

COOKING IN HOLIDAY TIME

THERE always seems to be a lot of extra cooking needed during the summer holidays; and only a certain amount can be done beforehand. A good deal of fruit comes in all at once too, and has to be preserved, or made into jam and jelly without delay.

Pulping (without sugar)

Don't forget that any fruit which has to be dealt with at once (whether there is any sugar available or not) can always be pulped and put aside ready to make up into jam or pies when you are ready. Moreover, bruised or less perfect fruit may be used in pulping provided the bruised parts are cut out. It is a good plan to lightly butter (or grease) the preserving pan first, before putting in the clean cut-up fruit, with only sufficient water to prevent burning until the juice begins to flow. Soft berry-fruit and tomatoes will need hardly any water; but just crush a few to draw sufficient juice to commence cooking, and as the fruit gets hot, and you stir it well, the juice will run freely. When all is boiled to a soft pulp, fill heated jars right to the brim, and seal airtight immediately.

Easy Bottling (old-fashioned)

Make a syrup in the preserving pan by boiling together the sugar and water for 10 minutes; allow 4 to 6oz. of sugar—or honey—to a pint of water. Honey syrup is excellent for preserving fruit. If scarce, one tablespoon of honey to a pint of water is quite good; but a heavy syrup is certainly more delicious, especially for apricots and peaches. When the syrup is ready, put in the prepared fruit and simmer very gently until cooked. If boiled very fast, or stirred carelessly, the fruit may break and the appearance be spoiled. When the fruit is cooked, ladle it carefully into hot jars, with plenty of syrup and seal airtight immediately.

A Few at a Time

If you get just a pound or two of fruit that you want to preserve without making a fuss about it, just prepare it by peeling, stoning, or halving, pack carefully into jars, fill up with cold boiled water, or cold boiled syrup, place the lids on loosely, and stand the jars in the oven, near the bottom, at Regulo ½ to 1. See that the jars do not touch one another, or the sides of the oven; and stand them on thick folded paper or an oven cloth. Sterilise until the fruit is soft but not broken. Remove from the oven, one by one, sealing each airtight immediately. Just one or two tablespoons of sugar put on the top of the fruit before filling up the jar with cold boiled water, will make quite a good syrup. It is quicker to use boiling water or boiling syrup, but then, of course, you must use heated jars also.

Irish Plum Cake (2 eggs)

This is a useful holiday standby, and is said to look and taste like a pound cake. Sift 2lb. flour into a bowl; rub in ½lb. of good dripping. Add ½lb. of brown sugar; then 2lb. mixed fruit and

peel. Mix together in a basin, 1 teaspoon bi-carbonate of soda and 1 teaspoon cream of tartar (substitute) and pour over them a pint of sour milk. Then beat 2 eggs and mix the cake with the whole. The mixture must be moist. Bake in steady moderate oven 3 hours approximately.

Custard Cake

This is another good stand-by and is perfectly good made with ¾lb. of good dripping or cod-fat instead of the specified pound of butter, according to a Dargaville Link in our Daisy Chain. A little lemon juice beaten with the fat is always an improvement. Two pounds each of flour and sultanas, 1½ to 2lb. mixed fruit, currants, raisins, dates, peel, etc., 1lb. sugar, 1lb. butter (or ¾lb. dripping), 4 eggs, 4 teaspoons bi-carbonate of soda, 1 pint boiling milk, one dessert-spoon each of almond and lemon essences, ½ teaspoon grated nutmeg. Rub fat into flour and mix all dry ingredients, pour the boiling milk over the slightly-beaten eggs, add the essences, and mix all together well. Mixture is a very wet one. Bake 4 to 5 hours. Half this quantity makes a very good cake.

Lemon Honey (without eggs)

A very useful filling for tarts or sponge cakes. Two large lemons—grated rind

and juice, 1 tablespoon cornflour, 1 breakfast cup sugar, 2oz. butter. Melt very slowly the sugar and butter with the lemon juice. When sugar is dissolved, add cornflour moistened with water. Remove from fire just while stirring in the cornflour. Then cook all very slowly till clear golden.

Fresh Herring Fritters

A real holiday luncheon or tea-dish, or even breakfast after the boys and girls have been out fishing. Cut open the herrings. Carefully take out backbone; cut off heads and tails. Then put herrings through the mincer. Make a batter, put in the minced fish and fry in hot fat by tablespoonfuls.

Fish Fritters

Any left-over fish, smoked or fresh, flaked up, may be put into batter and fried as fritters. Have ready a batter made from one beaten egg, a small cup milk, salt, 1 teaspoon chopped parsley (be sure to chop the parsley very fine as it makes such a difference), 1½ tablespoons flour, ½ teaspoon baking powder. Flake the fish and mix into the batter. Now just grease a pan as you would for pikelets, the drier the better, and cook as ordinary fritters.

Another Fish Batter

Sift 4oz. flour into a bowl and drop in an egg-yolk whole. Beat just a little, adding a little tepid water to make a smooth batter. Leave for 10 minutes. Then add the egg-white beaten stiff with a pinch of salt. Fillets of fish coated with this batter and cooked in boiling fat are excellent.



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