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STONE FRUIT IN SEASON

PLUMS, peaches, apricots and nectarines are all in plentiful supply, and we should make a point of bottling as many as possible for winter use. Apricots are especially healthful; plums, too, are a splendid standby in making preserves, because they combine well with more expensive fruits such as strawberries, raspberries and currants. Plum jam, when well made, is very good indeed. Pies made with a mixture of stone fruits are delicious, too.

Sponge Crust

Beat together 1 egg with 1 small teacup sugar, add 1 oz. butter which has been melted in about 3 tablespoons milk. Sift in lightly 1 breakfast cup flour with 1 teaspoon baking powder and pinch of salt. Have the fruit in the piedish boiling hot, pour sponge mixture on and bake in hot oven for approximately 20 minutes. Alternately cream butter and sugar, and add 1-2 eggs one by one, beating well. Finally add flour, baking powder and salt. Have sponge mixture fairly thin, or crust will be too solid. One or 2 tablespoons boiling water added last makes a nice sponge. If butter is scarce make a light sponge by beating 1 egg with ½ cup sugar till creamy, then add 1 cup flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder, pinch of salt, and enough milk, either hot or cold, to make a thin batter. Always pour batter on to very hot fruit.

Plum Dessert

Cook 1 lb. plums in a little syrup. Lift them out, and put in glass dish. Make up the syrup to 1 pint with water, and with it make up a packet of orange jelly crystals. Also make up a pint of good custard, and beat the cooled custard into the jelly, just as it is beginning to set. Pour over the plums, and leave to set.

Fresh Plum Pudding

Cook about 1½ lb. fresh red plums in about 1 teacup of water, adding 2 tablespoons sugar; when soft, remove stones. Line a pudding basin or mould neatly with slices of stale bread cut into wedge-like pieces and fitted neatly round the sides, with a round piece of bread at the bottom. Carefully soak this lining with some plum juice. Now put in a layer of soft plums, then a layer of thin bread, and so on until basin is full, finishing with a layer of bread. Cover with saucer or plate which fits tightly, and put a weight on top. Leave till cold. Turn out of basin and serve with a good custard or mock cream.

Plum Charlotte

Stone about 2 lb. ripe plums after stewing till soft, but not too broken. Sweeten just before they are cooked. Cut slices of bread and butter, and with them line bottom and sides of a large bowl. Pour in the plums boiling hot, cover, and set to cool. When quite cold serve with custard sauce or cream.

Plum Mousse

Stew about 12 large plums with sugar to taste and not much water. Then strain through coarse sieve, making a rich

puree. There should be at least 1 breakfast cup full. Make a good boiled custard by pouring ½ pint of hot milk on to 2 beaten egg yolks, adding a little sugar, and heating till it thickens, stirring all one way. Don't let it boil or it will curdle; use double saucepan or jug standing in pan of boiling water. When custard is cold, add it to the plum puree. Whisk about ½ teacup of cream, and stir that in, too. Have ready 2 dessertspoons gelatine dissolved in about 2 tablespoons plum syrup, and add this to the mixture, stirring it well in. Taste to see if sweet enough. When cold and just beginning to set, fold in the 2 stiffly-beaten egg whites, and turn into a wet mould to set. May be decorated with whipped cream or mock cream.

Plum Wine

Allow 8 to 12 lb. very ripe plums to each gallon of hot water, and 3½ lb. to 4 lb. sugar, according to sweetness of plums. Use an earthenware or wooden vessel, not tin or any metal. Do not let the wine get chilled during fermentation, but keep it in a fairly warm room, and do not move the vessel about. Put plums into vessel, mash well, cover with water, and leave 6-8 days while fermentation is active, stirring frequently every day. Then strain the juice through muslin bag, measure it, and add sugar as above. Let this stand to work as long as it will. Skim every day, keeping some juice to add after skimming so as to keep the same quantity. It may work for a month or two. When it has quite ceased working, bung tightly, or bottle and cork well. Should be ready in 3 months, but the longer it is left to mature the better. Wine matures best in a wooden keg. Keep the cask covered with a light cloth during fermentation period as it attracts a lot of insects.

Plum Sauce

Six pounds plums, 3 pints vinegar, 3 lb. brown sugar, handful bruised ginger, 6 teaspoons salt, 1 teaspoon cayenne, or to taste, 1 oz. cloves. Grease preserving pan, and boil all 2 hours. Strain through colander and bring back to the boil. Bottle.

Plum Jam

Three pounds firm plums, 3 breakfast cups water, 5 breakfast cups sugar. Put fruit and water in pan and cook till plums are soft. Add sugar and boil swiftly till a little tried will set firmly. Remove stones as they rise to surface. Let cool a little before bottling.

FROM THE MAILBAG

Scratches on Furniture

Dear Aunt Daisy,

I heard you give a distress signal from two women about furniture that had become scratched. I had the same problem with a walnut radio cabinet which had deep scratches. I simply rubbed olive oil into the marks, and they disappeared like magic. They all became the same shade as the wood. Of course the marks are still there, but not noticeable as before. "A New Link."

About scratches on furniture. I hasten to tell you what I always use and find very good. Rub the scratches with half

N.Z. LISTENER, FEBRUARY 3, 1950.