



HINTS ON JAM-MAKING

IN spite of gloomy prognostications about the wet spring having cut down the supply of fruit this year, there is still much to be thankful for, and plenty of scope for ingenuity in devising recipes for "blended" jams—using some cheaper and more plentiful fruit to eke out the rarer and more precious kinds. We can use rhubarb to eke out strawberry and raspberry jam; plums will combine with these also, and apples with almost any fruit. Will the Links in our Daisy Chain please help out by sending us the results of their experiments?

Recently I was told by a man that to savour the full flavour of a good jam, it is essential to spread it on plain bread without any butter! He assured me that butter blunts the flavour of jam, just as sugar does the flavour of a cup of coffee or tea.

Warm the Sugar

Although some jam recipes specify boiling the sugar and water together first for a certain time and then adding the fruit, the majority of jams are made by first cooking the fruit gently till soft, then adding the sugar, stirring until this is properly dissolved, and then boiling very briskly till the jam will set when a little is tested on a cold plate. It is best to have the sugar well-warmed before adding; it then dissolves more quickly and thoroughly when added to the fruit. *It is important that the sugar be thoroughly dissolved before the final rolling boil, if not, the jam is liable to crystallise later on.* In factories, the jam boilers are surrounded by a steam jacket, so that the jam is heated all round as well as from the bottom, thus making for faster boiling.

Time for Cooking Jam

The times given in a recipe are of necessity, only approximate. If jam is boiled for too short a time, it will neither set firmly nor keep well, while if, on the contrary, it is cooked too long, it will become sticky and the colour is spoiled. Test jam by putting a spoonful on a cold plate. This will set in a few minutes if done. Draw your finger through the blob on the plate; if the jam runs together again quickly like water, it is not done; if very slowly, you may take it up.

Sealing Jam

Jam must, of course, be sealed airtight. A round of white notepaper cut to fit the jar, and dipped in vinegar, is a good idea for preventing mould from forming. Store in a cool place; the top shelves of pantries are not good, because the heat rises. Most jams are sealed down while very hot, but preserves of whole fruit, like strawberries, are bottled when half-cooled, stirring first, so that the fruit is evenly distributed through the jam.

Five Minute Berry Jam

This recipe applies to strawberries, raspberries, loganberries and red and black currants. It had a considerable popularity a year or two ago. Of course the jam takes longer to make than it sounds, for the five minutes is counted

each time from the time the mixture reaches the boil. Remember the rule to have the sugar thoroughly dissolved before the second boiling. Six pounds of fruit, 6lb. sugar, pinch of salt. Put the fruit in the pan and sprinkle over 1lb. of the sugar with the salt. Boil exactly five minutes. Then add the rest of the sugar, bring to the boil again. Then boil for exactly five minutes again. Pour into jars and when cold, it should be a beautiful firm jelly.

Instead Of Butter

If using dripping or lard instead of butter in cake-making, use only 4/5ths as much, and cream it well first with a dessertspoon of lemon juice or vinegar to a half-pound of dripping. A pinch of baking soda may be added also.

Gooseberry Jam (With Vanilla)

This is said to taste just like strawberry jam. Use the same recipe and vary it by adding raspberry or strawberry essence instead of vanilla. Also, leave some without any flavouring, as real honest-to-goodness gooseberry jam. Boil 6lb. sugar and 5 cups water for 10 minutes. Add 3lb. gooseberries, and boil about 1½ hours. Take off stove, let stand half an hour, then add ½ small bottle of vanilla essence. Bottle.

FROM THE MAIL BAG

To Remove Mildew

Dear Aunt Daisy,

I know that you have told us of a simple and certain way of removing mildew, but I cannot remember it. Unfortunately, I have two tablecloths badly mildewed, and so would be very grateful for the remedy.—E.J. (Christchurch).

Just stir ¼lb. of chloride of lime into 2 gallons of cold water, and leave it an hour or two till dissolved. Strain carefully through a strong tea-cloth or similar article, so that no lumps are left in. Then soak the tablecloths in this water for a while—watching to see when the mildew has faded. It may take 2 or 3 hours, or less. Rinse very thoroughly in two or three clean waters, putting some vinegar in the last rinsing so that any chloride of lime left may be killed, otherwise the fabric may be weakened. If you have coloured tablecloths to treat, which the above bleach will fade, damp the mildewed marks, rub well with wet soap, and then cover thickly with a paste of starch and cold water. Put the article outside, so that it may get the benefit of the sun and the rain. Each time it gets dry, repeat the process until the mildew has faded. Half salt and half starch may be used for the paste. Wash thoroughly afterwards. Another recommended way is to soak the article in kerosene, roll up and leave all night, then wash.

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