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ASK Aunt Daisy

WELCOME RHUBARB

PINK, crisp, spring rhubarb really is different from the long, reddish-green sticks we have been grateful for during the winter—different in flavour as well as in colour.

Baked Rhubarb (1)

Cut into pieces about 1½ inches long, sprinkle with one-third its weight of sugar, and put only a little water—not nearly enough to cover. Flavour with strips of lemon-rind, which must be removed before serving. Cover with lid and bake in a slow oven. The rhubarb will express its own juice, which will be rich and thick when the rhubarb is cooked—that is, soft but not mushy.

Baked Rhubarb (2)

Make a syrup of 1 cup of sugar to 2 cups water, bringing to the boil and simmer for 2 or 3 minutes. Thicken the syrup—only a little—with arrowroot, pour it into a casserole, add the juice of one small lemon, and the rhubarb cut into inch-long pieces. Put on the lid, and bake in a very slow oven till the rhubarb is tender, but not squashy. Serve hot with a good custard sauce, made with custard powder, being careful to stir a knob of butter into sauce just before taking it up. Or serve the rhubarb cold with a dish of junket. If the cooked rhubarb is not a definite pretty colour, add a drop or two of red colouring. Appearance is important.

New Rhubarb Pie

Stew a pound of rhubarb with water to a pulp, sweeten, and add grated rind of lemon, a cup of breadcrumbs, an oz. of butter, and the beaten yolks of 2 or 3 eggs. Pour this mixture into a baked pie-shell, and bake in a hot oven. Whip the egg-whites to a stiff froth with a tablespoon of sugar, and spread this meringue on top of pie when cooked. Return to oven for a few minutes to set, and brown lightly. Some people prefer to use an unbaked pie-shell; if this is done, see that the pastry is very thin, so that it cooks quickly.

Rhubarb Shape

Line a pie-dish with breadcrumbs or thin slices of bread (without crusts). Cover with boiling, stewed rhubarb. Now put another layer of bread and another of rhubarb. Meantime, make up a packet of jelly crystals, using a little less water than usual, and pour this hot over the whole. Leave to set overnight. Turn out and serve with custard (or cream). Alternative: Instead of bread, use stale sponge cake, in which case the rhubarb need not be hot. Lemon jelly is good for this.

Spring Rhubarb Pie (American)

We cannot get the American corn syrup, so I suggest we use one-third each honey, golden syrup and lemon-juice; or just honey and lemon-juice or half golden syrup and the other half hot water and lemon-juice. Orange-juice is a delicious alternative. Two pounds rhubarb cut into ½-inch pieces; 6 tablespoons

flour, ¾ cup sugar; ¾ cup corn-syrup; 1 tablespoon butter, and flaky pastry. Combine the sugar and flour and mix it with the rhubarb. Arrange in a shallow baking dish and pour the syrup over. Top with the butter broken into bits. Roll out the pastry ⅛-inch thick and large enough to hang over the dish. Fold over the pastry in half and make several slits in the fold, in a little design. Then unfold it on top of the rhubarb, trim the overhang, and fold it under; decorate the edge with a fork. Bake in hot oven (425deg.) for first 20 minutes, then reduce heat, and cook for approximately an hour.

Rose Rhubarb

(Individual plates)

About a pound of rhubarb, 1 packet of strawberry jelly crystals, some sugar, desiccated coconut, 1 pint of custard, and a few walnuts. Stew the rhubarb with a little water and sugar to taste, until tender. Drain off the syrup, and divide the fruit into pretty individual dishes. Make up the syrup to a pint with water, and dissolve the jelly in this. Leave it till nearly set, then whip up to a froth and pile on top of the rhubarb. Make a pint of custard, and pour a little round each jelly. Decorate with a sprinkling of coconut and walnut on top.

Rhubarb Hedgehog

This is a very pretty dessert, and very good served with ice cream or custard. If no almonds available, just leave them out and call the dish rhubarb jelly. Wipe the stalks of some young, pink rhubarb, but do not skin them. Cut into small pieces and stew in a little water till tender. Put through a sieve, add sugar to taste, and the grated rind and juice of a lemon. Now dissolve some gelatine in a little warm water, and add it to the rhubarb purée. The amount of gelatine depends on the quantity of purée, and the size of your family. If you have a pint of purée to thicken, you will need 2 dessertspoons gelatine; if only ½ pint, 1 dessertspoon. Beat up the rhubarb and gelatine together, and add also a knob of butter, which gives the mould a smoothness of taste and texture. When all is well blended, pour it into a wetted mould and leave to set. When turned out, stick blanched and shredded almonds all over it, to make the hedgehog effect.

FROM THE MAILBAG

Viennese Chocolate Cake

Dear Aunt Daisy,

Would you please put the recipe for Viennese chocolate cake in *The Listener*. I was called to the phone while you were in the midst of giving it out, and it is a recipe I have wanted for such a long time.—Papanui.

This is indeed a most popular recipe. In a breakfastcup mix 1½ tablespoons cocoa to a thin paste with boiling water. Stir in 1½ tablespoons (small) of raspberry jam, then make up to ¾ cup with boiling water. Let it cool. Cream 4oz.

(continued on next page)