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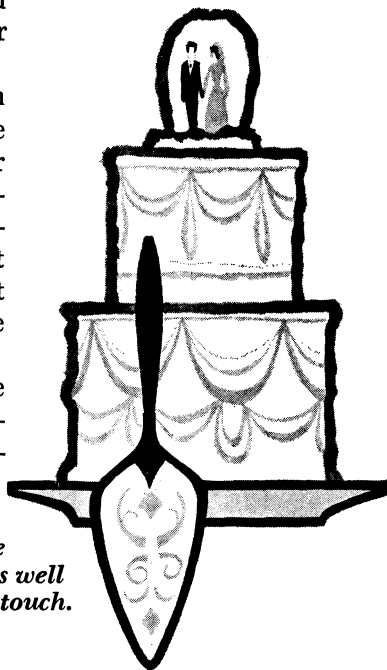
Recipes

A refresher course
in writing food copy

ARE YOU a recent home economics graduate going into test-kitchen work? Or a not-so-recent one moving from teaching or dietetics or institutional foods into a business job in the food or kitchen equipment or home editorial field? Then you will probably find you have to adjust your ideas of recipe writing. For business home economists have long since learned that a recipe can and should be more than a standardized formula for making a standard product.

Unlike recipes used in the classroom, which have the benefit of personal introduction by the teacher, the recipe published in a newspaper or magazine or cookbook, or in a booklet or advertisement, or printed on a carton or can, must sell itself to readers or shoppers. If it does not, it might as well not be printed. (As a matter of fact might *better* not be printed, for such a recipe is a waste of expensive space.)

How can a recipe be taken out of the sterile formula classification and given real kitchen appeal? Let's put the problem into our mental mixers.



*Writing a recipe is something like
decorating a cake. It takes skill as well
as know-how, plus a light, fresh touch.*

RECIPE FILING

Organize your recipe files to fit the needs of your department, rather than follow systems laid down by others.

TEMPORARY FILES

Along with a permanent file system, most home economists have a temporary one into which go recipes and ideas to be tried at some future time. Such files should be gone through frequently — for reasons too obvious to mention!

FILE GUIDE

The index of a general cookbook will serve as a guide in setting up almost any type of permanent filing system.

In planning and writing a recipe for wide distribution, you have three hopes:

You hope every woman who *sees* the recipe will *read* it. You hope every woman who *reads* the recipe will *try* it. You hope every woman who *tries* the recipe will *like* it.

Before you do any actual writing, you will, of course, have to select — or adapt or originate — the right recipe for the particular purpose you have in mind. (And more about the need for “recipe inventing” in Chapter 8, “Ideas and Ingenuity.”)

Selecting a just-right recipe is important. A recipe that would be suitable for editorial presentation in certain magazines may be too elaborate for use in an extension circular on nutrition. One that would be excellent to include along with others in a general recipe booklet may not have wide enough appeal to justify using by itself on a package label. An especially good recipe of limited appeal might appear in a general cookbook where there are many recipes from which to choose, but not be a good choice for use in a magazine. And so it goes.

Once you have chosen what you consider the right recipe for the situation, you are ready to figure ways and means of persuading homemakers to read, use, and enjoy your offering.

First, how can you tempt women to read your recipe? In a number of ways.

The *title* you give it can lead a woman to read that recipe eagerly, or turn her away.

Generally speaking, a recipe title should be sensibly descriptive rather than outlandishly novel. It should give at least some clue as to what can be expected of the finished dish. For example, “60-Minute Rolls” is a good appealing title because it tells something definite about the recipe; it promises something to the reader. “Yeast Rolls,” on the other hand, is a mere label.

A title may well be fresh and in line with to-day's thinking and manner of speaking, but should never be too cute and tricky. "Wun'fl Puddy" is a wun'fl example of what not to do along that line. At the same time, a title certainly should not be completely dull and colorless, such as "Dried Fruit with Mush," or "Congealed Salad."

The *general appearance* of the recipe has a great deal to do with how many persons read it. If it looks like a recipe, the readership percentage goes up. Surveys show that recipes-which-look-like-recipes are excellent bait to entice women to read advertising or editorial columns. If it looks open and inviting — that is, if it is set in easy-to-read type, in good black or dark color that stands out clearly and sharply on the page — readership goes up. If it has an appealing, mouth-watering illustration, that helps too.

As a home economist you may not have complete say about these matters of layout and type and illustrations. But you can keep studying into those subjects, gathering evidence as to what women want along these lines. You can keep developing ideas and judgment. And you can express your convictions modestly but authoritatively whenever you have a good opportunity to do so.

Let's suppose, then, that you have decided upon your recipe. You are assured that it will be set up in attractive readable form. You feel you can count on its interesting the casual reader to the point that she will stop, look, and read it.

What can you do to get her to go the rest of the way, and try the recipe? What can you do to make sure that when she does try it, she will be successful and happy with it the very first time?

One thing is certain; if she is dissatisfied in any way the first time she tries your recipe, she is not likely ever to try it again — and may even be prejudiced against you or your company from that

RECIPES FOR CANS AND CARTONS

There are times in recipe-writing when a fresh, newsy recipe is needed. There are other times when a simple, standard one is demanded. In writing a recipe to go on a can of pumpkin, for example, a good standard recipe for pumpkin pie is a "must." Preferably one that uses the entire contents of that particular size of can.

GOOD WRITING

From a printed discussion of how to roast a goose: "Water birds, like channel swimmers, rely on a thick coating of fat to keep them warm. The internal layer of fat in a well-fed goose is so thick it is wise to prick the skin freely with a fork before putting the goose in the roasting pan."

time on! You want her to like that recipe so well on first trial that she will make it over and over, get to thinking of it as "my recipe." If she does that, it will be your highest praise!

Here is where your skill as a writing home economist — or a home economics writer — comes in. You can write that outstanding recipe in an ordinary matter-of-fact, take-it-or-leave it manner. Or you can write it in a way that will prompt the casual reader to use it. That kind of writing is recipe magic — but it is magic you can learn.

Just keep in mind that the two simple ingredients which make the difference between a dull-sounding and a makes-you-want-to-cook recipe are *clearness* and *friendliness*. Both qualities have the same root: *thoughtfulness* for the woman who will (you hope) use the recipe in her own kitchen.

Once you learn this magic it will shine through in every recipe that you write, even though the recipe may, in the last analysis, be poured into the most rigid of molds!

Basic How-To's to Keep in Mind

If you are totally inexperienced in recipe writing, or if you feel that you can improve your technique, here are the important points to keep in mind.

WORLD'S BIGGEST COOKBOOK

Today's supermarket has created the biggest cookbook in the world. On the shelves of that market are more than 8,000 items, each with instructions as to how to cook or use.

No matter what form or style the finished recipe is to take (see pages 54 and 55 for samples and discussions of formats and styles), the first step always is to *think* the entire procedure through, step by step. In other words, *organize your thinking*. Once you get ingredients and method reduced to logical order, you can write the first draft of your recipe in whatever style you are to use.

In doing that first draft, you will, of course, observe the following rules.

LIST INGREDIENTS IN ORDER

Put down all ingredients, with their measurements, in the order in which they are to be handled or used. If some items need special preparation in advance, list them first, even though they are to be added toward the last. For example, in a cake recipe that calls for adding sifted dry ingredients to a creamed shortening-sugar-etc. mixture it is sensible and usual to list those dry ingredients first, so they can be measured, sifted, and set aside, ready to use at the proper time.

In an upside-down cake, it is important to list first the topping ingredients — butter, brown sugar, fruit, and nuts — so the pan will be sure to be made ready before the batter is mixed. In a fruit cake recipe, it is wise to list the fruits and nuts first, since all the dicing and chopping and slicing should be done before the actual cake mixing is begun.

INTERPRET THOSE INGREDIENTS

To help the woman follow your recipe without wasting time and effort, give as much information as is feasible in the ingredient list for each item. For example, perhaps your cake recipe calls for 2 eggs. If those eggs are to be beaten before they are added to the mixture, say *2 eggs, beaten*. Better yet, say *2 eggs, well beaten*, or *beaten with a fork*, or whatever stage of beating is recommended. If, however, your list of ingredients is over-long, beating the eggs may be worked into the method, provided it does not slow it down.

In general, when tabulating ingredients, try to arrange procedures so the measuring of dry items comes ahead of the measuring of liquid or oily things. Try to make it easy for the woman to use the same cup or spoon without having to wash and dry it between usings. Few homemakers have du-

COST

All recipes are expensive to develop and bring to the homemaker. A poor recipe or a poorly written one is most expensive of all for it destroys the homemaker's faith in a company or a product. As one home economist puts it, "Remember, a lady's groceries are sacred."

CALORIE COUNT

It's well to look at each recipe from the standpoint of calories. If the dish is too highly caloric for many tastes, you can often soften that fact by suggesting low-calorie go-alongs.

plicate measuring cups and spoons, as test kitchens have!

When feasible to do so, group similar measurements of dry or liquid ingredients together, so that the woman does not have to shift back and forth from a cup to a half-cup, etc. For example, your recipe calls for $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cloves; 1 teaspoon cinnamon; $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon nutmeg; $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon allspice. A more sensible arrangement would present the teaspoon of cinnamon first, then the half-teaspoon of nutmeg, then the fourth-teaspoon each of cloves and allspice.

Incidentally, when spices, cocoa and the like are called for, it's smart to list those dark ingredients after the salt, soda, baking powder, etc., when feasible, so that the measuring spoons will not carry dark color into the white powders in the packages or cans.

ORGANIZE THE METHOD STEP BY STEP

Begin by visualizing the prospective user standing in her kitchen, ready to try your recipe. Let's say it is a cake she is to make. What should she sensibly do first? Should she get out the pans and grease them? Turn on the oven to preheat? Then say so, right then and there. Don't wait until the end of the recipe to tell her something she should have known at the beginning. (Unless, of course, the number of words allowed you simply will not permit you to put such information there at the beginning where it belongs!)

Next, write down the steps necessary in putting those ingredients together. At this stage of writing, it will help you to number those steps to make doubly sure you outline the work in exact order of progression, with no back-tracking or criss-crossing. Make certain that you give the best order of work for the recipe in hand. Only thoughtful testing will prove that point.

Some of the recommendations given here admittedly represent ideals, rather than rules, and, for lack of space, cannot always be acted upon. But a recipe can be well written even though it must be kept short.

Quantity recipes designed for use in institutional kitchens are a special problem. This problem is discussed at the end of this chapter.

Some directions call for fussy procedures. Some require unnecessary washing of utensils in combining ingredients. Instead of saying, for example, *"Beat egg yolks; wash beater, and beat whites stiff,"* why not make it, *"Beat egg whites stiff; set aside. With same beater, beat yolks,"* and then continue instructions.

UP-DATE YOUR METHODS

In figuring out and putting down the order-of-work in a recipe, give thought to present-day kitchen equipment. This is always something to watch for when you adapt an old recipe. If the long-baking casserole can be done equally well and perhaps in less time in an electric skillet, give the reader a choice of which utensil to use, giving cooking times in each case. If a batter or mixture needs a good beating, mention the approximate time required on the electric mixer or by hand. If a cake is particularly good for freezing, say so — if there is space for the words!

But use judgment. If you are young and inexperienced in living, you may have the feeling that all homemakers have the latest in kitchen equipment, because some of your young friends do. If you are one who has been working with recipes for a long time, you may, out of sheer inertia, go on using old methods, forgetting that times have changed. It's a matter of examining yourself as well as your recipes!

BE SPECIFIC BUT SENSIBLE

You will, of course, give such vital information as pan sizes, baking temperatures, cooking or baking times. When it comes to baking, however, it is well to allow some leeway to take care of variations in accuracy of oven regulators, differences in types and sizes and pans, and other factors. It's

MIS-PLACED!

These statements actually occurred in printed recipes: *"Place several kinds of fruit through food grinder."* *"Place 2 packages frozen peas in saucepan."* *"Place in a large bowl 4 eggs, well beaten."*

RECIPES AND GEOGRAPHY

Home economists are sometimes criticized for being too casual with recipe terminology as it relates to localities. *"Southern Fried Chicken,"* for example, may suggest batter chicken to a good cook in Georgia and something else to one in Texas or Tennessee. Rather than be too specific, why not make it something like, *"Oven-Fried Chicken with a Southern Accent?"*

YOU NEED THESE DESK HELPS

"Handbook of Food Preparation" gives abbreviations and symbols, definitions and standards, weights and measures, purchasing guides, cooking time and temperatures and other valuable information. For your copy, send 50 cents to American Home Economics Association, 1600 20th Street N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

"Dimensions, Tolerances, and Terminology for Home Cooking and Baking Utensils." Published by American Standards Association, Inc., 70 East 45th Street, New York 17, N. Y. (Price 35 cents.)

"Canned Food Tables," outlining servings per container, together with nutritive values. Obtainable from Consumer Service Division, National Canners Association, 1133-20th St. N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

wiser to say, "Bake at 350° (moderate) 40 to 45 minutes, or until done when tested," or "Bake about 45 minutes, or until done," rather than be too exact about the number of minutes. If two minutes extra baking on a pan of cookies makes for an undesirable product, it's best to say, "*Bake 8 to 10 minutes. Do not over-bake.*"

Keep in mind that though your recipe says definitely, "Bake in an 8x8x2-inch pan," the woman who is making your cake may not have that size, so she glibly turns the batter into a 9x9x1¾ or a 10x10x1½-inch pan — and then she wonders why the cake is over-done in the time your recipe specifies! It does not occur to her that a 10-inch square pan has 36 square inches greater area than an 8-inch square pan, and that the batter spread out thus in a thinner layer will bake considerably faster. It does not occur to her that a cake which will be done perfectly in 30 minutes in a 350° oven when baked in a dull-finished aluminum pan, will require less time (or 25° lower heat) if baked in an enamel or glass or dark metal pan; *more* time if baked in a bright, shiny new pan. (Even if you publicize such pan facts over and over, the homemaker will pan the recipe if it turns out unsuccessfully for her. And even though you do use a just-right type of pan in your testing kitchen, that particular pan may not even be available in many homewares stores.)

The same general reasoning holds true for casserole baking and top-of-range cooking. The size of pan; the shape, deep or shallow; the material it is made of; whether or not the mixture has been refrigerated — all influence the length of cooking time and quality of results as well. While you cannot dictate the exact type of utensil a woman is to use, you can at least take the various probabilities into consideration in your writing. And you can tell whether or not to cover the utensil, and suggest using kitchen foil or a cooky sheet to cover a lidless casserole.

STATE NUMBER OF SERVINGS

Along with pan sizes, baking times, and temperatures, give the number of average servings to be expected from each recipe, or the number of muffins or cookies of a certain size, or the number of loaves of bread. Notice that *number of servings* is recommended rather than *number served*. The reason is obvious. A main dish which makes six servings may actually serve six persons under some conditions, or it may serve only two or three under other circumstances. Many variables enter in — the occasion, the rest of the menu, the appetites of the group.

These points — pan sizes, temperature, number of servings — are basic requirements for modern recipes. But you want your recipe to be far above standard in appeal and helpfulness.

TRY TO FORESEE PROBLEMS, QUESTIONS, AND DOUBTS

You are, for example, writing a steamed pudding recipe which calls for no eggs, no shortening. Foresee some homemaker's questioning, and tell her in advance that these are not necessary in that particular pudding.

You are writing a cake recipe which makes an unusually thin batter. Say so in the recipe, so that the woman who is making the cake for the first time will not conclude that it is a typographical error and decide to add more flour.

You are writing a recipe for meringues which calls for beating the egg whites to a certain stage before beginning to add the sugar. Don't just say, as many recipes do, "Beat until foamy," and let it go at that. What does foamy mean here? One inexperienced cook may take it that the whites should be beaten merely until they are sudsy-looking; another that the eggs should be beaten until stiff enough to stand alone. Foresee those inconsistencies, and be explicit.

If some procedure is vital to the success of the

SAY WHAT YOU MEAN: MEAN WHAT YOU SAY

Do you mean "1 cup cheese, grated" or "1 cup grated cheese"? "4 tablespoons shortening, melted," or "4 tablespoons melted shortening"? There's a difference.

Do you really mean "1 small minced onion," or "1 small onion, minced"? Is there such a thing as a minced onion? And is "mince" the best word for the purpose? Would "cut fine" describe the operation equally well? Many inexperienced cooks have no idea what "mince" means.

Do you really mean it when you say, "Pour batter into pan"? Some batters are thin enough to pour; others must be dropped or spread.

LESSONS IN FRACTIONS

When deciding on a size or face of type to be used in recipes, be sure to study the common fractions in those sizes and faces. Fractions at best are hard to read. In many recipes that are otherwise distinct, the fractions scarcely register. Remember, many women have poor vision, work in poorly lighted kitchens.

In compiling recipes, avoid using $5/6$ and $7/8$ whenever possible. One young cook says, "When I see a recipe that calls for some strange fraction, I skip that recipe."

recipe, say so in one way or another. You may say simply, "*Stir hot liquid slowly into beaten eggs. This is important.*" Or, "*Be sure to stir the hot liquid slowly into the beaten eggs.*"

Once you're sure your recipe is clear, complete, and can be fitted into the allotted format and word count, stir in all the appeal possible by means of skillful rewriting and editing.

USE HOME KITCHEN LANGUAGE

In the final writing of your recipe, take an informal approach, if possible. If you remember that your recipe is supposed to be used in a home kitchen, you won't be so likely to go formal and superior in your writing.

When you study some of the most popular cook-books, you find that many of the recipes begin with a line or so of interesting information about the recipe itself, or about the resulting dish. A recipe for a quick chocolate cake may begin, "If you melt the shortening and chocolate together in a large double boiler or a bowl set in hot water, you can mix this entire cake in one utensil." A fruit cake recipe may promise, "This recipe makes five pounds of rich, moist, dark fruit cake. If you prefer a light cake, simply omit the spices." Such introductory words not only give useful information, but they set the tone of the recipe as one of friendly informality and of kitchen reality.

In some places it is not feasible or necessary to use such selling lines to lead into your recipes. But where they do work in, they work well.

Whether you begin your recipe with a preamble or not, you will be wise to put an informal, me-to-you attitude into your writing. But don't over-use the word *you*, or the recipe may sound patronizing. If you keep the reader constantly in mind as

you write, she is almost certain to feel that you are writing directly to her.

Work for a lively, interesting style of writing. Choose words that are as lively as yeast. Put them together in sentences that have the charm and appeal of fresh-baked rolls. Result: a recipe with that wonderful makes-you-want-to-cook quality.

What are lively words? First, of course, are the verbs — strong action verbs which give a definite picture of a process or an act. Weak, general verbs such as poor old overworked *add* and *place* can be replaced by dozens of others that much more clearly express the action you have in mind.

Second come the adjectives — colorful, pictorial adjectives which describe something in concrete terms. When you say, "These cookies are delicious," you create no mental picture of those cookies. But when you say, "This makes a firm, chewy cooky — just right for those lunch-boxes," you give the homemaker a preview of what she can expect. And you'll be surprised at how few words it takes to accomplish this in many recipes.

When you are searching your vocabulary for the most expressive word, try to find one that at the same time is simple, straight-forward, familiar to readers. Avoid long, involved words with strings of prefixes and suffixes dangling.

What are appealing sentences? First, they are simple and clear. They are not scrambled. They are not dripping with complex clauses and phrases. They are of varying lengths — mostly short and crisp, with enough longer ones included to make for smooth, easy reading and to avoid a choppy, bossy-sounding style. Short and long sentences are woven together into paragraphs with regard for rhythm, balance, and change of pace.

How can you develop that regard for smooth writing? How can you learn to turn out brisk but smooth sentences and paragraphs?

RECIPES FOR ADVERTISEMENTS

When you are to prepare a recipe for an advertisement, ask for a layout. Estimate space allowed, then select a recipe that can be written to fit that space. Some recipes simply cannot be reduced to small space without sacrificing clearness and goodness.

RECIPES FOR RADIO

When you write recipes that are to be broadcast, select those that have ear appeal. Keep to a minimum of ingredients — usually not more than six items for a recipe that is to be dictated over the air.

NATIONAL APPROACH

If your recipes or other information are to be used nationally, make them fit various sections of the country. A booklet on using a pressure saucepan, for example, should include directions for cooking okra and artichokes and celery root, even though those vegetables are not commonly used in every section of the United States.

THOSE PAN SIZES

Before you put out a recipe calling for a pan of a specific size, check to find out whether that size is in common use in home kitchens or is available in most housewares stores. Pans used in testing kitchens are not necessarily the sizes found in the average kitchen cupboard.

"We home economists might as well recognize the fact that while we can standardize recipes, we can't standardize the women who will use those recipes."

By reading and writing! Read and study recipes critically. Try to figure out just why one is pleasant to read, easy to follow; why another is jerky, difficult to understand. Notice that even such small points as the number of words in a sequence and the way they are arranged can make for smoothness or for awkwardness. Study punctuation, too. Modern writers use just as few punctuation marks as are absolutely necessary to make the meaning clear.

Then practice. Try different ways of saying what you want to say. Study your own writing critically. Don't hesitate to throw away what you have written and begin again. Sometimes you have to throw away several wastebasketfuls of discarded sentences and paragraphs to turn out a single really well written recipe.

WATCH OUT FOR INCONSISTENCIES

There is more to good writing than choosing good words and composing good sentences. You have to be watchful about a number of points.

Remember to keep parallel points or items or words actually parallel in your writing. For example, you must not join nouns and verbs with the word *and*. Yet notice in how many recipes you read, "Add flour, salt, pepper, and stir." If you must save space, say, "Add flour, salt, and pepper; stir." The semicolon marks the end of the parallel units.

Watch to keep the same point of view throughout a recipe. If you wish to switch from second person to first person in order to tuck in an explanation (as you might appropriately in a personally signed article or cookbook), remember to enclose your direct remarks in parentheses, or otherwise set them apart.

Watch tenses. Don't switch from present to past to present again in the space of one sentence or paragraph or recipe.

Adopt one style pattern and stick to it throughout the recipe or group of recipes. If you use numerals in one place, use them all the way through. Don't spell out a number in one line, use a figure in the next. If you set out to express measurements in cups, tablespoons, etc., use that style consistently. Don't say *cup* in one place and *cupful* in another. If you use abbreviations at all, use them all the way through.

If you are writing recipes for editorial use in a specific magazine, study the food articles in the current issue of the publication. Follow the recipe style which that magazine uses, whether it is your personal choice or not. Check on whether the recipes call for "Shortening, melted, 4 tablespoons," or "4 tablespoons melted shortening"; whether the word *teaspoon* is spelled out in its columns, or abbreviated *tsp.* or *teasp.*

You have to be consistent about actual measures, too. If you call for a definite amount of one item in a recipe, you must give definite amounts of all other items, otherwise the proportions may be thrown completely out of proportion. Violation of this rule is a common error in many cookbooks put out by local groups. It is common also in those folksy-sounding radio chatter recipes or recipe-ettes. The thoughtless writer airily dictates, "Just mix half a can of bouillon with tomato juice to make a marvelous appetizer." Why "half a can" of bouillon when nothing is said about how much tomato juice is to be used?

All these rather dull-sounding *musts* and *have to's* have a very real bearing on the enjoyment a woman will get out of using the recipes you write. Your observance of them demonstrates your

INSTEAD OF "ADD"

"Add" is such a convenient word! Because of its shortness, it is chronically overworked. When you are tempted to use it, stop and think, "Does 'add' convey the exact meaning here? Or would another expression better express the action?" One of these, for instance:

Pour into
Stir into
Drop in
Blend in
Combine with
Put in
Mix in
Beat in
Whip in
Toss in

Five Ways To Write A Recipe—

These are, of course, not the only ways to write a recipe, but they do illustrate the basic patterns most frequently followed in recipe writing. If you will examine thoughtfully each recipe that you read in advertising and editorial columns of newspapers and magazines for a period of a week or two, you will find examples of most of the recipe patterns given here, and various combinations and adaptations of them.

1.

This might be called the chronological pattern for recipe writing, for ingredients are called for as they are used. It's a bit on the dictatorial side, too—note that each sentence begins with a verb of command. Many young homemakers are partial to this pattern because they say it is easiest for them to follow.

Cheese-Frosted Biscuits

Melt together in double boiler:

- 1 cake (3 ounces) pimiento cream cheese
- 3 tablespoons butter or margarine

Sift: 2 cups all-purpose flour

Measure, then **sift** again with:

- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt

Cut in with pastry blender:

- 4 tablespoons shortening

Add: $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk

Stir only until flour is dampened. **Turn out** onto lightly floured canvas or board, and **knead** lightly 20 to 30 seconds.

Roll or pat out $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick, cut with floured cutter and **place** close together on ungreased baking sheet. **Stir** melted cheese and butter until well blended, **top** each biscuit with a spoonful of the mixture, and **bake** in hot oven (450°) 12 to 15 minutes. Makes about one dozen 2-inch biscuits.

2.

The idea back of this "Traditional" or "Conventional" pattern for writing recipes is that the user will measure out all ingredients before beginning to put them together. Some women say they like this pattern best because they can check the list of ingredients at a glance, and see whether they have everything at hand. Some beginners say it is confusing to try to follow measurements in one place and method in another.

Cheese-Frosted Biscuits

- 1 cake (3 ounces) pimiento cream cheese
- 3 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 4 tablespoons shortening
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk

Melt cheese and butter together in double boiler. Sift flour, measure, then sift again with baking powder and salt. With pastry blender cut in shortening, until mixture looks like coarse crumbs. Add milk, stirring only until flour is dampened. Turn out onto lightly floured canvas or board and knead lightly 20 to 30 seconds. Roll or pat out $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick, cut with floured cutter, and place close together on ungreased baking sheet. Stir melted cheese and butter until well blended, top each biscuit with a spoonful of the mixture, and bake in hot oven (450°) for 12 to 15 minutes. Makes about one dozen 2-inch biscuits.

3.

Recipes written according to the conventional pattern need not be coldly impersonal as a chemical formula, though they are often just that. Here is a conventional-type recipe, condensed to fit an advertising or editorial layout, but brought to life by its informal, conversational style of writing.

CHEESE-FROSTED BISCUITS

Turn on oven to preheat to 450° (hot). Melt together in double boiler, stirring occasionally:

- 1 cake (3 ounces) pimiento cream cheese
- 3 tablespoons butter or margarine

Make baking powder biscuits as you usually make them, using 2 cups packaged biscuit mix, or your favorite recipe. Roll them rather thin (about $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch), cut with small cutter, and place close together on ungreased baking sheet. Top each biscuit with a spoonful of the cheese mixture, and bake 12 to 15 minutes. Serve hot, with salad. It is not necessary to serve butter with these. Makes about one dozen 2-inch biscuits.

4.

This adaptation of the conventional or traditional recipe pattern, with each step in the method plainly numbered, was developed to satisfy those inexperienced cooks who complained that it was difficult to follow directions when run together in a solid paragraph. In writing recipes according to this pattern, begin each step with an action verb.

Cheese-Frosted Biscuits

- 1 cake (3 ounces) pimiento cream cheese
- 3 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 4 tablespoons shortening
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk

1. Melt cheese and butter together in double boiler.
2. Sift flour; measure, and sift again with baking powder and salt.
3. Cut in shortening, using pastry blender.
4. Add milk, stirring only until flour is dampened.
5. Turn out onto lightly floured canvas or board, and knead lightly 20 to 30 seconds.
6. Roll or pat out $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick, cut with floured cutter, and place close together on ungreased baking sheet.

7. Stir melted cheese and butter until well blended, and top each biscuit with a spoonful of the mixture.

8. Bake in hot oven (450°) 12 to 15 minutes. Makes about one dozen 2-inch biscuits.

5.

Here is a "Chattered" recipe (i.e., set up without tabulating the ingredients) done in extremely chummy, explanatory style. As given, a great many words and lines are necessary. Figure where and how you might cut the recipe and still retain the chattered style.

CHEESE-FROSTED BISCUITS

First turn on the oven to preheat, setting the control at 450° (hot). Put into a double boiler a 3-ounce cake of pimiento cream cheese and 3 tablespoons butter or margarine, and let melt, stirring occasionally. While this mixture is melting, sift some all-purpose flour onto a sheet of waxed paper. Measure 2 cups of this sifted flour, spooning it lightly into the measuring cup so it won't pack; level off the top with the straight edge of a knife or spatula. Put the measured flour back into the sifter, add 3 teaspoons baking powder and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt, and sift together into a mixing bowl.

Now drop in 4 tablespoons (that's $\frac{1}{4}$ cup) shortening, and with a pastry blender or 2 knives, chop-chop that shortening with the flour until the mixture looks like coarse crumbs. (Leaving the shortening in bits this size makes for flakiness in the finished biscuits.)

Add, all at once, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk, and stir with a fork just until flour is dampened and mixture holds together fairly well. Turn out onto a lightly floured canvas or board, and knead gently 20 to 30 seconds. (This kneading makes for smooth, well-shaped biscuits.) Roll or pat out $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick — or even less — and cut with a small cutter, dipping it in flour frequently so dough won't stick to it. Place the biscuits close together on an ungreased baking sheet. Stir the melted cheese-and-butter mixture again, and spoon it lightly over the biscuits. Bake in hot oven (450°) about 12 minutes, or until nicely browned and done. Makes about two dozen tiny biscuits, superb to serve with salad or with practically anything. It is not necessary to serve butter with these.

**WHAT MAKES IT
DELICIOUS?**

There are synonyms for delicious, of course, but what quality expresses its appeal or your reaction more specifically? Is it tangy, piquant, spicy, tart, savory, mellow, zesty, frosty, refreshing, cool, colorful, fruity, juicy, nutty, buttery, sweet, rich, hearty, satisfying, wholesome, filling, delicate, dainty, tender, crisp, crispy, crusty, crunchy, chewy, creamy, whipped-creamy, intriguing?

thoughtfulness for the eventual user, just as do your thinking-out of the logical steps and your inclusion of explanatory notes and warnings.

USE COMMON SENSE ALWAYS

While strict accuracy is vital to success in many recipes, there are other, more casual recipes in which absolute accuracy is neither vital nor advisable. The more you learn about cooking and about women's cooking habits, the more reliable your judgment will become as to where you must be precise, and where you can and should be more free and easy.

For example, in a perfectly balanced cake recipe, it is often necessary to call for rather elaborate fractional measurements, such as " $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons" sifted cake flour.

In a recipe for something like stuffed pork chops, however, it seems rather absurd to get into fine fractions in stating the amounts of bread crumbs needed. Instead of calling for " $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups fine dry bread crumbs" to stuff 6 chops which are certainly not standardized, wouldn't it be more sensible to call for "2 cups"?

In a recipe for Waldorf salad, instead of calling for " $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups diced apple," wouldn't it be more in line with good home kitchen practice to say, "Allow 1 medium-sized tart apple for each 2 servings"?

In a recipe for pudding sauce, instead of calling for precisely " $2\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoons sherry," wouldn't it be more sensible to say, "2 to 4 teaspoons sherry, or simply, 'sherry to taste'"? In recipes with which some liberties can safely be taken, isn't it better to give the reader some basis for forming her own judgment, rather than to give arbitrary amounts of items which can and should be varied to suit family tastes and ideas?

Queries About Quantity Recipes

Why do so many excellent large-quantity recipes that have been developed and tested so carefully and printed so expensively go unused in institutional kitchens?

To answer that question and to figure out a constructive approach to wider acceptance of quantity recipes, a bit of visualizing and analyzing is in order. Yes, and a bit of dramatizing — that is, bringing to life of the writing of those stiff-looking formulas.

First step in inviting food service managers to try a quantity recipe is to give it a fresh, interesting title. Second — and this is rarely done — is to supply a few words of description that will enable the manager or head cook to visualize the dish. If a good photograph can accompany the recipe, so much the better are its chances of being read and tried.

Third step is to set the recipe up in an easy-to-follow typographical form. Should your recipes be on cards or in a booklet? Votes seem to be about evenly divided between 4x6-inch file cards, and booklets of approximately that size. But something more is needed.

In the effort to make a recipe look and sound completely standardized and professional, it is well to remember that human beings, not automated machines, are to use it. The men and women who work in institutional kitchens vary greatly in professional training and experience, and in their ability to read and understand printed English. Some find it difficult to interpret and follow a rigid formula — at least for the first few trials.

Take the cooks who prepare lunches for school children. Whether they are volunteers or paid workers, are not most of them homemakers, learn-

LESSON FROM A VIOLIN

It is possible for one to understand music and to know the principles involved in playing a violin, and yet not be able to play one very well. To do so takes practice. The same is true in writing recipes.

If the recipes you have written seem to be awkwardly stated, try reading them aloud. This will help you to get a better rhythm; make the recipes more pleasing to follow.

If even after long practice in writing recipes yours seem weak and ineffective, take a course in basic English. Many a beginning home economist needs to do just that.

ing to multiply home cooking skills by 50 or 150? Might it not be wise to soften the stiffness of those mathematical formulas with some of the cautions and reassurances that women appreciate in home-size recipes?

Types of recipes welcomed by restaurants, of course, differ markedly from those designed for schools and institutions who serve "captive customers." But the same need for clear writing exists. A recipe should be so clear and complete, so easy to understand, that one of the helpers in kitchen, pantry, or bakeshop department can follow it with no problem of interpretation.

Which brings up another point.

Institutional departments of most business firms do give both weights and measures of most ingredients in their quantity recipes. But there are still some gaps.

Eggs, for example, in large kitchens often are measured by cups, pints, or quarts rather than by count or weight. (Hard-cooked eggs, of course, would be called for by count.) But when more than 3 or 4 eggs are called for in a recipe, both measure and weight might well be given. (As "1 pint eggs [1 pound]" or "1½ pints egg yolks, [1½ pounds]" or "1 quart egg whites [2 pounds].")

Granulated sugar, also, often is measured by quarts, pints, and cups rather than by weight. Milk, water, and other liquids are probably more likely to be measured than weighed. To play safe, give both measure and weight. And, wherever possible, avoid complicated fractions, such as "2⅞ cups."

Much good work has been done toward standardizing quantity recipes. Now it would seem time to go a step further, and bring those recipes to life — for the good of the kitchen help, the customers, and, of course, the firm which is putting out those recipes!

First, last, and at all times keep visualizing the homemakers who will use your recipes.