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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

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Subject: Preserving Winter Fruits.

Bulletin available: Aunt Sorny's Radio Recipes.

A store window full of oranges caught my eye yesterday when I was out shopping. It made me think of all kinds of nice things---orange juice for breakfast, orange salads, orange desserts, candied orange peel and orange marmalade. That reminded me that our supply of marmalade on the pantry shelf is getting very low and that Uncle Eb tezer always wants marmalade for Sunday morning breakfast and sometimes oftener. So I went closer to the window and looked at the price card. Then I began to consider orange marmalade in earnest. And the very first thing I did when I got home was to climb up and get the preserve kettle off the high shelf where I put it last fall after canning season. With oranges the price they are now in my town, this is the thrifty time to put up marmalade and make candied peel or other orange dainties. And it is also the time to feature orange foods on the menu.

Just to see what different dishes can be made from oranges, I glanced through my recipe file. There are more ways to use this fruit than I could possibly tell you in a short ten minutes. In fact, there are orange dishes for almost any course or any meal. Orange juice, alone or combined with other fruit juice, makes an excellent appetizer for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Oranges cut up may be used for fruit cup, salad or dessert.

Here let me put in a word about the value of oranges and other fresh fruit. Once upon a time we thought fruit was simply a food luxury and ate it for its pleasant taste and good looks. Nowadays we know it has many other virtues. It helps the appetite because of its tempting appearance and refreshing taste, and because it contains the vitamin that stimulates appetite. That's why most of us like fruit first thing at breakfast. That is also why the nutrition specialists recommend eating more fruit, if you find that meals don't appeal to you very much these late winter days. Moreover, fruit is healthful because the acid and roughage it contains have laxative properties. And finally fruit, especially raw fruit, is a good source of some of the vitamins and of minerals like calcium and iron. When vitamins are mentioned, it is time for the citrus fruits to come in for special praise. Most fruits, you know, contain the vitamins C and D, but oranges, grapefruit and lemons contain all three vitamins and are especially rich in C.

In a few minutes I'll have an extra good orange recipe to give you, so find a pencil while I'm talking, and sharpen it if necessary, for the recipe will be quite a lengthy one. In the meantime, here's a good motto

to put down on your calendar or to stick in the edge of your mirror where you'll see it every morning: "Eat some fruit once or twice a day. Eat citrus or other raw fruit or tomatoes every day." Tomatoes? Yes, tomatoes--cooked, canned or raw. Tomatoes happen to be blessed with a big supply of vitamins just as citrus fruits are, and so make a good substitute--a substitute, I should say, as far as food value goes. When it come to flavor, of course, for oranges have a flavor all their own, just as lemons have, and that flavor is the cause of the popularity of desserts like orange rice mold, orange sponge or jelly and orange ice or sherbet.

By using the grated rind, you can get this flavor in essence. My Next-Door Neighbor makes tiny tea biscuits by adding a little sugar and grated orange rind to her baking powder biscuit recipe. Other friends of mine use it to flavor sponge cakes and angel food as well as the frosting used on cakes.

Well, I could go on at this rate for a long time. But I'll stop because I have that recipe to give you. No, it's not a recipe for marmalade. You'll find a marmalade recipe in the radio cookbook on page 81 called Amber Marmalade. This is especially delicious and different, because it is made from one orange, one grapefruit and one lemon. Somebody asked me the other day how to make orange marmalade that was not bitter in taste. So I referred the question to the Recipe Lady. She says that parboiling the peel several times, using plenty of water to cook it in, and changing the water each time will take out the bitterness. Naturally, if the water is allowed to boil down and become strong, the bitter taste will be increased. The same rule holds true in candying the peel of grapefruit, orange or lemon.

The recipe I have for you today is the Recipe Lady's favorite method of candying peel. It beats anything you ever saw or tasted in this line. The product is a beautiful, clear, tender, delicately flavored confection--not a bit like the hard tough bitter candied rind that is often made. It is so different, in fact, that the Recipe Lady calls it Jellied Peel.

You know the old saying that you can't eat your cake and have it too. But you can eat oranges and still have the peel. However, for best results in candying or jellying the peel, select the fruit for its skin rather than its contents. Though fruit with a very thin rind often gives the most juice, for jellied peel choose that with a thick, smooth light-colored skin, free from russet and blemish. I'll warn you again that the recipe is rather long, but I promise you that it is well worth having in your recipe files. There are just four ingredients. If you are ready I'll read them now.

10 ounces of fruit peel (either grapefruit, orange or lemon)
2 cups (or 14 ounces) of granulated sugar
1 and 1/3 cups of water for sirup, and
1/2 teaspoon of salt.

I'll repeat those four ingredients. (Repeat)

Strip the peel from the fruit in quarter sections, including all of the white part possible. Cut the peel into strips 1/4 to 1/2 inch wide. Do not trim off either the outer rind or the white pith on the inside; use the entire peel.

Parboil the peel three times. Yes, Agatha, three times to remove the bitter flavor and make the peel clear and tender.

How is the parboiling done? Add two quarts of cold water each time, bring it to a boil, cook for one-half hour, and discard the water after each cooking. Add more water if it boils away rapidly. After this, the strips should be tender and must be handled gently to prevent breaking.

The next step is to make a syrup. Put the sugar, water and salt in a saucepan 8 inches in diameter and bring the mixture to a boil. Now slip in the strips of peel carefully, so that they lie parallel to each other to prevent their being broken when turned. Cook rapidly for about 40 minutes. Then reduce the heat and continue to boil gently for about 30 to 40 minutes longer. Have the heat low during the last of the cooking so that the sirup will not scorch and turn the strips of peel frequently with a fork.

When all the sirup is absorbed, place the strips, skin side down, on waxed paper. When cool, roll them in granulated sugar until there is a thin coating of distinct crystals. Let the peel dry out for a few hours before serving or overnight, if it is to be stored. Wrap it in waxed paper and store it in tight tin or glass containers. If kept this way in a moderately cool place, it should keep in good condition for two or three weeks.

The Recipe Lady, who believes that careful scientific measures are worth while to get perfection in results, says that success in this recipe is much more certain if weights rather than measures are used. A slight excess of sugar makes the peel too hard, while too little gives an insipid flavor and a watery texture. That is why the list of ingredients, which I gave you, calls for 10 ounces of peel and 14 ounces of sugar.

If you want to prepare larger quantities of peel at one time, the process should be slightly changed. If twice the recipe is made (this will be 20 ounces of peel). Be sure in making the sirup to choose a saucepan about 10 inches in diameter, and use 4 cups of sugar, but only 2 cups of water, so as to shorten the tedious boiling-down process.

Dear me, did I hear someone ask about oranges for garnishing? Oranges and lemons are both attractive fruits to use as decorations on dishes. When you want a platter of cold meat to look gay and special for company, add a few small slices of orange spread with currant jelly. For fish, lemon sections or slices are used, because fish demands something tart. When you want the fish to look extra fancy, dress up the slice of lemon by dipping one-half in minced parsley and the other half in red paprika.

Tomorrow: First Lessons in Concentration.

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