

Old Farmer's Almanac Releases 'Good Cook's Companion'

DUBLIN, N.H. — The editors of "The Old Farmer's Almanac" recently researched what it takes to make a really good cook. When all was said and done, their good-cook recipe looked something like this: Combine cleverness with efficiency (both time and money), then fold in truly tantalizing ingredients followed by creative variety. Finally, mix well with old-fashioned methods and a little new technology.

The third annual Good Cook's Companion has stocked its pages full of helpful hints, informative articles, and mouthwatering recipes guaranteed to bring success to the kitchens of experienced cooks, on-the-go professionals, and weekend enthusiasts. Prepared by the folks at "The Old Farmer's Almanac," America's oldest and most trusted household reference guide, the handy companion publication is now on sale for \$3.99 at newsstands, supermarkets, specialty shops, and bookstores everywhere.

Saving time and money in the kitchen is one of those lofty ambitions every cook tries to achieve. The Good Cook's Companion offers seven time- and energy-saving recipes in "Make Supper Using Just One Pan." With selections such as Spinach and Pasta Soup or Chicken Mexicana Casserole, this

method doesn't sacrifice taste for convenience. One thing to remember with one-pan cooking is to be sure the pot is big enough to hold all the ingredients before you begin.

Frugal cooks still serve excellent meals: it's just that they do it with money left over. Cash-conscious chefs often turn to meatloaf because, frankly, nothing is more down-home and satisfying. The best advice for meatloaf makers: Blend by hand to keep the mixture light.

Editor Georgia Orcutt describes the importance of having great recipes as well as the know-how to make them work. "The best recipe in the world won't help if the cook doesn't have the skills to put it together," explains Orcutt. "This edition of the 'Good Cook's Companion' is packed with great recipes and the required helpful hints. We've even included an article on the whys and hows of cutting vegetables, because this affects the way they cook. Did you know that peppers saute more evenly in squares than in rings and that green beans left whole, with just the ends removed, retain more of their juice and food value while cooking?"

As more and more people turn to prepared foods and take-out meals, the old-fashioned methods

of cooking are in danger of being forgotten. In an effort to preserve this knowledge, the "Good Cook's Companion" includes an article on how to bake a cake from scratch (adding eggs and oil to a cake mix doesn't count), complete with recipes and tips. (If it calls for cake flour, the Good Cook's tells how you can adjust for all-purpose flour.) Or you can rouse your loved ones from their slumber this Saturday with warm, fragrant, homemade cinnamon rolls with the recipe that includes detailed directions to ensure delicious results.

Even though old methods are great, new technology offers cooks the opportunity to discover endless menu possibilities. The Good Cook's "Cooking on the Net" guide suggests sites for everything from coffee to chilies and pies to pasta — and even tasty insect recipes. (Perhaps you should bake some Chocolate Chirpie Chip Cookies with dry-roasted crickets for the next office party.)

Cleverness is a characteristic that develops with experience. The Good Cook's Companion is loaded with valuable advice designed to increase your C.Q. (cleverness quotient). For example, when making muffins, try buttermilk for special moistness and flavor; puree leftover cooked

carrots and use it to thicken soups; reduce the saltiness of feta cheese by rinsing it with cold water before serving; and add color, flavor, and fragrance to salads with tulips. (Just remember, only the petals are edible!)

The Good Cook's Companion" is one of several publications produced by Yankee Publishing Inc., of Dublin, New Hampshire. It follows on the heels of the 1998 editions of "The Old Farmer's Almanac" and the "Gardener's Companion" and will be joined by the second edition of the "Guide to Summer's Best Recipes" in June.

Copies of the 1998 Good Cook's Companion are also available through mail order by sending \$3.99, plus a shipping and handling charge of \$1.95 to The Old Farmer's Almanac, P.O. Box 520, Dublin, NH 03444. Orders can also be placed on-line at www.almanac.com.

Finally, the next time you're searching for "brain food," con-

sider curry. Indian philosophers believe that eating more-complex and subtly flavored foods exercises the brain, making it more capable of understanding, appreciating, and surviving the complexities of life. We knew there was a reason it tasted so good!

Here are some recipes from the cookbook.

Scrambled Eggs w/Spinach
(Use fresh spinach or sorrel for this perfect breakfast dish)
8 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided

¼ pound fresh spinach, cleaned, stemmed, and shredded
salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

1 tablespoon heavy cream
12 eggs

Melt a tablespoon of the butter in a large saucepan. Add the spinach and a little salt. Cook over low heat until spinach is wilted and liquid evaporates, about 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in the cream, and

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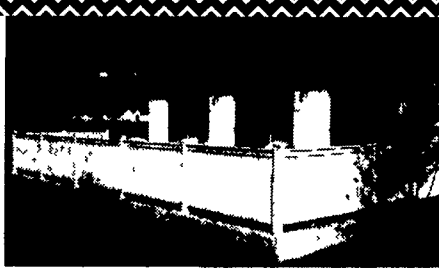
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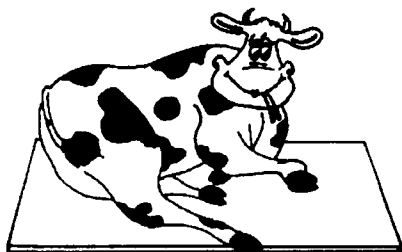


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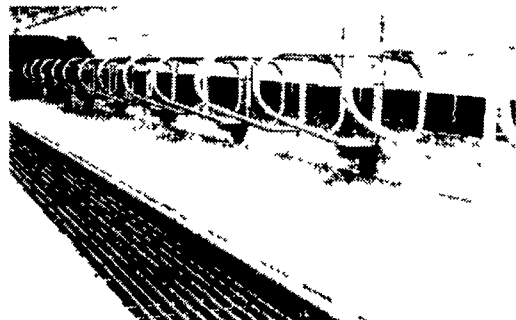
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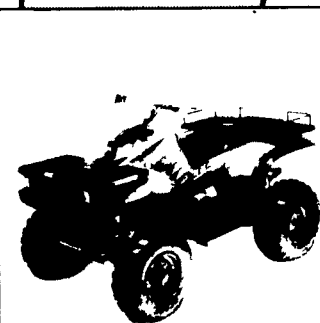
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