

Omlet King captivates audience with demonstrations

BY SUZANNE KEENE
LANCASTER — He bubbles as effervescently as the fluffy omlets he prepares for entranced audiences. During his food demonstrations, he bounces, trots, giggles and talks so fast it's hard to believe he can cook at the same time.

Howard Helmer, the Omlet King from New York, captivated an audience of local home economics teachers last week with his omlet-making demonstration at a banquet sponsored by the Lancaster County Poultry Association.

Listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the fastest omlet maker, Helmer can whip up an omlet in 40 seconds or less. He cooked 217 omlets in 30 minutes to

break the record that was previously set at 84 omlets in half an hour.

For ten years, Helmer has been the Eastern Representative for the American Egg Board, conducting public relations activities with food editors of national media in New York city.

At the banquet in Lancaster, Helmer first demonstrated how to make a plain omlet. To make an omlet, Helmer mixes two eggs and two tablespoons of water.

The first step to a successful omlet, he said, is starting with a very hot pan. He uses a Silverstone pan with sloped sides, giving him the maximum amount of cooking surface. A 10-inch pan with sloping sides gives 14 inches of cooking



Howard Helmer, the Omelet King from New York, recently demonstrated omelet making to a group of Lancaster County home economists. Helmer holds the world record for making the most omelets in a 30-minute time period.



Omelet King Howard Helmer bastes his flaming dessert omlet with brandy. Helmer said the cook should continue basting the omlet until the flame extinguishes.

surface, he explained.

When the egg hits the very hot pan it bursts into bubbles that give the omlet its fluffy consistency.

"The more bubbles the better," Helmer advised his delighted audience.

The egg that is directly touching the pan is cooked instantly, but the rest of the egg remains slimy until Helmer scrapes the pan with his spatula and flicks his wrist to pour the uncooked portion of the omlet onto the surface of the pan.

Within seconds the omlet is cooked and should be removed from the pan as quickly as possible.

"It has to get in and out of the pan," Helmer explained.

The next step, he said, is to point the pan's handle at your navel, place any filling on the left hand side of the omlet and fold, not flip, the unfilled side on top of the filled side. Then, he puts his turner down and with a flick of wrist, turns the omlet onto a plate waiting at his lefthand side.

One nice thing about omlets, he said, is that if the omlet tears when you're turning it over, it doesn't matter because that side is on the bottom when it is served.

"No one needs to know the guts are coming out of it," he chuckled.

Good fillers for omlets, Helmer said, include ham, bacon, mushrooms, asparagus, cheese or nearly any leftovers you may have in the refrigerator.

Later in the evening Helmer made a flaming dessert omlet, which he recommended to use when entertaining friends who consider themselves gourmets. To make the dessert omlet, he first prepared a plain omlet then filled it with canned fruit (you can use fresh), chopped walnuts, maraschino cherries and a sliced banana. He then folded the omlet, topped it with powdered sugar and poured about 1/4 cup 70-proof brandy on top. When he lit the omlet with a match, it produced a crowd-pleasing flame. He warned

that using higher-proof alcohol could result in singed hair.

Baste the omlet until the flame goes out, then top it with sour cream, nuts and cherries. But this time, he cautioned, do NOT turn it upside down to serve.

Helmer also demonstrated how to make a quiche. He blindfolded a member of the audience and guided him through the mixing process.

"A quiche," he explained, "is just a custard pie that is a vehicle for other foods."

Many ingredients can be included in a quiche to add variety, providing a way to use leftover foods like meats, cheeses or vegetables. When a good quiche is finished it will have a domed top and a custardy texture, he said.

When Helmer had finished his charismatic performance, the audience had not only been entertained, they also had gained a little more knowledge about cooking with eggs.

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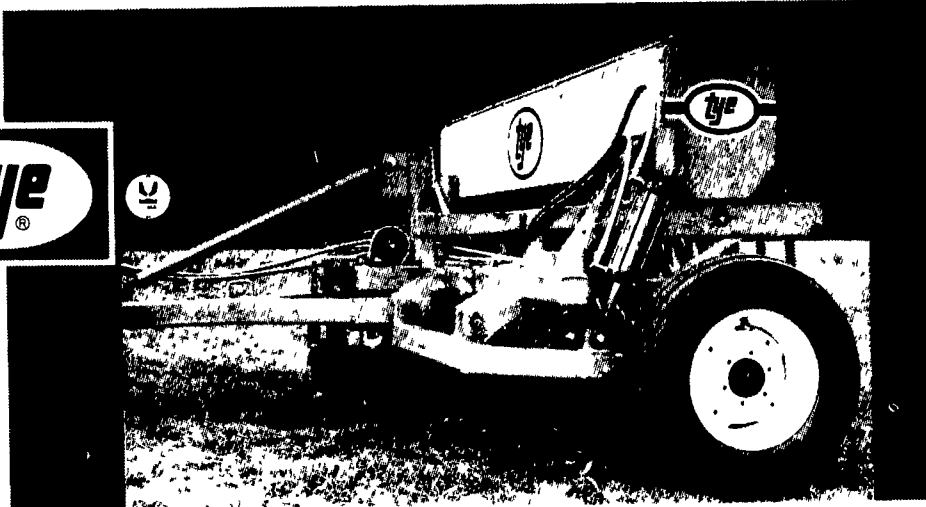
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