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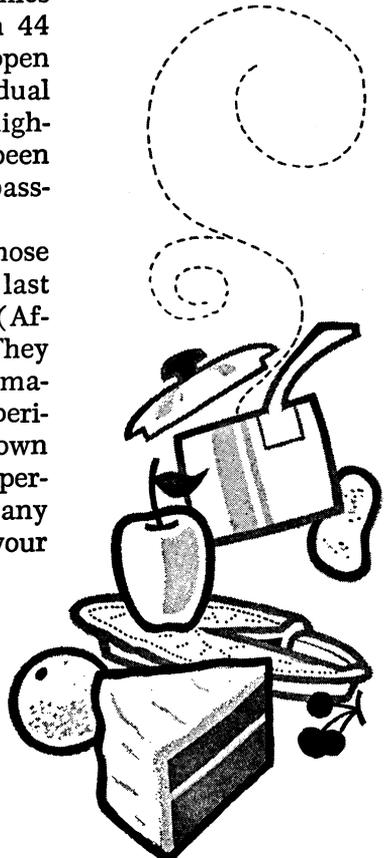
# Food Photogenics

Techniques that make  
for better pictures

IN EACH of the Workshops in Home Economics Writing which we (R/C) have conducted in 44 cities from the Pacific to the Atlantic, an open discussion of the problems of handling individual foods for editorial photographs has been a highlight. Home economists everywhere have been most generous in sharing their experiences, passing along their findings.

Here are some of the notes gathered in those meetings. They are not to be taken as the last word in handling foods for photographing. (After all, every photograph is an experiment!) They are put down here for the special benefit of amateurs in this fascinating field. If you are experienced, you have probably worked out your own solutions to these problems — better ones, perhaps, than some of those that follow. In any case, you may like to use these margins for your photographic notes. — G.A.C.

*The secret of good facial make-up  
is to heighten natural beauty.  
The same is true in  
handling foods for photographing.*



**IMPORTANT NOTE**

Suggestions given in this chapter apply to handling food products in photographs for editorial use — not for can or package labels or for advertising of brand-name products.

**Appetizers.** Don't try to show a great variety of canapés on one plate. Narrow your choice to a few kinds, then arrange groupings of each kind to make a pleasing over-all design. Select types that have definite form — crackers, shrimp, miniature sausages, olives, for example.

If you are to show a bowl of dip or dunk, break up its flat surface with a few definite dashes of chopped parsley, a few bits of pimiento, or some chopped walnuts or toasted almonds — whatever is appropriate.

When illustrating a canapé spread, give it form by heaping it in a bowl or on a plate or shaping it into a mound or loaf. Then garnish it lightly.

If you're using potato or corn chips, place them in position one at a time. Use perfect ones — some light colored, some darker — so there will be a good definition between them.

**Bacon.** If rather flat, lightly crinkled bacon is wanted, lay the slices on a rack and put another rack on top. Then bake in moderately hot oven.

More often, art directors ask for bacon slices with a definite ripple or wave. To achieve this, shape a strip of doubled foil the size of the slice. Lay the bacon on it, then "flute" foil-and-bacon over fingers to make deep ripples. Arrange in shallow pan, set on lowest oven rack under broiler, and cook just until clear and glistening.

Individual baked products are discussed in alphabetical order. (See Biscuits, Breads, Cakes, etc.)

**Baked Products.** Baking for pictures is an important part of the responsibilities of hundreds of home economists. As one department head expressed it, "You can't sell a picture of flour — but a picture of a luscious cake can sell flour!"

To bake photogenic breads, cakes, pies, cookies, etc., the amateur must know what constitutes a perfect product in each category, and must have the skill to turn out a top-quality product.

Ability to recognize the characteristics of a perfect product comes from education and constant observation and awareness. Ability to produce a perfect product comes from practice, study, experimentation — and more practice.

**Biscuits.** To turn out photogenic biscuits — tall, flaky ones with straight sides and level tops, not lopsided and uneven — expert home economists roll the dough between two guide-bars of proper thickness, usually  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch. The rolling pin, of course, rolls on the guide bars.

To cut out biscuits with straight, true sides, place the floured cutter carefully upright on the dough, then press straight down with even pressure. (Don't twist the cutter.) Don't cut biscuits close together — leave an inch or more of dough between them as you cut. You will probably have to mix, roll, cut, and bake several batches in order to get a dozen perfect biscuits for the picture!

How deeply browned should the biscuits be? Usually a normally rich, golden brown is right for either color or black and white photograph. In case of doubt ask the photographer.

**Barbecuing.** Outdoor atmosphere can be provided or at least suggested in studio. Have steaks or chops cut extra thick. If real charcoal fire is used in grill, blow or knock thick gray ash off coals just before shooting. (A vacuum cleaner tube in reverse works fine, making coals glow brightly, and providing a bit of smoke for extra atmosphere.) Broil the meat in range, ready to transfer to grill at proper moment. Use a heated skewer to make needed grill marks. If fake coals have to be used, sift ashes over them for realism.

**Breads.** Exterior shape, proportions, and color, and interior texture are of top importance. For nut breads and the like, loaf pans somewhat smaller, deeper, and narrower than standard 9"x5"x3" are often a good choice. Since such breads are usually shown cut, good distribution of nuts and fruit is a problem. (Solution: have several loaves on hand.) Don't worry about a crack in the top of a loaf of quick bread; it is characteristic. But do consider adding interest to that top crust before or after baking — with big pieces of nuts or fruit, perhaps; or a sparkling sprinkling of sugar and cinnamon; or a simple powdered sugar glaze after baking.

Use these  
marginal  
areas for  
your own  
notes and  
quotes.

**Beer.** Have several glasses or mugs chilled — near zero if possible — to assure frosting just right. Pour beer from a little height, to insure deep head of foam. Same method applies to root beer.

**Butter or Margarine.** Cutting a perfect slice is not easy — but some types of cheese slicers with wire for blade do a good job. To keep butter from melting under the lights, freeze it with dry ice and have plate very cold. If necessary, use dry ice under the plate. For use on pancakes: if the cakes are hot there's no problem. If they are cold, a hot knife, or a light held close above the butter will melt it just right.

**Cakes.** Make layers, loaves, or sheets somewhat thicker and higher than usual, or they are likely to appear thin and flat in finished picture. Experiment in advance to discover the just-right thickness for cake to fit a special layout. Most cakes are shown cut, to add interest and to show color and texture of cake itself. Fancy-shaped ones, however, such as heart, star, etc., are best left uncut to avoid destroying the design.

*To cut cake.* Good texture of the cut surface depends a great deal on the knife and the handling of it. Use a sharp, thin-bladed knife. (Some experts prefer a bread knife with fine, even serrations.) Saw gently up-and-down — don't press! This knife technique roughs up the surface and makes the crumb look fluffy and velvety, not hard and dry. To emphasize velviness (especially for television), go over surface gently with a toothpick, lifting tiny crumbs so they will catch the light.

*To cut a frosted cake.* Insert knife straight down in center of cake, and saw lightly with up-and-down motion, in order not to drag frosting down onto cut surface of cake. After taking out pieces, use toothpick or tip of knife to remove frosting that does show on the crumb. (Chocolate frosting on light cake causes the biggest problem.)

*To cut a sheet cake.* Follow directions given for cutting candy and bar cookies. Freezing or chilling the cake helps in cutting neat, sharp-edged shapes for *petits fours*.

**Candy.** Make fudge and the like extra-deep in pan, so layer will not look thin. Use large pieces of nuts or fruits, whole cherries, etc., so they will show up well.

*To cut candy* in even squares or bars. Turn it out of pan onto cutting board, if practicable. Measure and mark lines for cutting, using toothpicks. Then, using long, sharp chef's knife, press straight down to make sharp, clean edges.

**Canning.** Barely heat the fruit or vegetables before packing in jars, or they will look over-cooked. Use clear or light-colored pickling syrup on fruits. Strain syrup so it won't look cloudy.

**Casseroles and Mixtures.** Use a light hand in putting mixtures together, whether to be shown in a casserole or bowl or on a platter. Keep ingredients in recognizable pieces so far as possible, and arrange to have some of them show up in the top layer. Figure some sort of design or garnish to break up flat expanse of top and to add interest. Perhaps cheese strips or triangles, or drifts of shredded cheese; green or red pepper rings; onion rings; sliced or quartered hard-cooked eggs; sprigs of parsley, or dashes of chopped parsley, etc.

**Cereals.** For most purposes, care in handling and speed in shooting are all that are needed. For some very special shots, a photographer may air-brush cereal flakes with paraffin to keep them from softening too quickly when milk is poured on.

**Cottage Cheese.** To bring out its texture, rinse most of the cottage cheese in cold water, drain well, then mix lightly with a little of the undrained so that it looks natural and moist but not "soupy." Tint the undrained cheese delicately with yellow food color or black dye. Dead white foods are inclined to come out looking like blank spots in a printed photograph, whether in color or in black and white.

To avoid a flat look, heap the cottage cheese in a mound. Break up a large expanse of white by adroit use of a fruit or vegetable garnish or dressing.

#### PICTURE PUZZLE

Have you ever said, "I wonder just what recipe and which pans we used for the cake in this picture?" To avoid such wondering it pays to keep special notebooks or files, complete with print or proof of each picture used in publicity or advertising. To each attach notes as to recipes, pan sizes, weights of batter per pan, kind of frosting used — all the data you might need if you were asked to do a new setup of the same subject.

**Chicken (Broiled or Fried).** Pull skin over ends of thighs, drumsticks, etc., and sew or pin in place so it won't shrink while cooking. Pin skin to bone at small end of leg. Cook some pieces light brown, some darker, to provide contrast on platter. Don't overcook or it will look dry.

If rosy tone is desired for fried chicken, mix paprika with flour used for coating.

**Chocolate.** Generally speaking, keep chocolate frostings, cakes, etc., fairly light brown in color. Dark browns come out darker yet in printing, whether in color or in black and white.

**Coconut.** Flaked coconut, lightly pressed into or drifted over frosting, etc., gives a good effect. A fluffy texture is the aim.

**Coffee.** The real thing can't be improved upon, though brown dye can be used. For that "freshly poured" look, float a few small bubbles on coffee in the cup. (To make bubbles, stir a little liquid detergent and coffee together in separate cup.)

**Cookies.** Choose display plate or tray in proportion to size of cookies, and of color and texture to give good contrast. If they are to be topped with almonds, walnut halves, raisins, etc., make the cookies in good proportion to the trimming. (A huge cooky will dwarf a walnut half.)

If just one kind of cooky is to be shown on a plate, bake some fairly light, some darker, to permit choice under the camera lens, and to insure contrast and separation between overlapping cookies. If two or more kinds are to be shown, arrange them in groupings — e.g., chocolate drop cookies in one group, frosted sugar cookies in another. Choose types that have contrast yet go well together. And don't try to show too many varieties on one plate! By the way, wire cooling racks often are more effective for displaying cookies than the usual plate or tray.

One of the big problems in planning a photograph of cookies is to keep them from looking too flat.

Composition of the picture and camera angle can do a lot to provide height. Sometimes a two-tier or three-tier plate is used to display the cookies. A well-designed cookie jar can do a lot for a picture. One that is too cute or coy is better omitted.

*To cut bar cookies.* See "Candy." Same directions apply here.

*Cream, Whipped.* Secret of whipping cream so it will hold up beautifully without weeping is simple. Before whipping, add 3 tablespoons powdered sugar for each half-pint of chilled cream. (A few drops of yellow food color may be needed for color photography, or a little black dye for black and white. See "Cottage Cheese.") Whip stiff. Lift whipped cream lightly with spoon for toppings, or put through pastry tube.

In an emergency, shaving cream lather can be used, but real whipped cream is much to be preferred.

*EGGS.* These innocent-seeming objects can present a variety of difficulties. Whatever way they are to be cooked, Rule Number One is to have dozens of eggs at hand.

*Hard-cooked Eggs.* Turning carton of eggs upside down in refrigerator the day before cooking, helps (sometimes) to keep yolks centered. To reduce chances of dark ring around yolk, cook 30 minutes in water just below boiling point (around 185°), then cool quickly under running cold water. At once crackle shell finely all over by rolling egg under palm of hand against sink or table, so membrane and shell will slip off easily and smoothly.

Why do some hard-cooked eggs refuse to peel smoothly? Because they are too fresh! Solution suggested by researchers: keep eggs in refrigerator for a week, or let them stand at ordinary room temperature for a day to "age" them slightly before cooking. Some home economists report that it helps also to start the eggs in warm water, heat to boiling, then immediately turn down heat and let them simmer 18 to 25 minutes (depending on size of eggs).

#### ANOTHER CREAM TRICK

Whip cream 2 hours ahead of using. When ready to use, fold in a little unwhipped cream to give a soft, natural appearance.

#### EGGS

To keep shelled hard-cooked eggs perfect in shape, float them in ice water in the refrigerator.

**Fried Eggs.** Here are three ways that various home economists find workable for frying eggs for pictures.

1. Have plenty of oil or strained bacon drippings moderately hot in skillet. If a single egg, round in shape, is needed, set a muffin ring (or a tuna can with both ends cut out) in the hot fat. After sliding the egg into the ring, use your finger or a knife handle to hold yolk centered. Just before white is "set" around edges, lift ring and let white flow so it will look natural. Cook very slowly — about 8 to 10 minutes. When white is set, lift egg carefully into a shallow bowl containing enough mineral oil to cover it completely to keep top from drying.

2. Sometimes a fried egg (or two eggs) must be shaped in a particular way to fit in nicely with other foods on the plate. To do this, cut a cardboard pattern the exact size and shape desired. Set pattern on foil, turn up edges of foil around it, then trim off, making a sturdy rim  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch high. Remove cardboard. Put foil "pan" into skillet, with plenty of oil in and around the foil. Slip in the egg or eggs and cook very slowly, holding yolks in place with fingers or with the side of a fork. When white is set, immerse egg in mineral oil as suggested under "1."

3. Occasionally an egg has to be "assembled" for a picture. Two raw egg whites are combined and fried as one by the first method suggested. Then a neat round depression is scooped out of the cooked white, and a raw yolk is dropped in just before the camera clicks.

**Scrambled Eggs.** Beat them very slightly, so that good flecks of white will show up in the yellow mass. Have them just firm enough to mound nicely. Figure out a way to "contain" them on the plate; perhaps heaped in a toast cup, or bounded by sausages or bacon, or — well, that's your job to think up answers to such problems!

**Fish and Seafood.** Trout, shrimp, lobster, and some other seafoods have definite form, and so make fairly easy subjects for photographing. For canned tuna, salmon, and the like, form and interest must usually be provided by the way the product is prepared and

served. For example, a fish or seafood salad may be simply packed into a fish-shaped mold, turned out on a platter and appropriately garnished. Or it may be — and often is — presented in a fish-shaped bowl or plate. Or a fish cut out of pastry or carrot (for goldfish!) or other amusing garnish may be used to say “fish.”

In making up a casserole or creamed dish featuring tuna or salmon it is important to use big, recognizable chunks or flakes and arrange them so that they really show up. Reason for this exaggeration is that so much detail is lost in reproduction.

Handling of these foods under lights deserves some mention. Shrimp fades, and usually has to be touched up with food color. Canned tuna dries and changes color quickly when exposed to air. Photogenic chunks and pieces selected from freshly opened cans may be covered with mineral oil to keep them in good condition, ready to replace faded “stand-ins” just before shooting.

**Frankfurters and Sausages.** These have definite and interesting form. Hence on a plate or platter they combine well with foods of softer texture and less dominant shape to make a good design. A neat mound of salad, for instance, or scrambled eggs.

Grilled franks may shrivel or wrinkle a bit as they cool while being arranged under the camera. They can be replumped by dropping into boiling water for a minute or so, then brushed with oil and photographed immediately.

**Frostings.** Unless the frosting you plan to use will hold up well under hot lights, be sure to have a stand-in cake frosted the same way. In putting a layer cake together for a picture, don't be too generous with soft frosting between the layers, or it is likely to bulge out and show as a ridge around the sides of the finished cake. After putting layers together with frosting or filling, wait a few minutes for this to “set” before frosting top and sides. Do frost top and sides lavishly, with fairly deep swirls or markings so that lights and shadows may give it interesting “modeling.” But avoid a too-labored look.

#### FROSTINGS

Angel food or sponge cake turned out on a plate is likely to show an uneven edge against the plate, which may present a problem in frosting the cake. Solution: using a pastry tube or paper cone, fill in those open spaces with frosting and let stand until firm before frosting the cake. (Small holes in the surface of the cake can also be filled in by this system.)

Be sure to make plenty of frosting all at once — or make two or three batches and mix them. Trying to match one batch of frosting with another in color and texture can be as frustrating as trying to mix paint to match what has been spread!

In making Seven-Minute Frosting for photographic use, it is advisable to beat it a shorter time than usual. It will stay more pliable, and can be reworked on the cake if necessary. This type of frosting, being snowy white, tints nicely.

*Labor-saving note:* Styrofoam “cakes,” cut in desired shapes and sizes, work well for frosting displays, and can be used for pictures where the cakes are not to be cut. The frosting can be washed off and the cakes reused indefinitely.

#### FOIL

Are there times when you need to use household foil in your photographic setup? Then follow the advice of experts and wear gloves so that fingerprints do not show. (One photographer wears the type of gloves worn by pall-bearers!)

**FRUITS.** Handle as little as possible. Use pieces large enough to be recognizable, keeping natural form insofar as feasible. To prevent discoloration of raw pieces, dip in lemon juice or anti-oxidant solution. Cook fruits very lightly; handle gently; coat with syrup for gloss.

*Apples, Baked.* Don't core them all the way through — just the top. Good natural effect can be achieved by cooking apples in plenty of medium syrup on top of range, turning often, until they look soft on outside. Then finish as desired in hot oven or under broiler, watching constantly.

*Avocados.* These must be ripe enough so skin can be stripped off. (Never pare an avocado with a knife!) Cut in halves first, remove seed, then handle from inside while peeling, slicing, and arranging. Don't touch the fragile, smooth green surface with a brush — pour lemon juice over all and use finger tips as applicators. When mashed avocado is to be shown, add a little pale green color; otherwise it looks yellow and unrecognizable.

*Bananas.* Uncluttered design in arrangement of salads, etc., is a must for these and many other fruits. Use lettuce sparingly.

*Berries.* Like beets, most red berries tend to look purplish in color photographs, black in black and white photographs. The photographer's advice is best

to follow. But take plenty of berries from which to choose perfect individual ones.

**Cherries.** Need a few Maraschino cherries? Look for brands with brightest, clearest red. (Consider other ways, too, of putting needed touches of red into color photos — red jelly, for example.)

**Cherries for Pie.** Some use Maraschino cherries, soaking them to remove some of the redness. Easier way is to drain canned Royal Anne (white) cherries, then dye them to the desired shade of red with food color. (Don't pit them.)

**Cranberries.** Cook lightly, to keep bright color. For cranberry jelly, dilute juice slightly with water and use gelatin. Slice canned cranberry sauce so that surface looks "rippled," not solid and hard. A slightly crumpled piece of white paper under a slice sometimes helps to let light through.

**Fruit Cocktail.** Assemble your own, in order to have pieces with sharply cut edges and good form. (Open a can of fruit cocktail for a guide, and a can of each type of fruit used in it. Cut these fruits in same size and shape as original, and combine in same proportions. Use thin, clear syrup on them.)

**Olives, Green or Stuffed.** Look for best color. Choose size in good proportion to other items. If to be cut, use thick slices or wedges, and arrange so they look casual.

**Olives, Ripe.** Drain and dry them, then swish with oil in bowl. Don't arrange black olives against stark white foods — contrast is too sharp. Add a little catsup (or black dye) to cottage cheese, macaroni, mashed potatoes, or the like — just enough to "kill" the whiteness.

**Peaches, Cling.** Select halves that look soft yet have good shape, with cavity centered. Choose slices that are even in size. Leave halves in their syrup until just before using so they won't lose their life and luster. Lift out, dry lightly with towel; place white blotter underneath to absorb seepage and to reflect light through them. Brush with peach syrup just before shooting. Peach halves look best when arranged with cut side up, pit cavity showing a bit.

**Peaches, Freestone.** These are usually shown in

large or individual serving dishes, or in shortcakes and such desserts. Care in selecting and handling is usually sufficient.

**Pears.** Look for fruit of good color, firm-ripe but not hard. Play up their good definite shape, by using lengthwise pieces (halves, slices, or wedges) in arrangements. If whole Bartlett pears are used in background of pear shot, select perfect-shaped ones; let some of stems show. Handle canned pears much as directed for peaches.

**Pineapple.** Select slices, spears, chunks, or tidbits that have good shape and texture — not ragged, not too many white lines. For color shots pick golden-toned pieces, or tint very lightly with yellow food color (to make up for loss of delicate color in reproduction). To reflect light through it, use white paper, cut exactly to fit each piece, underneath pineapple when it is used on lettuce or parsley, or on a colored plate. (Even for an upside-down cake, pineapple pieces may be carefully lifted off and white paper inserted beneath them; then replaced, and brown sugar syrup trickled to hide mark of surgery.)

**Pineapple Juice.** Tint delicately if necessary. For characteristic bubbles, beat egg white slightly, and float a few on juice, using a straw or medicine dropper to transfer them.

**Prunes.** Cook barely tender a day ahead of time. Let stand overnight in plenty of syrup in covered dish. For stuffed prunes, don't pit — just slit them. Brush with heavy syrup for shine. If a white food is used with prunes, tint it. (See Ripe Olives, etc.)

**Raisins.** Plump them in boiling water before using.

**Gelatin.** How to make molded salads and desserts that will not slump under hot lights? Extra gelatin plus a little alum water is the answer. The results are not edible, but that is excusable in this case. These proportions work well:

For colored gelatin, add 3 envelopes of plain, unflavored gelatin to a 3-ounce package of fruit-flavored gelatin; mix thoroughly. Add 1 pint boiling water and stir till dissolved. Strain through wet cheesecloth. Stir 1 teaspoon powdered alum with

#### TABLEWARE

Sturdy tableware of classic design is usually more effective than fine china and linens. White or off-white is a good choice for dishes to be used in black-and-white pictures.

2 tablespoons boiling water; strain into gelatin. (If plain, uncolored gelatin is needed, soften 4 envelopes of plain unflavored gelatin in 1 pint cold water or other liquid, then stir over hot water until it dissolves. Add alum water as above. Strain before using. This jells very quickly as well as very hard, so work fast.)

If fruit, vegetables, or other salads are to be used in the mold, pour in a thin layer of the liquid gelatin; chill until barely firm; add a little more gelatin, and arrange pieces of fruit, etc., as desired. Chill. Repeat, building one layer at a time, spacing fruit to get the effect desired on surface of mold.

*Miscellaneous Notes:* Pour gelatin gently into mold to avoid bubbles. If you oil a mold, do so very lightly—especially when layering the gelatin. Don't let one layer harden completely before adding next one, or they may not hold together. When you turn out a mold, wipe surface with wet cotton or with fingers dipped in water. Cut white paper to fit under gelatin on plate (especially on colored plate or on lettuce), to reflect light through it, and to keep color clear and bright.

*Ham.* Because a baked whole or half ham has such photogenic form and color, it is frequently used in pictures to dramatize other products—pineapple, peaches, glazed sweet potatoes, etc. Also, being large and recognizable, it is excellent to feature in long-shots of kitchens, dining table setups, and barbecues.

Study photographs of baked ham to determine whether you need a right or left ham to fit the proposed layout. Then shop (personally!) for one that fits both the layout and the platter to be used. (Better take platter, or paper pattern of it, with you to the meat market.)

Bake the ham (slightly under-cooked) the day before photographing, and let it stand 24 hours before cutting into it. If sliced the first day, its juices will seep out and give an unnatural iridescence to the cut surface. It is harmless, of course, but does not look right in a picture. (See "Meats" for carving notes.)

*To Score and Glaze Ham.* Bake ham until almost done; remove from oven. Using a strip of paper about

#### BIG QUESTION

In setting up color photographs to be used in newspapers, what colors come out best in reproduction? *Ans.* The primary colors—red, yellow, and blue. Subtle shades, fine for reproduction on high-quality paper stock, do not always come through or come true in newsprint.

1¼ inches wide for a guide, cut along it (not too deeply) through fat, marking it off in strips, squares, or diamonds. To hold fat in place along edges so it won't shrink apart too much, use pins or skewers. (You may need 100 pins for a whole ham!)

#### GOOD TASTE

Whenever it is feasible to do so, round out the featured food with a food that complements it. In other words, make your picture "taste good." For example, with a big vegetable salad show hot rolls to take away that "raw" look. Use fresh fruit in a photo that plays up chili. Suggest hot coffee with dessert. And so on.

Various glazes are usable. One good type is made this way: Pat sieved brown sugar evenly over fat; bake 10 minutes. Drizzle with honey; bake 10 minutes. Repeat three times. If some spots are browning too fast, cover them with bacon or pieces of foil. If not brown enough, raise ham in oven, or encourage the photographer to use a blow-torch or electric charcoal lighter (some use a chicken singeing tool) to brown it as needed.

If platter chosen is too deep to display ham well, you can fill it in either with plaster of Paris, or with cardboard matching platter in color, cut to fit exactly. Arrange garnishes to hide discrepancies — and be sure the garnishes are not too small and insignificant to be in scale with mass of ham.

*Ice Cream.* Real ice cream is best to use, but it does offer problems. Various photographers and art directors have their special ways of handling this product, but these suggestions may be helpful.

Have a big supply on hand, in large containers (2½ gallon size is good). Have dry ice ready, too, and kitchen tongs for handling it. If a freezing cabinet is available, fine; if not, improvise freezing "caves" from cardboard cartons (a small one inside a larger one, with dry ice between) in which to set the prepared servings.

To show the best possible flakiness of texture, scoop out the ice cream while it is semi-hard, using an ice cream spade or a big, old-fashioned kitchen spoon. This takes lots of practice, and lots of ice cream! Bed these flaky layers of ice cream on dry ice and store in freezer or cave until very hard. Arrange on a lump of dry ice in serving dish, sprinkling each layer with shaved dry ice, and rush into position before the camera. As the last grain of dry ice evaporates from the surface, the picture is snapped.

*Artificial Ice Cream.* This is available from Re-Lis-

Tik Display Company, 811 N. Madison St., Rockford, Ill. Write them for information.

An artificial ice cream that works well for displays, and for use in some pictures, can be made by gradually beating about 1 pound of sifted powdered sugar and 2 to 3 cups fine soap flakes into 1 pound white shortening. For chocolate ice cream add cocoa with the sugar. Or color as desired. No guarantee of quality or results is supplied with this recipe!

*Ice or Ice Cubes.* The real thing works better than substitutes such as crumpled Cellophane.

*Macaroni, Spaghetti, Noodles,* and other pastes. Cook underdone. Drain, rinse, toss at once with a little oil to keep pieces from sticking together. In arranging on platter, or on top layer of casserole, etc., use fingers or tweezers to place individual strands separately, so there will be separation and definition between them.

*MEATS,* general. Cook roasts, steaks, chops underdone; heighten browning on fat edges and grayish spots by using blow torch or touching up with Kitchen Bouquet, or with chili powder mixed with oil.

To carve a roast without making ridges on cut surface, *press* with the knife in only one direction. Don't use sawing motion.

*Hamburgers.* Make extra thick.

*Meat Loaf.* Figure ways of breaking up flat top or sides — with garnish, or just-right sauce, or whatever. A cut meat loaf is likely to be more appealing than a solid mass.

*Milk or Milky Drinks.* Chief problem is to keep drinking glass clear and clean above the milk line. Solution: partially fill glass, then wait till the last minute before filling to proper line.

*Nuts.* Almonds ordinarily are used whole, halved, or slivered. (When chopped they lose their identity.) Blanched almonds are toasted lightly to give them a tone. Before slivering blanched almonds some experts

#### PLATES

Beware of plates that are too large. A piece of pie usually looks better on a bread-and-butter plate than on a pie plate. . . . Don't let foods or garnishes spill out over plates' edge — keep everything contained. . . . Don't have a lot of margin showing. . . . Plates that are definitely flat rather than "cupped" in center, work best in most cases.

like to let them dry overnight. Separate in halves, lay flat-sides down on board, and cut with French knife. Select pecan and walnut halves of good shape and color (no chips or defects), and of matching size. If chopped nuts are to be featured on frosting, etc., cut them individually on a board into good-sized pieces, then shake gently in a coarse wire strainer to get rid of fine "chaff" from cutting.

#### LIGHTING

The lighting of a photograph is up to the photographer and/or art director. In general, oblique lighting (from side) is good for pictures to be used in publicity; while extra lighting at back can sometimes save retouching.

Keep the size of cookies, pieces of candy, or the like on which they are to be used in good proportion to size of nuts, so the pretty halves won't be dwarfed.

**Pancakes.** To make them uniform in size, dip batter with small ice cream scoop or  $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup measure. To keep them evenly round, cut out both ends of a shallow can of proper size (from Number 1 flat to a 1-pound shortening can). Place it on griddle, pour in batter, then remove can before edges are cooked. To achieve fine-grained, even-toned golden surface, have griddle heated just right, and don't grease it. Using too much fat causes coarse brown circles, making cakes look "fried." Cakes can be made ahead of time, stacked with waxed paper between, and frozen or refrigerated until time for photographing. Have plenty of them available for choices!

Stack cakes (or do something to them) so they won't look flat on plate. Try for different yet eatable arrangements — not so fussy that cakes in real life would surely be cold. Sausages, bacon or other meats enhance the appeal in the finished hot cake picture. Keep syrup separate unless layout demands it on the cakes. With today's fast-action lights it can be shown pouring over or dripping off a stack without too much effort.

#### TO RESTORE PARSLEY

Have you experienced the problem of having parsley go limp — and none at hand to use? Try reviving it by clipping the stems under water. That is, fill a bowl with cold water; stand the parsley in it, and clip, clip! Leave the greens in the water until they perk up.

**Parsley.** "A little touch of home economics," parsley has been called. Useful as it is, it should not be over-used. When it is definitely needed, have on hand some that is dark green, some lighter green. One or two fairly generous spots of parsley are likely to be more effective than several smaller sprigs too evenly distributed in the composition.

If minced parsley is to be sprinkled over something,

chop it (not too finely), then put it in a cloth or doubled paper towel and wring out the excess moisture to make it fluffy and easy to sprinkle.

**PIES.** Art directors and photographers always ask for a good brown rim of crust to frame the pie. (For a pie with brown filling, as pumpkin or chess, the rim may be a bit lighter.) A thicker-than-usual filling, too, is needed, and a high meringue if one is to be used.

How can an amateur make a pie shell stand up beautifully and not slump in baking? First you need a pastry that is fairly "durable," yet flaky and tender. (Proportions of 4 cups all-purpose flour to 1 cup shortening make such a crust.) Mix as usual. Don't chill the dough before rolling, but do let it stand 5 to 10 minutes. Then shape a good-sized chunk of the dough into a ball, and roll it out so it is even in thickness. Ease it into the pie pan, pushing it gently toward the center in order not to stretch it. (Stretched dough invariably shrinks while baking.) Make sure no air is trapped underneath when you press the pastry firmly against the bottom and sides of pan.

Trim edge of dough, leaving overhang as usual. Fold and press this firmly to ledge of rim before fluting it; then, as you work, bring tiny points of the dough down over edge of pan, to "lock" each fluting in place. Prick bottom and sides generously, then chill thoroughly before baking.

Before putting the crust into the oven cut a square or circle of foil and press gently into the unbaked shell, letting edges extend up above the rim. Fill this foil lining clear to the top with uncooked rice. Bake in a hot oven (450° or 475°) until rim begins to look cooked but not brown. Remove from oven, spoon out some of the rice, then lift out foil and all. (Save rice — it can be used over and over in pie shells, or cooked and eaten.) Prick shell again and put back to finish baking. Watch it! If rim shows signs of browning too fast, use a long band of foil around outside of pan, bending top edge to protect rim. If crust balloons up in spots, prick it with a sharp fork. If it puffs up around the bottom, press it gently back into place with cloth or paper towel.

#### LATTICE TOP FOR PIE

Weave the strips of pastry on waxed paper on a baking sheet; freeze. It's easy then to slide it onto the pie and, after a few minutes' thawing, to finish the rim as usual.

Double-crust pies offer fewer difficulties, but do require almost constant watching during baking, and use of pieces of foil to control browning.

*To Cut and Serve Pie.* Cut edges of crust first, with razor blade. Then cut top crust with small sharp knife held vertically. After cutting, separate flakes slightly with tip of knife to play up the texture. To cut meringue, use razor blade, scissors, wet knife — or combination of these. (A tender meringue helps most!) To display a piece of pie, use a bread-and-butter size plate rather than a salad or pie size, so it will show off to advantage. To hold up that outer crust on the cut piece, cut a wedge out of a foil pie pan and slip it under the piece of pie. It won't show in the picture, for the point of a piece of pie is always toward the camera.

*For Action Pictures.* To get contrast, use a pale blue canvas or board for rolling out crust for television, or action picture in black and white. Or use yellow shortening or tint the dough yellow.

#### SLIDES AND FILMS

Remember that food set-ups that will be projected on a screen will make objects appear over-large. For that reason, it is well to select tableware with short handles and to place it so that it is not over-prominent in the picture.

*Puddings, Soft Type.* Lay piece of waxed paper or foil on surface of pudding while it cools, to prevent a skin from forming. Stir or beat gently just before spooning into dessert dishes so it will look glossy. Heap it in soft mounds for height, or swirls for texture. Decorate top if it looks too plain: a fluff of whipped cream, a walnut half, or dash of chopped nuts, or other appropriate garnish. Work extra hard for design in the composition of the picture.

*Salads and Dressings.* Strive for form in salads. Use big pieces, not finely chopped mixtures. Even a bowl of lettuce or mixed greens can have form and design — never a haphazard, blowzy look! Use some light, some dark green lettuce, plus tomato wedges, egg quarters, onion rings, or something of the sort to contribute design to the top.

To achieve smartly simple design on plate or platter salads, use greens sparingly, particularly for black and white pictures. Plain plates with definite shapes and simple edges are usually best; medium-dark for light salads, lighter plates for dark-toned ones.

Dressings are usually shown separately, in bowl or bottle. To fill a bottle with creamy dressing without splattering it inside, use a funnel. (For a very deep bottle, you can improvise a long funnel by removing the bulb from a suction baster!) If using mayonnaise or similar thick dressing, have it well chilled, and put it on the salad at the last minute.

**Sandwiches.** Design in the sandwiches and pattern in their arrangement are important. For handling small tea sandwiches, follow suggestions under "Cookies." Using toasted English muffins as a base for sandwich or creamed food? Don't split them in exact halves. (They'll look too flat.) About three-fourths the height is better.

**Soup.** Use interesting dishes — cups, mugs, bowls. Break up flat surface with a touch of floating garnish. To make oysters, vegetables, etc., stay up so they will show, use a disk of clear plastic under surface of soup to support them.

**Tea.** Use the real thing. Iced tea? See "Ice Cubes."

**Turkey.** Roast turkey looks much more natural and appetizing in a picture when it is not really roasted. Some expert home economists simply massage the turkey all over with peanut oil mixed with soy sauce or Kitchen Bouquet, then put it on its back — not on a V-rack — in a shallow pan and heat in slow oven 30 to 60 minutes, or until the skin looks translucent and "cooked." Brush occasionally with the oil-soy sauce mixture. Watch carefully; if a spot browns quickly, lay a piece of foil over it. (Some photographers like to use a blow torch, or an electric charcoal lighter, to brown skin as desired.)

**VEGETABLES.** To "cook" most fresh or frozen vegetables for pictures, simply cover with boiling water, drain almost immediately, run cold water over them, then immerse in cold water or mineral oil to keep them from discoloring, shriveling, or "dimpling" as green peas do. (Frozen ones sometimes need only to be thawed in cold water.)

#### STYROFOAM

A pointed saw is a good tool to use for cutting styrofoam a desired shape.

Beets and red cabbage come out dark purple in color photographs. (For pickled beet slices, turnip slices dyed a slightly lighter red can be used; reproduced, they look more naturalistic than real beets ever would.)

Showing creamed vegetable on a plate? Give shape to the composition somehow — with toast points, or whatever inspiration suggests. (Save out some of the uncreamed vegetable to poke in here and there on top, so it will register.) Plain cooked vegetables require careful arranging.

#### TEST

By using a Polaroid camera, is it possible for the home economist to tell in advance how certain colors will show up when photographed in black and white? Yes, to some extent. Much depends, however, on how the photographer lights the final setup. Under some lighting a shade of blue can come through dark, while with other lighting it will look pale.

*Potatoes.* Use a touch of black dye in mashed potatoes to give them tone in reproduction. For baked potatoes, don't oil the skins. Baking at 450° for 30 minutes, then at 350° until done results in fluffy interior without over-browning skin.

*Tomatoes.* Whether a tomato will be firm and solid, or watery and holey inside cannot be confidently guessed from the outside — but shaking the tomato is something of a test. If it rattles when shaken, it's watery! But play safe and buy plenty, even if you need only one. For color pictures, rich, ripe red tomatoes are best; for black-and-white, choose a medium-light color. To ripen tomatoes, store in a dark cupboard for two or three days.

For stuffed tomatoes, whether baked or salad-filled, turn tomato stem-end down. For such specialties as a baked tomato topped with mayonnaise puff, cook the tomato and the puff separately, then combine.

*Wines.* Use simple, undecorated glasses, preferably tulip-shaped. To open bottles, cut (don't tear) the foil or cellulose band  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch below lip; wipe lip. Remove cork (jackknife corkscrew is excellent); wipe lip again. Red wines look inky if not diluted. For red table wines use about half wine, half water. For port, use one-third water. Fill glasses about  $\frac{3}{4}$  full; remove bubbles. Lighting is highly important — but the photographer is aware of that!

## *Personal Postscript From the Authors*

IN THIS NEW EDITION of *How To Write for Homemakers*, our aim has been to pin-point fundamental facts, and, at the same time, to needle your thinking! We have tried to restate basic principles in new ways, just as you in *Clothing and Textiles* restate basic dress design in fresh, new fashions.

Now the book is done, and we come to the index. Here we ask ourselves: "Shall we make this index look and read like every other index, or shall we rethink it and, perhaps, restyle it to give these last pages a custom-made look that fits the spirit of the book?"

In making the decision, our figuring went something like this: Surely everyone who reads or examines this book knows that a chapter on recipe writing would logically cover the arrangement of ingredients in a recipe, so why list the word *Ingredients* in the index? (Anyone concerned would be much more likely to look under *Recipes*; much more likely to read the entire chapter on that subject.) However, a reader or prospective reader is entitled to find a word such as *Copyrights* listed, for she has no way of knowing in which chapter or under what heading copyrights are discussed. Proceeding along this line of thought, we have shortened and sharpened as needed to interpret what is in the book.

We do not mean to convey the idea that this is an ideal index pattern for all books. Far from it. For example, a cookbook that is not completely cross-indexed is of little value. We do believe, however, in ever looking at the world of words with fresh eyes. Including indexes!

So much for our reasoning. Whatever your reactions to it or to other phases of the book, we shall appreciate hearing from you. After all, it is a book of Communications, you know! — G.A.C. and L.R.

