

CHAPTER II

Methods of Cookery

THE beginnings of cookery mark a step in civilization. The uncivilized man learned that meat put on a forked stick and held over glowing coals was more appetizing than when raw. To place his raw fruits and vegetables in the hot ashes, too, gave them an odor more pleasing to his nostrils, and it was just a step further to learn that the cracked grains spread on hot stones provided a food both pleasing to his eyes and satisfying to his body.

With the development of spits, fireplaces and utensils, the preparation of food became more and more varied.

Today, with different fuels and utensils at our command, we may make many new combinations of old foods, but after all the food value of the ingredients remains the same. Our problem is what methods of cookery are best to retain the nutrients of the food, make it pleasing to the senses and usable by the body and at the same time conserve the time, strength and energy of the homemaker.

Some of the best methods of cooking have been practiced since its beginning, as broiling.

Broiling is cooking by exposing the food to the direct heat of red hot coals, a gas flame or red hot heating units in electricity. It is still the par excellent way to cook chops, steaks, etc.

Baking is now done in an oven, rather than by burying food in the hot ashes.

Roasting means the same process, tho originally it meant exposing food to live coals.

Boiling is cooking in water at 212° F. The temperature at which water boils depends on the altitude of the locality. Therefore, water boiling on a high mountain is neither as hot nor does the thermometer register as high.

Simmering is cooking in water at a temperature just below boiling. Usually we say at 180° F. Small bubbles ap-

pear in the bottom of the utensil and only once in a while one comes to the surface.

Steaming is cooking in the steam from boiling water.

Pan broiling is cooking in a hot skillet, which has been oiled to prevent the food from sticking.

Sauteing is frying in a little fat in the skillet. This is the common method of frying.

Frying means cooking food in a kettle of fat, heated to a temperature best suited to the nature of the food.

Braising is a combination of stewing and baking. Meats are often cooked by this method.

Fricasseeing is first sauteing a food, then continuing the cooking by stewing.

Fireless Cooker: The fireless cooker is a method of cooking without the use of fuel after the food is placed in it. The cooker is made so that its walls retain the heat and the utensils which it holds are made with covers which fit very tight. With such an arrangement, the food may be first heated thoroly over the fire and then transferred to the compartment in the fireless cooker to continue cooking. With such an arrangement, foods may be stewed.

If, however, the fireless cooker is fitted with iron or soapstone discs, these may be heated and then it is possible to bake and boil food by placing one above and one below the food.

Foods, as cereals, that require long cooking are better for having been cooked in a fireless cooker. The amount of water must be reduced about $\frac{1}{4}$ as there is no loss by evaporation.

Meats and other protein food may be well cooked in a fireless cooker, if not allowed to remain too long, as the cooker is gradually cooling off and the meat may spoil if left too long.

It is not only a fuel saver, but a conserver of the homemaker's time and energy to use this modern device. All the fireless cookers carry specific directions, adapted to the use of the particular cooker, which should be carefully followed by the homemaker.

Pressure cookers are especially constructed utensils of strong metal. The cover is adjusted by clamps and con-

tains a safety device for controlling the imprisoned steam and a gauge which registers the pressure.

Increasing the pressure by confining the steam raises the temperature. A pressure of 10 to 15 pounds is usually used in most cooking processes.

The advantages of a pressure cooker are that it shortens the time and saves fuel; it is valuable in cooking tough cuts of meat and some vegetables, as beans; it enables the homemaker to can the non-acid vegetables and meat with less danger of spoilage.

MEASURING FOODS

In the recipes in this book it is very important that the homemaker measure the ingredients carefully. Too much or too little is one of the causes of the failures in cookery.

To measure accurately, each homemaker needs the following equipment:

1. Measuring cup, divided on one side into fourths and on the other side into thirds. The standard cup holds $\frac{1}{2}$ pint. It may be either glass or aluminum and have ridges showing accurate divisions.
2. A standard tablespoon, 16 of which make a standard cup.
3. A standard teaspoon, three of which make a standard tablespoon.
4. A cooking thermometer, if possible, with a range from 0° to 400° F.
5. An oven thermometer, with suitable range for baking.

How to Measure Accurately: Fill the cup or spoon full to overflowing and with the spatula or straight edge of a knife level the cup or spoon. To divide a spoonful of a dry ingredient, cut the contents thru the center for half and again across for fourths.

Fill the measures as full as they will hold in measuring liquids.

Abbreviations Used for Measurements:

c.—cup.

tbsp.—tablespoon.

g.—gill.

qt.—quart.

tsp.—teaspoon.
F.—Fahrenheit.
oz.—ounce.
lb.—pound.

pt.—pint.
gal.—gallon.
pk.—peck.
bu.—bushel.

3 teaspoons = 1 tablespoon.
16 tablespoons = 1 cup.
2 cups = 1 pint.
4 cups = 1 quart.
2 pints = 1 quart.
4 liquid quarts = 1 gallon.
16 oz. = 1 pound.
8 dry quarts = 1 peck.
4 pecks = 1 bushel.

Oven Temperatures

Slow—250° to 350° F.

Moderate or Medium—350° to 400° F.

Hot or Quick—400° to 450° F.

Very Hot—450° to 525° F.

Deep Fat Frying

A temperature of 340° to 375° F. is used for uncooked mixtures, such as doughnuts, or raw foods, such as oysters. At this temperature a cube of bread browns in 60 seconds.

A temperature of 375° to 400° is used for cooked mixtures, such as croquettes, or for potato chips. At this temperature the bread browns in 50 seconds.

Temperatures Used in Cookery

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| Blood heat | 98.6° F. |
| Liquid in top of double boiler | 185°-195° F. |
| Boiling | 212° F. |
| Coagulation of egg—begins 130°, complete at | 185° F. |
| Soft ball stage—fondant, icing, fudge..... | 236°-240° F. |
| Firm ball for caramels | 242°-250° F. |
| Hard ball for taffy | 262°-270° F. |
| Soft crack for butterscotch | 290° F. |
| Hard crack—brittles, caramel | 300° F. |

Terms Used in Preparing Foods

Creaming is manipulating a food with a spoon or hand until it is creamy in texture, such as butter.

Beating is lifting a mixture over and over by means of a spoon or fork to incorporate air, as in muffins.

Cutting is incorporating one ingredient into another by

cutting with a knife one into the other, as shortening into flour.

Folding is incorporating one ingredient into a mixture by lifting the mixture over the ingredient to be introduced, as egg white in cakes.

Crumbing means rolling a food in crumbs with some other ingredient, such as milk or egg, to cause crumbs to adhere.

Kneading is stretching and folding a mixture so as to thoroly mix all ingredients. It may also be used in adding an ingredient to a mixture.

Larding is running small strips of salt pork into meat or fish deficient in fat. This is done by means of a larding needle.

French Terms Used in Cookery

Au Gratin. This means that a cooked food is covered with a cream sauce and then with buttered crumbs before being placed in the oven to reheat and brown. Grated cheese may or may not be added.

Cafe noir. Means black coffee.

Canape. A highly seasoned sandwich, served as an appetizer. It is often toasted and is small in size.

Fondue. A dish made with cheese and eggs.

Glace. Means glazed by being placed in hot syrup at the hard crack stage. Vegetables over which sugar and butter are placed, before baking, are sometimes called glazed.

Lyonnaise. A sauted dish seasoned with onions and parsley.

Meringue. Means a frosting made of beaten egg and sugar.

Mousse. Literally means froth.

Parfait. Literally means perfect.

Puree. The mashed pulp of a vegetable or fruit.

Ragout. A highly seasoned stew.

Souffle. Dish lightened by air. Contains whites of eggs or the whole egg.

Timbale. A dough mixture fried on cup shaped molds in deep fat or a mixture of meat or vegetable cooked in cup shaped molds.