

Tips on how to cook for large groups

If you are asked to serve a kitchen crew for a family gathering or picnic, a wedding, or a class reunion, thoughts of preparing food in quantities of 20 or 40 gallons can be mind-boggling. The biggest problem in cooking for large groups is usually the organization of the kitchen crew. Too many cooks, or too few, can be a real problem, especially if the help isn't organized into an efficient working group, reminds Ruth M. Hand, Extension Home-Economist.

Plan Ahead. Begin any large meal by first finding out who is going to help. Then assign specific duties according to the skill and time available of each person. Give each worker a copy of the recipe well in advance. When later on you can discuss their needs and assign them the utensils, equipment, and space

necessary to do a particular job.

Go through each cooking process mentally - or better yet, on paper. When you go over each process step-by-step you can identify when, where, and how to do the work, who you need to help and what steps you can eliminate or combine. The goal is to foresee problems and eliminate them before the actual cooking begins.

Once you've finalized the work process for all the foods on the menu, put these steps down in writing so they become a work schedule. Include times to begin and end each process. Then post this list ahead of time in a prominent place where all your kitchen crew can refer to it.

Also, prepare the work area ahead of time - empty out refrigerator, set up heating equipment, assemble needed tools,

arrange for sufficient counter space.

Menu Selection. Plan a varied menu when serving large groups of people so hopefully everyone will be able to find something they like. Offer contrasts in color, size, shape texture, and flavor of food. Oven fried chicken or roast ham make good choices for the main course. But if you want versatility choose a rolled rib of beef - it's easy to prepare and is good served hot or cold.

When choosing foods for the menu stay away from potentially hazardous foods, such as fish, meat, foods with mayonnaise, and egg and milk products. Consider your equipment, too, for to serve foods safely you must serve hot foods hot - above 140 F - and cold foods cold - below 40. Bacteria will develop if foods are left at room temperature for any length of time.

Unless you have ideal storage conditions, don't plan to store any food for more than 24 hours. Instead, buy ingredients as close to serving time as possible and

choose the most fresh and wholesome looking produce.

Bacteria can be transferred easily from one food to another - even between raw and cooked foods. When preparing foods for the meal, make sure hands, equipment and work surfaces are clean. Be sure that all kitchen help wash their hands with soap and water after each activity.

Food safety can be more of a problem when cooking in large quantities. Therefore, be sure all recipes are followed exactly - cooking to meet time and temperature requirements. Cook large amount of food in small batches to control the temperature variations which occur when cooking large volumes of food.

Serving Food To Large Groups. If food must be taken to a site other than where it's been prepared, travel with foods chilled - do the reheating at the serving site.

Remember that portable servers are not meant to heat or chill foods - they only help maintain a food's temperature. Make sure all

foods are susceptible to bacteria. Try to keep food covered when it's not being dished up. Once the group has helped itself, cover and store leftovers at once. Guests wanting more food later on can help themselves in the kitchen. But if you have planned well, you should have few leftovers to store.

Information on adapting recipes to serving large groups, may contact Mrs. Ruth M. Hand, extension home-economist, Schuylkill County Extension Service, P. O. Box 404, Schuylkill Haven, Pa. 17972, telephone - 717 - 385-3431.

Because heated trays will not keep foods at the safe temperature of 140 F, use a double boiler system when using portable sterno fuel. Place heated food container over a pan of already boiling water which is above the fuel source.

Keep the serving area clean - cooked as well as raw

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Sewing series on channel 12

CHESTER - Increased family clothing costs have created an interest among women and girls - and men and boys - in learning how to create clothes for themselves and their families.

To help you learn how to sew, SEW SMART - "Beginning to Sew" - a series of 13, half-hour color programs, will teach you basic clothing construction skills at home. "Beginning to Sew" was produced by the Cooperative Extension Service of The Pennsylvania State University and WPSX-TV, the University's educational television station.

"Beginning to Sew" will be broadcast each week on Channel 12 on Tuesdays at 11:30 a.m. It began June 22.

Ruth Ann Wilson, extension textiles and clothing specialist, will show you the "how-to's" as they apply to children's clothing. She will help you create garments that have individuality and will be fun to wear as well as save you money.

Some of the topics covered in the series are tools for the job, know your sewing machines, fabric facts, patterns for children,

facings and fasteners, pants, tops, raglan sleeves knit jackets, set-in sleeves and collars, buttonholes, buttons and hems.

To find out how you can enroll, free of charge, in the "Beginning to Sew" series and receive your viewer's guide, contact the Chester County Extension Office, 235 W. Market St., West Chester, or phone 696-3500.

Mt. Joy 4-H

The Mt. Joy 4-H Club held its first meeting on June 15. The club toured Donegal Mills and saw how bread is made. After the tour, the group had refreshments of homemade bread and ice cream.



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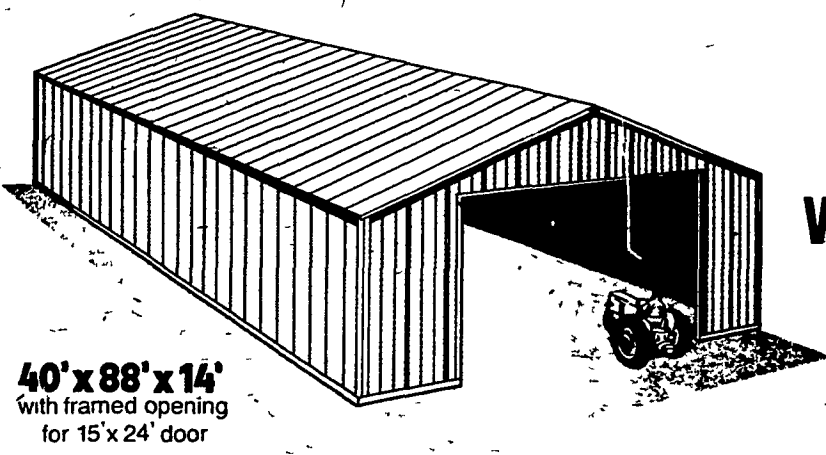
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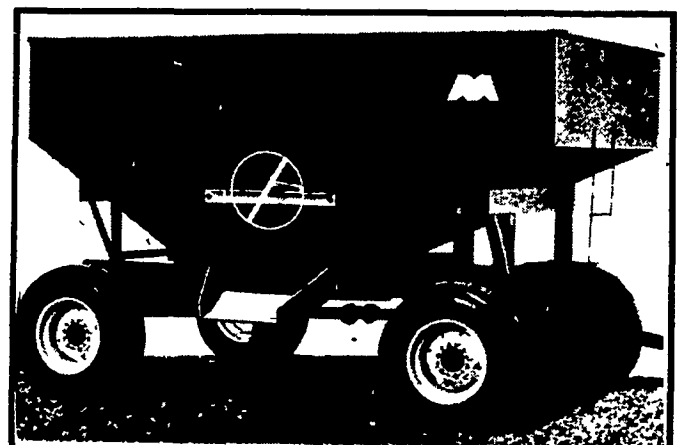
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