at 40c a yard and is four feet wide. The paper with varnished surface can be bought at 75c a double roll (16 yards). It is not as durable as Sanitas but it can be wiped off and kept fresh and clean.

(2). *Woodwork.* Baseboard, cupboards, etc., should be painted in a color that harmonizes with the other color schemes. Sometimes it is difficult to get nice soft shades in paint. Some of the blues are very glaring. A very nice shade may be obtained by mixing one of the light shades with one of the soft gray shades. One can experiment until the desired tint is obtained. Blue may also be toned with orange. A soft shade of green may be obtained by adding a little red; a soft shade of red by adding green, etc.

After being once well painted a fresh coat every spring will usually suffice to keep it in good condition. It is easily washed off; wash by using warm water with a few drops of ammonia in it; soap is hard on paint. The floor may be painted in the same color as woodwork but a few shades darker. The ideal floor covering is a good linoleum. It is expensive at first for it pays to get the best quality, but it is economical in the long run because of its durability in which it is unmatched by anything else. Its pattern and colors may be kept as nice as new for years by giving it a coat of varnish every few months; this also makes it much easier to wash off. If desired, a tile pattern that harmonizes in color with woodwork, etc., may be chosen and gives a kitchen a nice clean cheerful look. Many of the patterns that imitate different woods are good and durable and seem to make, perhaps, a more natural looking floor. Linoleum has the advantage of being easy on the feet of the worker, also on the whole body because of its yielding qualities; it is easily kept clean; is so durable in itself and also preserves the floor underneath it and is warm. If found beyond one's means at time of fitting, oil-cloth will do. It may be preserved in pattern and color by a coat of varnish, just as the linoleum is, but will need to be replaced many times more. It is not quite so easy on the feet, is not so warm and does not look so well, and is more inclined to warp. Both linoleums and oil-cloth come in nice grass-color designs so that they resemble matting in appearance.

(3). *Furnishings.* Will always in large measure depend on circumstances—whether city conveniences or not, size of family, etc., but in any case, all should be plain and substantial. The stove, particularly, should be devoid of ornament and it usually looks better for being so, as well as being easy to clean.

The kitchen work-table may be either plain, white natural wood or may be covered with aluminum, zinc or oil-cloth; the zinc and aluminum have the advantage of being durable, easily cleaned and cannot be injured by heat. A cupboard of some description is a positive necessity unless a pantry is situated very conveniently to the kitchen. The size and kind will always depend upon circumstances—whether there is pantry space, size of family, character of meals, etc. Where there is no

pantry and the kitchen is large enough (and it should be large enough in such a case) a cupboard that will answer every purpose can be built in. It will be found just as convenient, if not more so, than a pantry and assuredly will take less trouble to keep in order. A plan for such a cupboard is given with the paragraph on the pantry. It allows for space above for dishes and below for utensils and supplies. There are drawers for knives, towels, cloths, etc., a bake-board and space for working and serving. The window in the middle allows for good light. A division for writing, keeping account-books, etc., could be made.

The practice of keeping utensils hanging about is, in general, not a good one. There is always a certain amount of unavoidable dust, which, of course, will settle on the exposed utensils so that there is extra cleaning required to make them fit to use. There may be a few that are in such constant use that dust has not much chance to settle upon, otherwise all things had best be protected. A few things may be kept near the stove for convenience when cooking, such as a covered salt-box, salt and pepper shakers, perhaps cans of different seasonings which are often in use. A shelf to accommodate them can be put up near the range.

A chair or stool should stand near the worktable. If it is not there, the worker will, in all probability, stand at her work, and thus lose many an opportunity to prevent tiring herself.

A small table for work-basket and a rocker near a window should be a part of the furnishings. The housekeeper can often snatch a few minutes rest or recreation in intervals of waiting on some of the household processes, or where some watching of things is necessary (and there are many such occasions), and where otherwise she would, perhaps, just weary herself standing about. It is wise to keep book or paper or mending at hand.

Hangings are not appropriate in the kitchen, but plain simple muslin or cheese-cloth curtains for the windows are not objectionable but add greatly to the attractiveness and to the general look of cleanliness and they are so easily kept clean that they can hardly be considered as adding to the work of the household.

Pictures on the wall are out of place and could not very well be kept in good condition in a place where cooking and such-like processes are carried on.

There is no objection to a flowering plant or two in the kitchen window and it adds much to the cheerful appearance of the kitchen.

(4). *Utensils.* These should be of the *best quality* and it pays to buy such. In general, enamel and granite are the most satisfactory ware within the reach of all but only the best should be purchased. Aluminum is durable, light to handle and easy to heat. It is expensive at first but lasts so well with care that it does not seem so expensive in the end.

It is not wise to have an overstock of implements to work with; they are often unnecessarily brought down, adding to the work of dish-washing and there are always that many more to handle and put away.

On the other hand, many housekeepers add greatly to their work and often fail to have variety in their cookery by not having a sufficiency of the conveniences. It is poor economy to save on utensils at the expense of one's strength. It is a housewife's need to have as many as possible of the labor-saving conveniences; it adds much more to her comfort and happiness and that of her family to sacrifice some of the less important things to having good things to work with in the kitchen. The following is a list of articles with their prices, that are needful in any average household and the cost is not much to be reckoned with; the quality at the price is good. The list can be added to or some articles eliminated to suit particular cases. Choose articles that are easily kept clean and in repair, avoid utensils with seams:

### KITCHEN UTENSILS

1 granite dish-pan.....	\$.75	(glass) .....	.20
1 rinsing-pan .....	.75	1 bread knife.....	.75
1 tea-kettle.....	1.00	1 round cake tin.....	.40
1 large stew kettle with lid..	1.00	1 square cake tin .....	.40
1 roasting pan.....	.75	2 loaf tins .....	.80
1 double boiler.....	.60	1 meat-board .....	.50
1 large lipped saucepan with		1 rolling-pin .....	.40
lid .....	.60	1 doz. earthen cups for	
1 medium saucepan .....	.45	moulds .....	.60
1 3-quart granite pitcher....	.60	2 asbestos mats .....	.10
1 large pudding dish.....	.25	1 jelly mould .....	.25
1 medium pudding dish.....	.20	1 kneading-pan .....	1.00
1 muffin tin .....	.40	1 fibre pail .....	.30
1 set jelly tin pie plates....	.30	1 granite soap-dish .....	.10
1 large earthen mixing bowl..	.40	1 wooden chopping bowl....	.40
1 medium mixing bowl.....	.30	1 chopping knife .....	.20
1 granite colander .....	.50	½ doz. teaspoons German sil-	
1 potato masher (wire).....	.20	ver (nickel) .....	.25
1 potato ricer .....	.25	3 tablespoons German silver..	.20
1 flour sifter .....	.25	3 forks (nickel) .....	.45
1 coarse wire strainer.....	.25	2 wooden spoons .....	.20
1 fine strainer .....	.10	1 Dover egg-beater .....	.10
1 vegetable grater .....	.20	1 can opener .....	.25
1 nutmeg grater .....	.10	1 corkscrew .....	.25
1 granite funnel .....	.25	1 French knife .....	.50
1 tin skimmer .....	.10	1 spatula .....	.50
1 biscuit cutter .....	.10	2 paring knives .....	.30
2 tin measuring cups.....	.20	Scales .....	1.00
1 lemon squeezer (glass)....	.10	1 meat grinder .....	1.50
1 vegetable brush .....	.10		
1 pair salt and peppers		Total .....	\$28.75

### THE FIRELESS COOKER

The fireless cooker has now become so generally recognized as a saver of material and energy in cooking that a little treatment of the subject will not be out of place in a discussion of kitchen equipment. We may choose from a range, including the home-made to the most elaborate manufactured article, but, in any case, the saving of time and labor will amply repay the effort or cost.

The principle of the cooker is the retention of heat; it follows that the article to be cooked must first be heated to boiling point, or perhaps cooked for some time (depending on the article to be cooked) before being put in the cooker, or, in the case of those fitted with soap-stones, the soap-stones have first to be heated very hot, placed in the cooker and the article put in to cook. The degree to which the soap-stones are heated can be so great that any of the processes of cooking, baking, roasting, etc., can be carried on. The soap-stone cooker is more expensive but has the advantage of being available for more general use and there is no upholstery—it is very sanitary. Many of the cheaper kinds have upholstery and care must be taken to keep them well ventilated.

Prices for the manufactured article range from ten dollars upward, depending, too, upon size and make. It is the kind that can be made at home that shall be considered here.

For the purpose, a convenient sized packing-box or an old steamer trunk, can be utilized.

(1) To make.—See that there are no cracks or holes of any kind in the box; if so, have them filled up. Everything must be done to prevent escape of heat.

(2) In the case of a box—get a well fitting lid, secure it with strong hinges. It can be fastened down firmly when in use with hooks or other strong fasteners. With a trunk the question of a practically air-tight lid is settled.

(3) Line the box and lid with a layer of asbestos sheeting which can be easily obtained at a very slight cost. If not convenient to get sheets of paper (newspapers or any other kind) will answer the purpose. Use twenty to twenty-five layers of the paper, being careful not to join at the corners.

(4) For packing, use hay, excelsior, shavings or any light loose material. The packing should be put in closely but not too solidly and vests made to accommodate the cooking utensils. In this way it can be changed frequently.

(5) If a more permanent and neater sort of padding is desired, the packing may be kept in place with heavy denim, cotton or ticking. To do this—

(a) Cut a piece of cloth the size of the top of box, allowing an inch more on all sides for lapping, etc.

- (b) Have ready chosen utensils the size that it is judged will be needed; these should be straight-sided, and have close-fitting lids—lids can be obtained provided with firm fasteners.
- (c) Using the lids as guides, cut circles from the cloth in the positions that utensils will fit into the box.
- (d) Cut rectangular pieces of cloth of the same width as the height of utensil and of same length as its outside circumference, allowing for a seam.
- (e) Sew the circumference edge, around the edge of the circle, thus forming a nest to accommodate the utensil. If the edges are put together with a piece of strong tape, it will be firmer and allow for room for the utensil to slip in.
- (f) Sew the other circumference edge to the edge of the cloth where the circle was cut out, using tape in the same way.

Now, the rectangular piece of cloth will fit over the top of the packing, utensils can be placed in their several cavities and the packing put around them.

*Packing.*—

(1) Place to the depth of four or five inches in the bottom of the box.

(2) Put cotton batting to the depth of two inches just beneath where the utensils are to go.

(3) Place the utensils in their cavities and stand them in the cooker where they are to fit.

(4) Place around the utensils an inch thickness of cotton batting; then arrange the packing in the box in the spaces between utensils, folding back the top piece of cloth for the purpose.

(5) When packed up to the level of the top of the utensils, turn the top covering cloth back, draw firmly and smoothly and tack its edges to the sides of the box. The tops of utensils should come to at least six inches below the top of the box. If utensils are of different depths, they can be brought to the same level at the top by packing higher at the bottom.

(6) Now make one, two or three cushions (according to the size of the box) mattress-like to fit into the spaces left above the surface of the utensils, so that when the lid is closed down these will fit tightly over the top. The utensils are thus enclosed on all sides by a packing of non-conducting material.

(7) *Care.*—

(a) This kind of cooker should be left open in the air and sunshine when not in use; the cushions should be taken out and hung in the air, otherwise the odor of cooking will linger about them.

(b) During use, the cooker may be kept in the basement if it is in the way in the kitchen.

- (c) Do not leave food in the cooker after it is cooked; it will reach the temperature at which food spoils quickly.

*Note.*—This kind of cooker is useful only for slow cooking processes, like steaming and stewing.

(8) *Advantages of Fireless Cooker.*—

- (a) The odor of cooking does not escape through the house.
- (b) There is no burning of food; no watching is required.
- (c) It is a saving of fuel and in warm weather it makes much cooking over a hot fire unnecessary.
- (d) No food material is wasted.
- (e) On days when top of range is much in use, as it often is on wash-day or canning day, the cooker can be used for preparing all or the greater part of the meal.
- (f) It is a great saver of time and energy for people who are wage earners outside of home, and who do their own cooking; they can come in and find the greater part of their meal entirely cooked for them.
- (g) It is good in cases where food has to be carried distances, as it is often with men working in the fields, workmen in cities, etc. Something hot and appetizing can thus be conveyed to them.
- (h) It is likely that it will, in future be an established feature in the lunches of school children.
- (i) Hot water may be kept on hand when fires are not kept up.
- (j) Wear and tear on kitchen utensils is lessened and they are