



COOKING FOR TWO

I AM often asked for recipes suitable for just two people—perhaps a young married couple, or two girls “baching”—or even two men baching, for that matter, though in this case, there probably would not be any “left-overs” to deal with, which is one of the chief problems.

Actually, nearly all “left-overs” can be used very tastily indeed by the help of white sauce—which is not so white, nowadays, because we know that it is best to make it with fine wholemeal flour. In this way, the cold meat, or fish, or vegetable is not really re-cooked, but only allowed to warm through in the sauce. The mixture can be served with fingers or wedges of toast (or on toast); or filled into tiny pastry shells made in patty pans; or into a larger pastry shell baked in a small pie-plate; or put into a pie-dish and the top sprinkled with grated cheese and fine breadcrumbs, or any of the several excellent wholemeal “flakes” now so freely on the market.

If you have a small quantity of two kinds of vegetables left over, and also some cold fish or cold meat, you can make a very nice deep pie by putting them in separate layers, divided by layers of thick sauce, and over all a good cheese pie-crust made with wholemeal, and with some dry scraps of cheese grated into it—thus using up the cheese, too, as well as adding to the nourishment. The cold fish must be flaked, and the cold meat minced or chopped finely. Instead of pastry, the top crust can be of mashed potatoes.

With a little imagination and practice, you will be able to make almost unlimited “concoctions” from “left-overs.” The chief need is to be able to make a good sauce. Try this way. Into a small saucepan put a heaped tablespoon of butter, and after just softening it over a gentle heat, stir in a heaped tablespoon of fine wholemeal. Stir these until they are melted together, adding a shake of salt and pepper, and stirring for three or four minutes, to remove the raw taste of the flour. Then add very gradually about a cup and a-half of milk; or part milk and part vegetable water, i.e., water saved when straining boiled potatoes, peas, beans, spinach, and so on. If you want to keep the sauce white, of course, you must keep to milk, and white liquids; but generally the colour does not matter so much as the nourishment. Stir well as you add the liquid, which will thicken gradually. Then stand the saucepan in another one of hot water, and let it go on cooking until nicely thickened, so that it will coat the back of a spoon. A double saucepan is nice for this, but not necessary—just stand the small

saucepan in a larger one. This does away with constant stirring or watching, for it cannot burn or stick when standing in another saucepan of water like that; and it cooks thoroughly. Chopped parsley may be added to this, or grated cheese, or chopped, cooked celery.

Savory Fish Pie

This is made of any cold cooked fish, and some cold mashed parsnips, which combine very nicely. Have your white sauce made and ready, with chopped parsley in it, pepper and salt, and a pinch of ground ginger.

Now make your pastry with eight ounces of wholemeal flour, one level teaspoon of baking powder, four ounces of butter (or margarine if it is to be eaten while hot) or two ounces of butter and two ounces of lard or dripping. Rub the

Green Tomato Jam

Six pounds of green tomatoes, 2lb. of apples, ½lb. of preserved ginger, 8lb. of sugar, or Brewer's crystals, and 1 cup of water. Cut up the fruit and ginger, and put in the pan with the water. Boil for half an hour, stirring frequently. Then add the sugar, and boil until it will set—about one hour. — (From “Well Wisher,” Hamilton)

fat into the flour until it is like bread-crumbs, and then mix it to a nice soft dough with either milk or water, or some of each. It should come out of the mixing basin in a nice firm ball, leaving the basin clean. Mix wholemeal pastry a little wetter than that made with white flour. Into the mixing water, you may put half a teaspoon of caraway flavouring, for this combines beautifully with both fish and parsnips. Roll out the pastry and put a wide strip round the edge of the pie-dish, to reach halfway down the inside. Then put a layer of cold mashed parsnips into the buttered dish, and then a layer of cold cooked fish; next comes a layer of sauce; continue in this order until it is all used up, finishing with the sauce. Then roll out the pastry again, and cut out little rounds with a small pepper-tin, or something which will make rounds about the size of half-a-crown. Place these round the edge of the pie-dish just overlapping one another. No crust goes over the white-sauce top layer—just a dab or two of butter, perhaps; and when cooked, a sprinkling of wheat-flakes. Bake in a hot oven to cook the pastry.

Vegetable Pie

In the same way, you can make a pie with layers of any cold cooked vegetables at all, covering with a sauce made

as usual—viz., a tablespoon each of butter and wholemeal, melted and stirred together, but thinned out with gravy or stock, flavoured with celery and onion, and with a little vegetable extract added. If you like, cover with a peanut butter crust, made like this: One and a-half cups of wholemeal, 1 teaspoon of salt, ½ cup of milk, 4 tablespoons of peanut butter, 1 large teaspoon of baking powder, and some strips of bacon fat. Sift the dry ingredients, add the peanut butter, mixing with a fork. Add the milk, and roll out. Fit on to the pie dish, making two or three slits. Cut the bacon into small pieces and sprinkle on top. Cook in a hot oven.

Curry Sauce

Many “little bits” are delightful if heated up in a curry sauce. Or you can warm up the cauliflower or Brussels sprouts separately in a covered casserole on the lowest shelf in the oven when you are cooking meat or other things on other shelves, and then pour the curry sauce over them. Make it like this—peel and slice one large onion, and fry it in bacon fat, or butter, or good dripping, or margarine, for five minutes. Add a small apple chopped or sliced, and fry it too, and then stir in a heaped dessertspoon of curry powder, and go on frying for a couple of minutes or more. This frying of the curry powder is the secret of the real proper flavour of the sauce. Then add about half a cup of mixed raisins and sultanas, and then stir in the usual tablespoonful (or one and a-half tablespoonfuls) of fine wholemeal, and stir till nice and smooth. If the flour won't come quite smooth on account of the other ingredients in, add a wee bit more fat. Then add your 1½ cups or 2 cups of milk and vegetable stock, very gradually, stirring constantly, and cook until it begins to thicken.

Finish by standing the pot in a large pan of hot water as I described before, and cook until the sauce will coat the back of the spoon. The seasoning of pepper and salt (and a little cayenne too in this case) is always added at the beginning of the process. Crayfish cut up in small pieces is very delicious warmed up in curry sauce.

Meat and Vegetable Loaf

This is another tasty way of using up cold meat. Put it twice through the mincer (to make the “loaf” light and more palatable)—together with a little raw onion, a carrot, and a stalk or two of celery. Mix it well in a bowl with some cooked and mashed potato, a seasoning of pepper and salt, and a beaten egg. A little milk to rinse out the basin the egg was beaten in can also be added, if the mixture is too dry. Pack it into a bread-tin or a cake-tin, and bake in a moderate oven (350° or Regulo 4) for about an hour, or less if the loaf is small. Very nice with tomato sauce, or with a mushroom sauce made by adding a few mushrooms to our faithful friend the white sauce.

FROM THE MAIL BAG

Water Melon Preserve

Dear Aunt Daisy,

Have you a recipe for water melon konfyt? My husband used to have it in South Africa as a boy, and is always talking about it. I've never been able to find a recipe in any book. It is made from the skins, and there is lime in it. —“Faithful,” (Papatootoe).

Strangely enough, I have some South African recipes, and here is just the one you want. Take the peel off a ripe water melon. Peel off the green outer rind, and remove most of the pink portion of the fruit inside. You could eat that, or use it in a salad. Prick each piece thoroughly with a fork, and then cut into the desired shapes. Steep the rind for twelve hours in a solution of lime water, using one tablespoon of lime to every 3 quarts (that is six pints) of cold water. Then rinse the peel thoroughly in fresh water, drain and boil gently in water for about half an hour. In the meantime, dissolve the sugar in boiling water, allowing six pounds of sugar to every five pounds of peel; and three cups of water to every cup of sugar. Add the drained peel, and cook gently until the peel is clear and transparent. You can also add for flavouring two ounces of bruised ginger, or stick cinnamon, tied up in a muslin bag.

Kaffir Water Melon Preserve

This is exactly the same recipe, except that the peel is not parboiled—it is put straight into the syrup and cooked until clear and transparent. If liked, a small piece of alum the size of a green pea is added, to make it crisp.

Mounting Ferns

Dear Aunt Daisy,

“Green Lady” may like to know the following method of mounting ferns: Pour a little liquid paste or glycol on to a piece of glass; spread a very thin coating with the tip of the finger over sufficient space to take the fern you wish to mount. Place the fern face up on the paste. Press lightly with the fingers, lift carefully, and place in position in the album. The most delicate ferns can be handled in this way without fear of damage.

It is best to do one page at a time and to place a piece of paper over the ferns until next day. Keep the album under a heavier book.

“Fern Frond,” (Timaru).

Many thanks, “Fern Frond.” It is a very fascinating hobby to press and mount native ferns and flowers.

Whitening Unbleached Sheets

Dear Aunt Daisy,

Mother was listening to your broadcast about unbleached linen this morning, and has told me to write and tell (Continued on next page)