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Ask Aunt Daisy

DELICIOUS COLD DESSERTS

HALF the problem of serving summer dinners may be solved by having luxury-looking desserts prepared beforehand. These are especially useful for week-end meals. They are mostly quite inexpensive, and the appearance of luxury (which is a cheering and comforting attribute for the housewife with an inelastic purse) is attained by using a little imagination in touches of colour, the shape of moulds, or the use of ring-moulds for example. These last are now obtainable and you can make either desserts or savoury salads in them. A jellied salad, containing meat and green peas, hard-boiled egg-rings, and so on, turned out of a ring-mould, and the centre filled with fresh lettuce and tomato wedges and cream cheese, or whatever you have, is very easy and attractive-looking. And as for desserts which you can dream up and set in a ring-mould—jellies and blancmanges with fruit filled into the centre when turned out—they are almost unlimited.

Sunripe Surprise

Make your favourite sponge cake recipe, either with or without butter, and bake it in a ring-mould. Turn it out on a pretty dish. Pour a little Maraschino cherry syrup over it with a spoon, sufficient to flavour without softening too much. Spread with whipped cream (or mock cream), and dot all round with Maraschino cherries. At the last moment fill the centre with ice cream, pour more syrup over it, and arrange cherries prettily on top. Instead of Maraschino cherries, you could use passion fruit pulp, straight out of the bottle, spreading it thinly over the whipped cream on the cake-ring, and plentifully over the ice cream in the centre. Or better still, use fresh strawberries, or raspberries instead of bottled fruit. Crush a few to make the necessary syrup, and arrange the berries around and on the ice cream.

Baked Alaska

Don't be afraid to try this. The idea is to place a mound of ice cream on a base of sponge-cake, arrange strawberries or raspberries or any fresh fruit slices, or pieces of tinned pineapple, over the ice-cream, and then cover thickly with meringue (egg whites beaten very stiff with a little less sugar than is usual for meringues). Put into a hot oven for about 4 minutes to lightly brown the meringue. Serve at once. The egg-whites don't conduct heat, and the resultant pudding is delicious. The meringue may be delicately flavoured with any essence.

Banana Honey Mould

Two tablespoons gelatine, ¼ cup cold water, 1½ cups milk, ½ cup honey, 3 ripe bananas mashed and sieved, 1 lemon, 1 cup whipped cream. Soak gelatine soft in cold water. Heat milk and stir in the dissolved gelatine. Add honey, mashed bananas and lemon juice. Set in cool place, and when it begins to thicken fold in whipped cream. Chill.

Peppermint Marshmallow

Boil 2 tablespoons sugar with ½ cup cold water 2-3 minutes. Dissolve 1 teaspoon gelatine in ½ cup boiling water, and add to sugar and water. When cool add 2 unbeaten egg-whites and gently stir. Set aside and when just beginning

to set, whip until thick and foamy, add peppermint flavouring and mix well. Set in wet grease-proof paper. Make a custard with the 2 egg yolks, top with coconut and bake. Join together.

Strawberry Sponge

One tablespoon gelatine, ¼ cup cold water, ½ cup hot water, ¼ teaspoon salt, 1 cup strawberry juice and pulp, 1 cup sugar, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 2 egg whites, ½ cup whipped cream (may be omitted). Crush berries, add sugar and leave ½ hour. Soften gelatine in cold water, add salt and hot water, and stir until dissolved. Add berry mixture and lemon juice. Cool, and when thickening fold in stiffly-beaten egg whites, and if possible whipped cream. Serve either in one bowl or individual glasses. About 6 servings. Sets in fairly quick time. Any fresh fruit or canned fruit may be used, but use less sugar with canned fruit.

FROM THE MAILBAG

Using Preserved Eggs

Dear Aunt Daisy,

Could you let me know if preserved eggs can be used to make scrambled eggs, or be fried? I shall be cooking for over 100 people at Easter and I am wanting to use preserved eggs.

"J.P.," Christchurch.

Preserved eggs are splendid for scrambling. You can add body to the dish, when cooking for so many, by putting in a few breadcrumbs and letting stand till they are well soaked. Also a little chopped celery and parsley make a nice addition; and some people even put a little grated onion. Preserved eggs are not always satisfactory for trying, as the white is sometimes difficult to set. But if the eggs have only been a short time in preserve they will be all right.

Endive for Winter

Dear Aunt Daisy,

Hearing you talking about the use of endive, and that one does not cook it, I felt I must tell you that it is the best stand-by next to silver beet for the winter. It cooks like spinach, with just a little butter when cooked. It is excellent when greens are scarce, besides being useful for one's green salad all the winter. We have grown it for years, and the leaves half-way from the base get bleached like white heart lettuce, and are excellent.

"Joan," Paraparaumu.

Many thanks, Joan; I have sown endive seeds in my garden, and recommend all Daisy Chain Links to do the same.

Pickled Cucumbers

Dear Aunt Daisy,

About the discussion on pickled cucumbers, I remember how, about forty years ago, a certain woman was very proud of her pickled cucumbers, which were quite famous. She told me, very confidentially, that the great secret was to put them in an empty wine cask.

"Constant Listener"

Select firm cucumbers, not too large. Put into a stone jar with a large onion in the centre. Make a strong brine, boiling, and pour over cucumbers. Cover jar very closely and stand for 24 hours.

N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 10, 1952.

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