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FROM THE MAIL BAG

Drying Beans

Dear Aunt Daisy,

This is my first time of writing to you, but I listen to your session when I can, and always read your page in *The Listener*.

I have heard you several times describing how to preserve beans and peas by the "three-hour method," and have also heard you mention drying beans as a method of preserving them. I have done quite a lot the latter way, and am wondering if people realise what a simple and successful method it is. I took the precaution first of trying a few out by drying them and then soaking and cooking them; and they were just as nice as those I did last year in bottles. There is no fuel required, and the only time it takes is in cutting them up finely. I put them on trays out in the sun for a few days, turning them over in paper bags. The bottles I used for beans last year, I am saving for extra tomatoes, as I think you cannot have too many of them for winter soups, savoury dishes, etc.

Stale Bread

I noticed in *The Listener* a few weeks ago, you were asking if anyone had tried freshening bread by putting it under a running tap and then baking it in the oven. I have, dozens of times, and it is completely successful. Scones can be freshened in the same way, using milk instead of water. By the way, here is a recipe for using stale bread which makes very nice Savoury Fingers for using with salad, or simply by themselves. Four ounces of tasty cheese, 1 tablespoon of vinegar, 1 teaspoon of sugar, 1 teaspoon of salt, 1 teaspoon of butter, and not quite a teaspoon each of mustard and

pepper. Melt the butter in a pan. Beat an egg and mix with the grated cheese, stir in the rest of the ingredients, and add all to the pan. Cook a few minutes. Then slice the stale bread very thinly, cut into fingers, spread with the mixture, and bake in a slow oven till crisp.
—Mrs. W.W. (Blenheim).

Preserving Hints

Dear Aunt Daisy,

I generally listen to your session each morning, and have heard how many of your listeners have preserved fruit, so I thought I would send you a method I used during the last war. I was in the Old Country, and our ration of sugar was only half a pound per week for each member of the family.

This quantity did not allow much for preserving fruit, after making jam. I did plums and damsons this way:

I used glass jars (without metal caps). First of all I wiped the plums, and made sure they were quite sound. I filled the jars to the top with the fruit, put these into a cool oven (mine was a fire oven), and I had boiling water ready. When the fruit had sunk down in the jars, and the skins cracked, each jar was filled to overflowing with water. I had some thin starch made ready, also tissue papers cut. One paper was ready with starch, and as I filled a jar with water, I popped the paper on quickly, then put a second paper over. There was no sugar used. When we used the plums later, I poured the water in a pan, adding sugar, made the syrup, then put in the fruit for a minute or two. They were lovely also for tarts. I do not know whether this will interest you—I hope it will.

Please excuse my typed letter — I cannot write, as I had a stroke two years ago, so write all my letters this way. I do enjoy your talks — they are grand.
—"Worthy" (Auckland).

It certainly does interest us, "Worthy," and thank you for telling us. And we admire your spirit in typing your letters, as you cannot write. We are never beaten, are we?

Apple and Onion Salad

Dear Aunt Daisy,

I'm just another of those who enjoy your morning session and recipes, and your *Listener* page. I've heard you put over many apple recipes, but I've never heard you give the Apple and Onion Salad. Well, here it is. Of course, the size of the salad depends on the size of the family. For my family, I use three apples and one onion (the apples must be eating apples, not cookers). All you do is to peel and slice very finely the apples and onion, mix them together in a salad bowl, and then pour over a sweet dressing. I like a dressing made with sweetened condensed milk, and it is especially lovely with this salad. If you have not already tried this, you will find it very tasty, particularly when lettuce and tomatoes are getting scarce.
—R.M. (Orakel).

Very piquant and exceedingly healthy. Although onions do not agree with everyone, they are very good for those who can digest them. Bread and onion is real "peasant" food, simple and satisfying. Here is my condensed milk salad dressing: One tin of sweetened condensed milk, 1 teaspoon of salt, 1 teaspoon of dry mustard, some pepper. Mix all with the milk, then sift in a little curry powder, then vinegar to taste.

Or you could try this Pineapple Salad Dressing — using 1 cup of pineapple juice, 4 tablespoons of flour, 3 tablespoons of sugar, 2 eggs, 1 tablespoon of butter and 1 cup of cream. Mix the sugar and flour, and add enough pineapple juice to make a smooth paste. Heat the rest of the juice, and add the flour mixture. Cook, stirring constantly until thickened. Add the eggs, beat until light, and add the butter. Cook 2 or 3 minutes, stirring to prevent lumps. Cool and place in refrigerator, or a cool place, until ready to serve. Whip the cream and fold into the mixture just before serving.

Cleaning Panama Hats

Dear Aunt Daisy,

Here is a tried and proved way of cleaning a panama hat. I have tried it on my schoolgirl's regulation panama, and find it very good.

Beat one egg white with one teaspoon of salt. Add gradually the juice of one lemon, and beat well together. Brush on the hat with a toothbrush. Wipe over with a damp cloth, and put in the sun to dry. I put mine over a basin when drying, and elevated the basin to keep it clear of the ground, and also to keep the brim in shape.

—Constant Listener (Brooklyn).

That information will be welcomed by every mother of a schoolgirl and by every bowler's wife! Thank you very much.

A Simple Hand Lotion

Dear Aunt Daisy,

Here is my own simple hand lotion which I have found very helpful. Just buy a two-ounce jar of zinc ointment and a four-ounce bottle of castor oil. Put the ointment into a small basin (a cup without a handle is what I use) then add twice the quantity of oil. Stand this in a saucepan with hot water, and stir until the ointment is dissolved. This forms a paste which does not rub off as readily as ointment. It is a really marvellous remedy.

I might mention that I enjoy your talks, and also your page in *The Listener*. I have tried many of your recipes, and all have been a decided success. Lots of good wishes. Yours truly—An Interested Listener (Wellington).

THE LISTENER CROSSWORD (Answer to No. 51)

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