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PRESERVES, CONSERVES AND MARMALADES

RECEIVED  
AUG 11 1938

A radio conversation between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. John Baker, Office of Information, broadcast Thursday, August 4, 1938, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, by the National Broadcasting Company and a network of 93 associate radio stations.

--ooOoo--

JOHN BAKER:

It's Thursday again - homemaker's day on the Farm and Home Hour. And Ruth Van Deman is here again with another batch of news from the Bureau of Home Economics. Ruth, making anything good to eat over there these days? You haven't brought us any samples in a long, long time.

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

How would some nice golden yellow peach preserves suit you?

BAKER:

Oh my, oh me.

VAN DEMAN:

Or some Damson plum jam?

BAKER:

Well, now, I'd rather have plum jelly.

VAN DEMAN:

(Nothing choosy about you). How about watermelon preserves then?

BAKER:

(Hesitatingly). Watermelon preserves?

VAN DEMAN:

"In lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon".

BAKER:

Good poetry. But I'm not sure about the taste. Now if you gave me a sample - - - -

VAN DEMAN:

You'll have to come over to Mrs. Yeatman's laboratory. I'm sure she'll be glad to have you taste all her experiments.

BAKER:

Will I have to judge 'em by official score cards?

VAN DEMAN:

Certainly you will.

BAKER:

Like the ones Mrs. Yeatman put into her bulletin on home-made preserves and jams and jellies?

(over)

VAN DEMAN:

Certainly. You have to be very objective about these things. All personal prejudices ruled out. You have to study the color and the consistency and the flavor of preserves as against conserves.

BAKER:

How do you tell where a preserve stops and a conserve starts?

VAN DEMAN:

It is hard to sometimes. In preserves the fruits are whole or in fairly good-sized pieces.

BAKER:

I see.

VAN DEMAN:

A conserve is more like a jam---with the fruit all cooked up into a smooth mass. And a conserve generally has oranges or lemons in it, and very often nuts. Mrs. Yeatman will be making grape conserve as soon as the Concord's are ripe.

BAKER:

Now you are talking, Ruth. Grape conserve with oranges and nuts in it! That's extra special. Is the recipe for that in the new bulletin?

VAN DEMAN:

It is. Think you'll indulge in a little grape conservation?

BAKER:

Well--I might--at that.

VAN DEMAN:

Let me give you some of Mrs. Yeatman's rules then. While we were talking this morning she mentioned two or three that are often the answers to preserving troubles.

BAKER:

Make them A B C's. Remember I'm very green at this preserving, conserving business.

VAN DEMAN:

But the fruit will be ripe, surely, firm-ripe, not soft-ripe.

BAKER:

Yes, I think I can pick out firm-ripe fruit.

VAN DEMAN:

And see that it's fine flavored and has a good color.

BAKER:

I'll look for the blush on the cheek of every peach.

VAN DEMAN:

Waste of time, mister. That kind of beauty goes only skin deep, even in making preserves. You peel the peach, and the blush is gone. Better break one open and see whether it's a good color clear to the heart.

BAKER:

White or yellow, preferred?

VAN DEMAN:

It doesn't matter. Either one will make good peach preserves. Then after you've washed and prepared the fruit, get out the kitchen scales and weigh it.

BAKER:

Can't I measure it, just as well?

VAN DEMAN:

Not just as well. You need to get the right proportion of sugar to fruit. If you measure large pieces of fruit, like halves or quarters of peaches, you're bound to have air pockets. But your sugar pours into every crack and cranny of the measure. It measures as heavy as it weighs.

BAKER:

I see. Then I might get more sugar than I needed.

VAN DEMAN:

Right. And your preserves might turn out gummy and sticky sweet. The surplus sugar might even caramelize like little pieces of rock candy, after the preserves had stood a while.

BAKER:

O.K. I'll weigh the peaches after I've pared and cut them. Then what? How much sugar do I add?

VAN DEMAN:

For each pound of peaches, anywhere from three-fourths of a pound to one pound of sugar, depending on how sweet you want the preserves to be.

BAKER:

My sweet tooth's pretty active.

VAN DEMAN:

I guessed as much.

BAKER:

Then what next? Do I just dump the sugar on the peaches and start to boil?

VAN DEMAN:

If you're in a great hurry you can. But you have to add a little water (about a quarter of a cup of water for each pound of fruit) to keep it from sticking to the kettle and scorching. But why not let nature help you?

BAKER:

Perfectly willing to let anybody help.

VAN DEMAN:

Why not pack your peaches and sugar in alternate layers and let them stand overnight? The sugar will melt and draw out the peach juice. And you'll have a richer, better flavored sirup to start the cooking with. And you won't have to cook your preserves so long and run the risk of getting them dark colored and strong flavored.

BAKER:

I don't want anything like that to happen---not when we've got this far.

VAN DEMAN:

And another thing, don't try to cook too big a kettleful at once.

BAKER:

What? Why not? I thought I'd make a good big batch while I was at it.

VAN DEMAN:

Surely. But do the cooking in two kettles. If you start with 6 or 8 pounds of fruit, and add sugar pound for pound, you'll have two kettles to watch and stir as it is. That'll keep you plenty busy I think.

BAKER:

Plenty. And how do I know when I've watched and stirred long enough?

VAN DEMAN:

When the sirup thickens and the fruit gets that clear, translucent look.

BAKER:

Translucent look? Not turning poetical on me again, are you?

VAN DEMAN:

No, this is entirely practical. As the sirup cooks down and the sugar in it becomes more concentrated, you'll see a change in the color and the texture of the preserves. With a fruit that has lots of pectin in it, the sirup will give the two-drop jolly test. That's the way it would be with Damson plums. But you wouldn't get that in peaches. Only don't overcook your preserves. Remember the sirup generally gets thicker after it cools.

BAKER:

I'll try to remember. I'll try very, very hard.

VAN DEMAN:

It's all easier than it sounds. Making preserves, like so many other kitchen jobs, is more or less streamlined these days. Of course you'll have hot sterilized jars ready to fill your preserves into as soon as they're done?

BAKER:

That so? I thought I'd just put 'em in a big jar so I could dip in when I felt like it.

VAN DEMAN:

Our grandmothers used to do that. They always had open jars of preserves on their pantry shelves. But they had to scrape a good deal of mold off the top, and waste a good deal of fruit and sugar. So Mrs. Yeatman says in her bulletin "to fill the jars three-fourths full of the preserved fruit, then add enough of the sirup to fill the jars completely. And seal while hot.

BAKER:

Ruth, if you get a jar of peach preserves with a red ribbon tied on it - - -

VAN DEMAN:

I'll know you won second prize at the county fair?

BAKER:

No, I'm not so ambitious. I meant if you got a jar next Christmas with a red ribbon and no card.

VAN DEMAN:

All right. If I do, I'll telephone Santa Claus and ask if his name is John Baker.

BAKER:

That's right. With a long white beard - - -

VAN DEMAN:

Well, Christmas is a long, long way off. Well, back to business. Here's another note Mrs. Yeatman gave me, about citron melon preserves. Lots of people seem to get citron and citron melon mixed up. The citron you buy in the store is made from a citrus fruit. But citron melon belongs to the same family as watermelon and cantaloupe. It's a rather common garden product. And it can be made into preserves, much like watermelon.

BAKER:

And the recipe for that's in that same famous bulletin?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes. And by the way that bulletin got so famous so fast, the first edition was exhausted before we knew it. But the plates are back on the printing presses now, and we hope to have a new supply in a few days.

BAKER:

Then if anyone writes to you now, you'll keep the names on file?

VAN DEMAN:

We'll do better than that. We'll address the envelopes and have them all ready to slip the bulletins into the minute the printer lets us have them.

BAKER:

Efficiency, thy name is - - -

VAN DEMAN:

The Bureau of Home Economics.

BAKER:

Good enough. Well, homemakers of the Farm and Home Hour, if any of you would like a copy of "Home-made Jellies, Jams, and Preserves" send your cards to Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, here in Washington, D. C. And Miss Van Deman will see to it that you get this bulletin---"Home-made Jellies, Jams, and Preserves---just as soon as the printer's ink on it is dry.

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