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COOKS AS DIPLOMATS'

SO far, in following up the rather fanciful idea of uniting the various peoples of the world by gathering round the dinner table and learning to enjoy each others' tasty dishes, we have eaten only the meat course, hot soup and game. We have yet to consider vegetables, cakes, pudding and sweets.

Germany—Apfel Torte

This is covered apple tart made with a little marzipan or almond paste. Peel, core and slice 2lb. apples. They can be used raw, or the slices previously cooked lightly in syrup, or stewed and sieved. Cream together 2oz. butter and 2 tablespoons sugar. Add a little grated lemon rind, 1 whole egg and 1 egg yolk, and a cup of milk or cream. Mix well and stir in the apple. Line a tart tin with short pastry, and cover with a thin slice of almond paste (which can now be bought by the pound). Fill up now with the apple mixture, and spread with ½ cup of sultanas. Cover with pastry, brush over with white of egg and sprinkle liberally with finely chopped almonds. Bake 10 minutes in hot oven, then bake in moderate heat 25 minutes longer. To make an open tart stir in sultanas with the apple mixture, then sprinkle with chopped almonds and before serving dredge with castor sugar. This makes 8 to 10 helpings.

Canada—Rhubarb Pie

One and a-half cups rhubarb, 1¾ cups white sugar, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon butter, breadcrumbs and short pastry. Cut fine unpeeled rhubarb, line a pie-dish with pastry and sprinkle with crumbs. Beat egg until light colour, stir in rhubarb and sugar, and spread this mixture over the crumbs. Put butter in tiny pieces on top, then cover with pastry. Prick top several times with a fork, and bake first 10 minutes in hot oven, afterwards at a lower temperature.

Austria—Semolina Croquettes

Into 1 pint boiling sweetened milk sprinkle 3 tablespoons semolina. Simmer gently, stirring continuously till semolina is cooked and mixture is a thick paste. Leave to cool, stir in 2 egg yolks, previously lightly beaten, some currants and sultanas. Make into croquettes and fry in butter. Serve sprinkled with castor sugar and ground cinnamon mixed together, and pass round more mixed sugar and cinnamon in a glass dish or sifter.

Near East—Dried Fruit Salad

Soak overnight in enough cold water to cover them well, but do not swamp, about 12 prunes, 12 dried apricots, 1 tablespoon sultanas, 1 tablespoon currants, 1 tablespoon raisins. Strain, make a syrup with water in which fruit has been soaked and when cold pour it over the fruit. Do not cook fruit. Sprinkle

freely with chopped almonds or chopped mixed nuts. Serve with fresh or sour cream.

France—Flans and Frangipane

Round or oval fruit tarts, known as flans, are a favourite French sweet course. Line tin with short crust, prick bottom of pastry, fill with fresh fruit, sprinkle with castor sugar, trim with criss-cross strips of pastry and bake in hot oven. After baking, pour in a little thick fruit syrup which, if liked, can be flavoured with essence of almond, or ratafia, or with a few drops of brandy. If tinned or bottled fruit is used, drain before filling into tart, and reduce syrup by boiling, or thicken it with a little cornflour. "Flans Meringues" are made in

QUAIL FRANCAISE

EN CASSEROLE: Dredge the birds lightly with flour. Cook in casserole with a good piece of butter, salt, pepper, a little sweet herbs, and small equal quantities of stock and white wine. Baste well. Serve with their own gravy reduced by boiling.

ROAST: Put a piece of butter in each quail. Wrap each bird in a buttered vine leaf, cover with a piece of bacon, and tie round with cotton or thin string. Cook in oven 12 to 15 minutes, with a piece of butter, salt and pepper. Baste well. Serve on croutons of bread (cubes of stale buttered bread fried or baked golden brown).

the same way, but do not trim with lattice of pastry. Instead, after tart is baked spread over or pile up on fruit a meringue mixture, made with stiffly beaten whites of eggs and icing sugar, and lightly brown surface in slow oven. To make frangipane stir to a smooth paste in a saucepan, off the fire, 3 tablespoons flour and 3 eggs (white and yolks). Add gradually 1 pint milk, still stirring to keep mixture smooth. Put saucepan on fire, and cook gently, stirring continuously, till mixture begins to thicken, then add 2 to 3 tablespoons castor sugar, vanilla essence and cook for a few minutes to incorporate. Use as a filling for flans and tartlets.

Russia—Charlotte Russe

This needs a pint of cream. Tinned would do, or saved top milk. Soak 2 dessertspoons gelatine in a very little cold water and have ready a little boiling water. Put a few drops vanilla essence in the cream and whip it, adding 4 to 6oz. castor sugar. Purée of apricots, raspberries, or strawberries, may be mixed with the cream if desired. When cream is nicely whipped but not too stiff add ¼ cup boiling water to soaked gelatine which will have absorbed the small quantity of cold water. Stir well and strain if necessary, then add it gradually to the cream, whipping all the time. The gelatine should be just warm. Have ready a pretty mould rinsed with cold water. Pour in the cream and leave to set in cold place.