

For the Farm Wife and Family



Household Tips

By Mrs. Richard C. Spence

Imagination Makes Meals Pleasing, Varied, Tempting

Foods don't have to be fancy to taste delicious. In fact, simple foods well prepared and properly seasoned make the best eating. Even if you are a new bride, you can serve meals which please your husband. You don't have to know "how to cook" as much as be able to manage your time and resources.

A good meal is more than being able to prepare foods. The key to being able to serve a meal which satisfies is to plan and think about the combination of foods.

Food: themselves are colorful and attractive so make them look natural, not handled. Salads built to look like a butterfly or candle or Christmas tree take a lot of time to prepare but taste no better than a simple tossed green salad.

Plan for colors, textures & flavors of foods which go together. Just as you wouldn't wear an orange blouse with a red skirt, so you wouldn't serve sweet potatoes with beets if you have thought about a pleasing color combination.

Plan all the other foods to go with the main dish. If it is rich and high in calories, include other foods which

crumbs or french fried onion rings. Likewise for meats—give them variety and interest by serving sauces over them.

These added touches don't take a lot of time. All they require is a little creative thinking as you prepare the menu.

Luncheon Meats, Ham Keep Best in Freezer

Luncheon meats and sliced ham will keep best if you store them in the freezer rather than in the refrigerator. Even if such meats are kept only a few days their flavor will be better if frozen.

In a recent study it was found that the cooked, packaged, sliced ham and other luncheon meats often picked up a slightly soured flavor and a buttermilk-like odor when stored.

A certain bacteria known to attack these foods and thrive at temperatures above freezing was studied. The bacteria seems to affect the flavor and odor of the foods although it doesn't make the food harmful.

The sliced meats held in a refrigerator for 4 to 7 days developed bacterial growth. Packages still vacuum sealed showed much less growth than those that had been opened. But when the packages were kept in the freezer the bacteria didn't multiply so no off-flavors developed.

With more and more ready prepared meat products on the market it would seem

best to give attention to storage of such foods. Since sliced meats separate quite easily even though frozen it's not difficult to take the slices from the freezer for immediate use.

COLD KEEPING

Food for the picnic, the cookout, the lunch box or the community supper needs to be kept cold from the time it is prepared until it is eaten—or until it is cooked and served hot. Fortunately many types of insulated food containers are for sale today that will keep food cold for hours, provided the food is thoroughly chilled when placed in the container.

Keeping food at 40 degrees F or below—the temperature in a good household refrigerator—is recommended for all foods during transportation to the picnic or community meal center and also while they are waiting to be served.

Though homemakers generally understand the need for refrigeration of food in the home kitchen, they often don't make arrangements for keeping sandwiches, salads, meat, eggs, pies, cream-filled or custard cakes and other soft desserts thoroughly chilled for "eating out." There is also misunderstanding about care of hot dishes—like meat or poultry pies, meat loaf, soups, stews or casseroles. If these are prepared at home for a picnic or community meal, they should be

refrigerated promptly after cooking then kept cold until they are reheated for serving. Otherwise, they may gradually become lukewarm and susceptible to spoilage before serving.

Much research has shown that food which is soft, moist, acid or handled a good deal in preparing needs special care. Such foods need to be chilled very promptly. This may be done by putting them in several small containers in the refrigerator or spreading them out flat on platters, for example. Food prepared in quantity for community picnics—such as salad mixtures of meats, eggs, fish, poultry or potato—sometimes is refrigerated in such large containers that spoilage may occur in the center before the mixture chills through.

Though cooking thoroughly is a safeguard if food is eaten promptly, it makes many foods more soft and moist and thus susceptible to spoilage if held without chilling.

Cook Fish Just Enough To Develop Full Flavor

Cooking fish to perfection is a little different than cooking meat. Less tender meats are cooked a long time to make them tender. Not so with fish. Cook fish to the well done stage to develop

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