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4.4

Ask Aunt Daisy

RHUBARB—First Spring Fruit

A WRITER once deprecated rhubarb as neither fruit nor vegetable; but when the first rose-pink bundles come in, early in spring, few can resist it. Our grandmothers believed that rhubarb was a good blood purifier, and it is well to bottle some as a standby for tarts and other desserts, because it combines well with other fruits, fresh or bottled. It is accommodating, too, for it takes on the flavour of the fruit with which it is mixed. Apple and rhubarb is a good blend; raspberry is another good idea, also orange, besides gooseberries.

Easy Preserving Method

Cut up the rhubarb into chunky pieces; fill up preserving jars, but don't add any water or at most a tablespoonful. Cover jars loosely, with saucer or tin lid, and put in oven at lowest heat (regulo 1). Leave till it looks cooked, about ¾ hour, depending on the size of the pieces. The rhubarb will have sunk in the jars, so you should fill them up from each other, being careful to put them back in the oven to re-sterilise the exposed tops, leaving about another 10 minutes. Black currants or loganberries are excellent preserved with rhubarb. Take jars out one at a time, fill up with boiling syrup as quickly as possible, sealing each one as you go.

The Syrup

A very heavy syrup is the cause of fruit rising in the jars. Allow ½ lb. sugar to a pint of water; put into a clean saucepan over low heat, stir till sugar is dissolved, then bring to boil. Boil for 3 to 5 minutes, then cool, and strain through muslin to make really clear. Fruit may be bottled with or without sugar, but the flavour is better if done in syrup.

Rhubarb Wine

Five pounds rhubarb, 4 lb. sugar, 1 lemon (juice and thinly pared rind), ½ oz. isinglass, 1 gallon cold water. Cut rhubarb into small pieces, put into crock and crush thoroughly. Pour water over. Leave to stand 6 to 8 days, stirring and crushing every day. Strain, add sugar, lemon juice and rind, stir till sugar dissolves. Add isinglass dissolved in a little hot water. Leave till fermentation ceases. Strain and bottle. Be sure working is finished before corking tightly. Ready for use in 6 weeks, better if kept longer.

Rhubarb Lattice Tart

This is an American one with an unusual method—said to be juicy and delicious. First, combine 4 cups rhubarb, cut into ½-inch pieces, with one slightly beaten egg, a tablespoon lemon juice and ½ teaspoon grated lemon rind. Have ready mixed ¼ cup sifted flour, 1½ cups sugar, ¼ teaspoon each of nutmeg and salt; add these dry ingredients to the rhubarb mixture. Fill this into your pastry-lined dish, cover with strips of pastry lattice-fashion, and bake as usual—hot oven (450 degrees) for first 10 minutes, then at 350 degrees—about an hour altogether.

Rhubarb and Strawberry Pie

Keep this until your strawberries are ripe. It is a delicious combination. Make in a deep plate with a lattice pastry top, like the other one. Use 2 cups fresh strawberries to 3 cups diced fresh rhubarb, and combine thoroughly with 1½ cups sugar, ¼ cup sifted flour, and ¼ teaspoon salt previously well mixed to-

gether. Turn all into pastry-lined dish or plate, cover with strips of pastry lattice-fashion, and bake, hot oven (450 degrees) for first 10 minutes, then at 350 degrees for about 50 minutes or till cooked.

Rhubarb and Pineapple Jam

Three pounds of sugar, 1 large tin pineapple, 4 lb. rhubarb. Cut up rhubarb and pineapple, add sugar, and leave all night. Next day put on to boil, and boil till it will set when tested. Just before bottling, add the pineapple juice, and stir well. Bottle in usual way. Lovely pink colour.

Rhubarb and Banana Jam

This is liked by some people. Make a little first—one pound of rhubarb, 1 lb. sugar. Cut up rhubarb and put with

SIMPLE CREPES SUZETTE

This is an easy form of the famous French pancakes. Make them very thin indeed, like waters, and keep them warm in the hot orange sauce as given below. Combine ½ cup flour, ½ teaspoon baking powder (the cream of tartar kind), ½ teaspoon salt, 2 eggs, slightly beaten, a cup of milk and about a teaspoon of grated lemon rind. Lightly grease a small frying pan (7-inch) and make hot on gas or hot plate. Put in a very small amount of the batter, so that you have to tilt the frying pan to make it cover the whole pan. Turn only once. Roll at once and place in oven dish in warm oven, to keep hot with this orange sauce poured over them—½ cup butter, ½ cup sifted icing sugar, and the juice and grated rind of a large orange—all heated together in a small saucepan.

sugar overnight. Boil till soft. Then add 2 or 3 bananas to each pound of rhubarb. Mash bananas or cut finely. Bring back to boil, boil 3 to 5 minutes, and bottle. Test.

Rhubarb Shortcake

This is a rich and good shortcake. Rub 8 oz. butter into 1 lb. of flour, add a tablespoon sugar and a teaspoon baking powder. Beat 2 eggs, add a tablespoon milk; mix all to a stiff paste. Roll out, line a greased tin or pie-plate with half of it, cover well with chopped, fresh rhubarb, and sprinkle with sugar. Cover top with the other half of pastry, wet the edges and press together, leaving no hole for the juice to escape. There is on the market now a special pie-plate called a flavour-saver, with a fluted edge which prevents the juice from boiling over into the oven. Bake the shortcake a pretty brown in a moderate oven and turn out. Dust with icing sugar. Any reasonable fruit may be used.

Rhubarb Sweet

Stew 1 lb. rhubarb with water to a pulp, sweeten and add grated rind of 1 lemon and yolks of 3 eggs well beaten, 1 cup breadcrumbs, 1 oz. butter. Grease and line piedish with pastry, pour mixture in, and bake in hot oven. Whisk whites of eggs to a stiff froth with a tablespoon of sugar. Spread on top of pie and return to oven, to set.

