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ASK Aunt Daisy

BANANAS, EGG PLANT, AVOCADOS

A SHIPMENT of these three commodities has lately come to New Zealand, so here are some timely suggestions for their use. It is a good idea to preserve some, because the hurricane in Fiji has largely destroyed the plantations, and future supplies may be meagre. Bananas bottle well, and I have had letters recommending both these methods. Make a syrup in the proportion of 1 cup sugar to 2 cups water. Boil about 10 minutes. Have bananas slit down the centre and in half, or cut in thick slices, immediately before packing, so that they do not discolour. Sprinkling with a little lemon-juice is a good idea, too. Have jars heated and ready. Drop prepared fruit into boiling syrup and leave 5 minutes. If left longer they will have a cooked flavour. Fill hot jars to overflowing and seal immediately. Finish one jar at a time. Pineapple may be preserved in the same way; it is left in the boiling syrup for 10 minutes. Or make the syrup as above, then pack the sliced bananas into warm jars, sprinkle with lemon juice, pour boiling syrup over and seal. Place in water-bath, bring slowly to boiling point, and keep there 30 minutes. Have the bath already warm to receive the hot jars.

Banana and Apricot Jam

Cut up fresh apricots, cover with sugar and leave 30-40 minutes, allowing 1 lb. sugar to 1 lb. fruit. Put on to boil, stirring gently and almost continuously, and when boiling add 1 mashed banana to each lb. apricots used. Boil fast. Should take about 30 minutes.

Banana Chutney

Three pounds peeled apples, 2 lb. peeled bananas, 1 lb. onions, ½ lb. preserved ginger, 1 lb. raisins, 1½ lb. brown sugar, 1 tablespoon salt, cayenne to taste (about ½ teaspoon), 2½ pints vinegar. Put raisins, ginger, apples, bananas and onions through mincer. Simmer all 2 hours.

Egg Plant

Fried: Cut a pared egg plant crosswise into ¼ inch thick slices. Sprinkle with pepper and salt and a little flour; or dip in beaten egg and then in bread-crumbs or cracker crumbs. Fry in a little hot bacon-fat, or salad oil, to a golden tenderness on both sides 6-8 minutes. Serve with grilled ham, or lamb chops or omelet. **Scalloped:** One medium egg plant (about 1½ lb.), ½ cup minced onion, 2 teaspoons salt. Pare egg plant and cut into 1 inch cubes. Boil it with the onion and salt in an inch of water, covered, until tender, but not mushy (about 5 minutes). Drain. Spread a small cupful of cracker-crumbs in a greased oven-dish; arrange egg plant and onion on top. Sprinkle with 1 teaspoon salt and a dash of pepper. Top with another cup of crumbs. Pour carefully into the corners of the baking dish about 1¼ cups milk to cover the bottom. Pour 6 tablespoons

melted butter over top. Bake in moderately hot oven (375 degrees) 45 minutes. Makes 4 servings.

Avocado Pears

When ripe, these are mellow and butter-soft. If under-ripe, hasten ripening by keeping in a warm room. Just before using, cut avocado in half lengthwise. To open, hold between palms of hands and turn halves in opposite directions. Lift out the seed. As an appetiser, serve a half of unpared, seeded avocado per person with pepper and salt and a wedge of lemon. Eat with a spoon.

Avocado Salad

Three grapefruit in segments, 1 large avocado pared and cut in crosswise slices, 1 head of lettuce broken up, 1 tin pineapple chunks (drained), 1¼ oz. blue cheese, crumbled (do what you can do about this!), ½ cup French dressing. Arrange these in alternate layers in a salad bowl. Add the French dressing. Makes 6 servings.

Avocado and Crab Cocktail

Use small crayfish or tinned crab. Use half and half crab-meat and cubed avocado. Serve in cocktail glasses or in avocado shells, with a little French dressing on each.

Avocado Salad Plate

Remove the seeds from the peeled avocados and fill centres with tomato catsup (or thick sauce). Chill. Shred lettuce and toss it with French dressing. Make a nest of this on each plate, and place an avocado half in each. Decorate with half slices of lemon. Arrange crisp wafers and cheese on sides. The cheese could be in cubes topped with a pickled onion; or balls of cream cheese.

Banana Delights

First make up a packet of lemon jelly and leave it to set. Then chop it up and fill the dishes 1-3rd full. Cover with well mashed banana flavoured with lemon juice. Top with a large spoonful of custard, either an egg-custard, flavoured with lemon or banana essence, or one made with banana flavoured custard powder. Sprinkle with nutmeg.

Banana Dessert

This is made in a ring-mould. Melt 2 oz. butter with about 1 tablespoon hot water, and beat it well with a small cup of sugar. Then add a well-beaten egg and mix well; add about ½ cup milk, fold in lightly 1½ cups flour and 1½ teaspoons baking powder sifted with a pinch of salt. Bake in ring-mould in moderate oven, 40-45 minutes. Grease mould well. When cooked, leave a minute or two, then turn out, and fill centre with sliced bananas and passion fruit topped with whipped cream flavoured with a very little banana flavouring.

FROM THE MAILBAG

Black Currants

Dear Aunt Daisy,

I always turn with interest to your page in *The Listener*, and cut out any useful hints and recipes. My husband bought me a newspaper clipping book, which means I can paste in as much as

N.Z. LISTENER, FEBRUARY 15, 1952.