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Special Requests

I HAVE here a number of letters "Asking Aunt Daisy," so I must make this week's page a kind of mixed bag by trying to answer them.

Preserving Grapes

This is a tried and proven recipe from Te Kauwhata, in the grape-growing district. Take the grapes off the stalks and pack in clean jars. Stand jars in a warm oven and slowly increase heat until about 350 degrees. Cook until they change colour, then remove from oven, and re-fill jars, making two full ones out of three (when they cook they sink down). Have your syrup boiling and overflow jars and seal in the usual way.

Grape Juice

Make like other berry juices. Put any quantity into large pan, crush with wooden spoon or potato masher and allow to stand a few minutes. Then add a very little water (about ½ pint to 6lb. of fruit) and place over very low heat, stirring and pressing to make juice flow. Don't actually boil, or at most for only a minute. Should take about an hour for 6lb. fruit. Then strain through a cloth, allowing plenty of time (or push through a colander, when it will be less clear but will have more Vitamin C value). Bring the juice to the boil and add about ¼lb. sugar to each pint. Honey may be used in place of sugar. Heat and stir till sugar is dissolved. While boiling pour into hot sterilised bottles or jars. Seal each immediately. If 1 teaspoon olive oil is put on top of each bottle this keeps all air from juice, and can be easily soaked up with a bit of cotton wool before using. After filling boiling juice into the hot bottles or jars and sealing, it is well to sterilise in water bath for 20 minutes, although this is not always done. Bottles may afterwards have necks dipped in melted wax.

Another Grape Juice

This method is from the Home Science Department of Otago University and is very simple. One cup grapes (6 oz.), 1 cup sugar, boiling water. Thoroughly clean a quart jar (preferably a glass top). Wash the grapes, put into the jar and add the sugar. Fill the jar with boiling water and close tightly. No processing. The juice is ready for use in 6 weeks.

Grape Jelly

Put freshly picked grapes, stalks and all, into pan and nearly cover with water. Boil till well mashed, strain slowly through jelly bag. Bring juice to boil, and boil a few minutes. Add ¾ cup sugar to 1 cup juice and boil till will set.

Bottled Pineapple

Stewing Method: Prepare light syrup (1 cup sugar to 3 cups water) by boiling it gently for 10 minutes. Then drop in the prepared slices or pieces and simmer gently until tender, probably about ½ hour; try with a silver fork. Bottle while boiling in hot sterilised jars, filling and immediately sealing each jar one by one. One housewife says she boils some of the cut-up cores in the syrup first to add to its flavour, leaving them in only 3 to 5 minutes and then removing them.

Processing Method: Cut in half-inch slices, remove skins, eyes and core. Pack into jars. If cut into pieces more can be

got into jars. Have ready your boiling, light syrup (1 cup sugar to 3 cups water). Cover the fruit with the syrup to up half inch from top of jar. Seal. Process in boiling water 25 to 30 minutes.

Green Peppers (Capsicums)

1. Cut off tops and scoop out fibre and seeds. Blanch by covering with hot water and boiling for 5 to 10 minutes till tender but not soft. Dust inside with salt and stuff with any desired stuffing, including minced meat or cheese, tomatoes, sausage meat, corn, rice, etc. Experiment.

2. **Lower Hutt Recipe:** Cut the tops off and fill with a mixture of cooked washed rice and grated cheese. Stand them in a casserole in about an inch of tomato juice with a dash of Worcester sauce added. Bake for 1½ hours, and then brown slightly with lid off. Nice for tea!

Eggplant

1. Pare and cut crosswise in thick slices; dip in egg and breadcrumbs (or in seasoned flour) and fry in hot bacon fat or salad oil till brown and tender—6 to 8 minutes.

APPLE MERINGUE CAKE

HALF cup shortening, 1 cup brown sugar, 2 egg yolks (unbeaten), 2 cups sifted flour, 1 teaspoon baking soda, ¼ teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, ½ teaspoon each of cloves and nutmeg, 1 cup thick unsweetened apple sauce. Cream the shortening together with the brown sugar, add the egg yolks, blend well. Sift together the flour, baking soda, salt and spices, add to the creamed mixture alternately with the apple sauce. Pour into a greased pan 8 inches by 12 inches which has been lined with wax paper; top with the meringue.

Meringue: Two egg whites, ½ cup brown sugar, ¼ cup nuts, chopped fine. Beat the egg whites until stiff, gradually add the sugar, beat again until the mixture peaks. Spread over the raw batter, sprinkle with the finely-chopped nuts. Bake in moderate oven until done.

8 minutes. Nice with slices of cooked ham wrapped round stalks of cooked (or tinned) asparagus and grilled.

2. Stuff and bake, much like green peppers, by boiling first (unpeeled) till tender: then halve crosswise. Scoop out pulp, leaving a thick shell. Mash the pulp, mix with an equal quantity of breadcrumbs, grated onion to taste, chopped tomato, melted butter or cream, some minced ham or liver or liver sausage, or as desired. Fill the shells, already dusted with salt, cover with a sprinkling of breadcrumbs, dot with butter and bake till brown and cooked—about 30 minutes in moderate oven with enough water to keep from sticking.

Pineapple Tea Punch

One quart tea liquor, 8 tablespoons sugar, 12 tablespoons lemon juice, 4 cups of syrup from canned pineapple. Make tea liquor with 2oz. good quality tea in 2 pints of fresh cold water and soak for 12 hours, or overnight. Strain tea carefully and add sugar, lemon juice and pineapple syrup. Serve in small glasses

N.Z. LISTENER, MARCH 15, 1957.