



Have You Heard?

By Doris Thomas
Lancaster Extension
Home Economist

YOUR KITCHEN IS YOUR PERSONAL SCIENCE LAB
Did you ever think of yourself as a scientist? Whenever you cook you are practicing a form of domestic chemistry. Combining ingredients by prescribed formulas — such as recipes — and subjecting them to varying tempera-

tures to produce a desired result involves a series of chemical reactions, which you control in the way researchers do in their labs. Unless we are preparing a gourmet meal, we tend to take the notion of cooking for granted. However it is really a complex process. The way food is handled

and heated has dramatic effect. Cooking alters the taste, texture, and color, and can determine whether a food is palatable or safe to eat, since heat kills microorganisms that cause spoilage and disease.

Heating meat allows complexes to form that produce enhanced flavor. For instance, raw chicken has almost no taste, but cooking induces a chemical reaction which gives poultry its "chickeny" flavor. Cooking makes meat more tender. It also alters the color of meat as well as its taste and texture.

Vegetables soften during cooking because the cell-wall fibers, especially pectin, absorb water and partially dissolve. For example, in potatoes, the starch swells and turns jelly-like when heated. Boiled potatoes are usually softer than roasted ones because the water helps dissolve more of the pectin and starch.

Stir-frying vegetables subjects them to heat for a shorter length of time and cause less breakdown, keeping them crispier.

Besides cooking, another chemical process you may practice in your kitchen is fermentation. If you make your own bread or pickles, you are using bacteria or yeast to act on food to produce acid or alcohol.

So you see, your kitchen is really your laboratory. Even the plainest cook is something of a chemist.

FIVE EASY TIPS FOR TRAVELING WITH TOTS

With summer upon us, do you dream of a relaxed family vacation, accompanied by laughter and song? That fantasy can come close to reality if you prepare for the trip with your preschooler's special travel needs in mind.

Prepare three bags of toys: One for travel to your destination, a second bag with different toys for the vacation spot, and a third bag for the trip home. For example, penlights can offer diversion and double as night-lights for preschoolers age three.

Engage the child's mind during

Turn Talents Into Profits

CREAMERY (Montgomery Co.) — During the summer months, Penn State Cooperative Extension will be offering two seminars for micro-enterprise owners. "Marketing your Craft Business," a follow-up session for our "Sewing & Crafts for Profits" workshop, will be held at Bentley's Restaurant in North Wales, on July 14 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and at Penn State Harrisburg, Middletown, on July 15. Guest speaker will be Gregory R. Passowitz, leader for natural resources and small business with the Ohio Cooperative Extension Service.

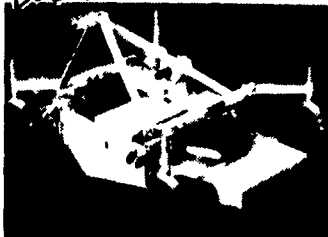
Due to popular demand, we will also be offering "Food for Profit" in a two-evening format at the Lebanon Extension Office (August 17 and 24, 7:00 to 10:00 p.m.). Designed for business people who make food products for resale (through stores, farm markets or restaurants), this workshop includes a discussion of sanitation, licenses and permits, marketing, packaging, record keeping, pricing and business planning. A registration fee of \$20 covers materials. For more information or to register for either of these workshops, contact the Montgomery County Extension Office at (215)489-4315.

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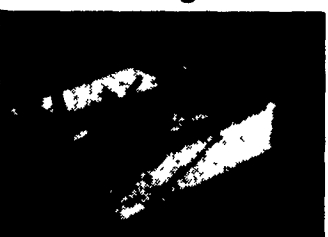
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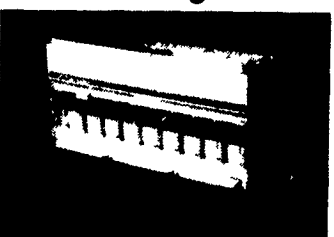
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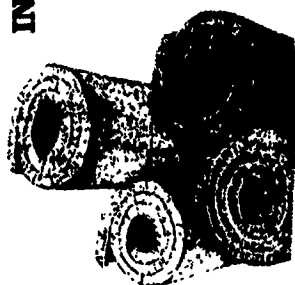
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