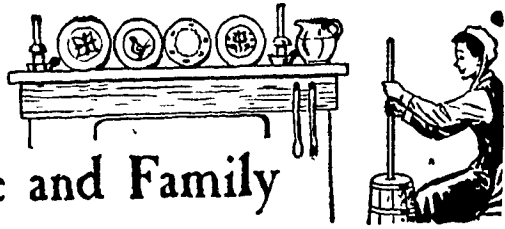


For the Farm Wife and Family



CHICKEN CHATTER

By Mrs. Richard C. Spence

Before summer days get too busy and while chicken prices are low it's a good idea to freeze some prepared dishes ahead.

When you are preparing a main dish it often takes little more effort or time to make enough for several meals. You can freeze it all in meal-size packages or serve part of it the same day and freeze the rest.

For tiptop quality and economical use of freezer space plan to use pre-cooked main dishes within 2 or 3 months. You can, however, keep these foods — if they are properly packaged and stored — up to 6 months without serious quality loss. After that the food won't be as tasty but it will still be safe to eat.

Prepare the food just as you would if you were going to serve it right away. Do not overcook. In fact some ingredients in main dishes that must be reheated for serving are better if slightly underdone for freezing.

Put the food in a container that will go right from the freezer to the oven. You'll find it's easier to reheat it in the oven because you don't have to watch it so closely.

Pasty crusts that are frozen unbaked will be more tender and flaky and have a fresher

flavor than those baked and then frozen.

Crumb and cheese toppings are best added later when the food is reheated for serving. Add them when the dish has been heated through or about 20 minutes before you take it from the oven.

Food for the freezer should be cooled quickly after it is cooked. This will stop the cooking and help the natural flavor, color and texture of the food. It also retards or prevents the growth of bacteria that may cause spoilage.

As soon as the food is cool, put it promptly in freezer containers. Choose a container that suits the size of your family. If you use quart containers, you may want to pour the mixture into the carton a layer at a time, separating each layer with double thickness of cellophane. This makes it easy to break apart the block while still frozen and shortens reheating time. Be careful that you don't fill the containers too full. Casseroles and other main dishes often contain liquids, and liquids expand as they freeze. So leave a little extra space at the top of each container for expansion.

Freeze your main dish foods as soon as they are packed. Freeze and store them at 0 degrees or below.

You might like to try a chicken corn casserole for quick and easy freezing. To make up 12 servings use three-fourths quart chicken broth to make a thickened sauce. Melt one half cup fat and blend in one cup flour. Then add the broth and seasonings.

Blend in about one quart

chopped cooked chicken, three-fourth quart canned or cooked whole kernel corn and three-fourths cup grated cheese. Chopped pimento and onion will add flavor and color. Cool the mixture quickly over ice cubes or cold water and package. Freeze.

flour and salt, then add broth and milk. Cook until thickened, stirring constantly. Add pimento and chicken. Blend well.

To serve immediately, heat the mixture thoroughly and serve on biscuits, hot buttered toast or in timbales.

To freeze, cool the food quickly. Pack in freezer containers leaving space for expansion. (For straight, tall containers leave 1/2-inch space in each pint, for low broad containers 1/4 inch. Pints are best because large blocks of chicken a la king are difficult to thaw.) Seal and freeze immediately.

To prepare for serving, without thawing heat frozen chicken a la king in the top of a double boiler — about 10 minutes for 1 pint.

Menu suggestion: Serve with asparagus and stuffed tomato salad with upside-down cake for dessert.

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