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Menus and Meal Plans

How to build up
appetites with words

IF YOUR WORK INCLUDES recipe-writing, you will at times need to round out those recipes by suggesting what to serve with them. Such meal plans may take the form of a sentence or two at the end of the recipe. Or they may be made into actual menus-that-look-like-menus.

When your recipe is planned for a simple home meal, the first form is usually preferred. If it is to accompany a more formal or elaborate dinner, the second form may be better. In either case, the layout or amount of space available is a determining factor.

Whatever form the menu may take, always consider how that meal plan will fit into the time schedule and the budget of the homemaker. Check its value nutritionally. Give a thought to balance of flavors, temperatures, textures, colors, and to sensible calorie count. Visualize the serving of the meal — yes, and the dish-washing that follows it. These are all basic problems in the lives of women at home. Ask yourself will it be easy or difficult to manage the cooking of the various

*A menu is a picture
of a meal. It can — and
should — have meaning, as
well as artistry.*



RECIPE ROUND-OUT

Whenever you write a recipe, see if it isn't possible to add at least 1 or 2 lines to suggest what to serve with that dish. Makes the recipe "taste" better in type and be more useful in the kitchen. No, you need not suggest the entire meal—perhaps just the right salad to round out a caserole dinner.

items, so that they are ready for the table at the same time? Show the homemaker that you understand her problems when you tell her what to serve!

How do you give meal suggestions appetite appeal? By using simple, mouth-watering words and phrases, and seeing to it that the menu makes sense to the women who will use it.

Menus for Restaurants and Tea Rooms

At some time in your home economics career you may be working with or for restaurants or other public eating places. A part of your job may include writing menus. If so, your technique will be quite different from that used in writing for homemakers.

First, mentally probe the minds and habits of the customers. They're not concerned with kitchen management; their sole interest is in getting something they like to eat at a price they are willing to pay. Menus designed to appeal to them should use pictorial words, rather than abrupt take-it-or-leave-it lists of dishes served.

In a popular restaurant, for example, "Ham" becomes "Baked Ham with Pineapple Garnish." "Green Salad" is listed as "Tossed Green Salad with Roquefort Dressing." In a restaurant known for its gourmet foods, however, more elaborate terms may be used. Important thing in each instance is to use appetizing, picture-suggesting words, without overdoing it. Beware of promising more glamour than the restaurant kitchen is equipped to furnish!

Menus for School Cafeterias

Visualize those moving rows of boys and girls, or older students, pushing their way toward the food center, intent on finding something they like

and can eat in a hurry, at a bargain price! The menu you put on the bulletin board or blackboard is important in the lives of those boys and girls, and it is important that it be planned and written with care and friendliness.

Part of your job is, of course, to work with the preparation center. Part of it is to encourage youngsters to eat what is good for them. Part of it is to keep all concerned good-natured and happy. How do you achieve the latter? By punctuating the menu with an occasional smile.

One school cafeteria with a surplus potato problem, stepped up mashed potato sales by offering a plate called "Hot Dogs in a Snowbank." Another, finding the cooky stand at a standstill, introduced "Flying Saucer Cookies" that have been in demand ever since.

The fun touch! Keep it alive, especially when you are dealing with the lively young!

Menus for Institutions

When you work with a captive audience, one of the big appeals is freedom of choice. In writing hospital menus, for example, work in choices whenever feasible. Even those patients whose deserts are limited to gelatin like the idea of being able to specify the color and flavor!

Nutrition-Centered Meal Plans

It is good nutrition education to always round out a family-type menu with a discreet line here and there, pointing up some nutrition fact or reminder. The homemaker reads that recipe-with-menu before she has completely decided to try it. The way in which such nutrition lines are worked into the recipe and/or menu may influence her decision to try or not try the recipe.

If the eat-this-because-it's-good-for-you point of

MEAL HIGH SPOTS

One advertising executive reasons this way: If you want to "sell" an elaborate or expensive dessert, suggest a simple, low-cost main course to precede it.

view is emphasized above the eat-this-because-you'll-enjoy-it angle, some homemakers may react against it. Perhaps a compromise is needed at times. It may be possible, for example, to give the recipe an appealing title, then comment casually that, *as you (the homemaker) can see*, the Corn-Crab Casserole is packed with protein. Better selling can often be done by suggesting that the homemaker *does* know something about good nutrition, and that the statement used is merely a reminder.

REMEMBER MAMA

Young mothers want help with their meal planning—especially simple meals for company. In giving them this help, keep in mind (a) how inexperienced they are, and (b) how busy! Since there are millions of young mothers, why not more menus written with their needs in mind?

Certainly every home economist can do much to further the cause of nutrition through careful planning of meals and through skillful use of words in describing those meals. This is true whether the home economist uses nutrition terminology, or appetite appeal, or a combination of both.

BAKING PAN ARITHMETIC

To compare the relative capacities of layer cake pans, remember these formulas from Junior High days: The area of a circle equals πr^2 . The cubic contents of a cylinder equal area of base times depth.

And so, for a round layer pan 8 inches in diameter and $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches deep, you take the radius (4 inches); square it (16 square inches); multiply by 3.1416. Answer: area of bottom of pan is 50.265 square inches. (Call it 50.3) Multiply that by $1\frac{3}{4}$ (depth of pan). Answer: contents of pan, 88 cubic inches.

A round 9-inch layer pan has a bottom area of 63.62 square inches—practically the same as that of an 8-inch square pan (64 square inches). But the $9 \times 1\frac{3}{4}$ -inch round pan has a content of only 111.335 cubic inches, whereas the $8 \times 8 \times 2$ -inch pan holds 128 cubic inches.

How to convert those cubic-inch contents into cupfuls? Simplest way is to measure how many cups of water it takes to fill the pan! Having done so, it's smart to write that measure on the outside bottom of the pan, using fingernail enamel. How do you measure content of a tube pan with removable bottom. That's right—use rice instead of water to fill it. — G.A.C.