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FROM THE MAIL BAG

Genuine Staffordshire Oatcakes

Dear Aunt Daisy,

Like your correspondent "C.G." whose letter appeared in *The Listener* of September 5th, I have been very interested in the letters which have recently been published by you about "Soft Oatcakes." "C.G." speaks of memories of fifty years ago, and as he mentions the town of Leek in Stafford-

shire, a town in which I lived when a boy just over fifty years ago, I feel it is about time that those of your readers who desire it, should have the genuine "Staffordshire Oatcake" recipe, which my mother had in her possession for over eighty years. It is as follows:

Eight heaped tablespoons of oatmeal; 2 heaped tablespoons of flour; 1 teaspoonful salt; 1 quart hot water. Mix together and add $\frac{1}{2}$ cake compressed yeast, or some brewers' yeast if obtainable. Leave to rise overnight, or for 6 or 7 hours, in a warm place. Cover the mixture with a cloth while rising. When it has risen, stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful of baking soda dissolved in warm water. Cook on a hot girdle like pikelets.

Keep wrapped in a cloth, one on top of another.

In this way they will keep soft for days if necessary, and can be warmed up in the frying pan. They can be eaten hot, buttered, with a pinch of pepper and salt, or fried with bacon. If desired cold, butter and syrup may be used. The recipes you have already given have a larger quantity of flour than oatmeal, but I am sure if the above recipe is tried by "C.G." he will find it comes very close to those oatcakes he remembers of fifty years ago.

—J.Y.R. (Oamaru).

I am sure that "C.G." especially, besides many other Old Country contemporaries, will appreciate your letter, and be glad to try your genuine old recipe. Thank you very much

Curing a Goat Skin

Dear Aunt Daisy,

Would you be kind enough to send me instructions, if you can get them, of how to cure and dye a goat skin for a mat? I once tried a salt dressing on a sheepskin, but it went very hard, and was not a bit nice.—R.A. (Tatuanui).

A New Plymouth Link in the Daisy Chain once answered this question, saying that she had successfully cured a goat skin with nothing but baking soda. She said that the skin must first be scraped free from any flesh and made quite clean; and then stretched out flat on the floor of the shed, or some flat surface, and tacked to hold it firm. Then rub in about a pound of baking soda. Leave for about a week. It should then be quite white and pliable. If it is hard, rub it with a piece of pumice, working all the hardness out of it.

Another listener recommended wetting the skin first with kerosene, and then rubbing in baking soda, thus forming a kind of paste; and then using the pumice as before, after a few days.

Do write again and let us know how you get on. Some reader may be able to give us some more advice on this subject. It is one of pretty general interest. As to dyeing it, I would advise leaving it its natural colour; but if you really want to dye it, I suppose you would follow the same general idea as of dyeing a sheep skin. Mix up a good dye according to directions, and dab it evenly all over the hair with a sponge. I think the hair is harder to dye than the wool of the sheep skin, however, and it may not be so successful.

Madame Patti's Beauty Treatment

Dear Aunt Daisy,

I was interested in the recipes for home-made hair pomade, printed in a recent *Listener*, and intend to try these later on, as they are so simple to prepare. What I would like is a good recipe for home-made cold cream.

Some years ago, I read an article written about Madame Patti, in which

(Continued on next page)



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