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An economy hint

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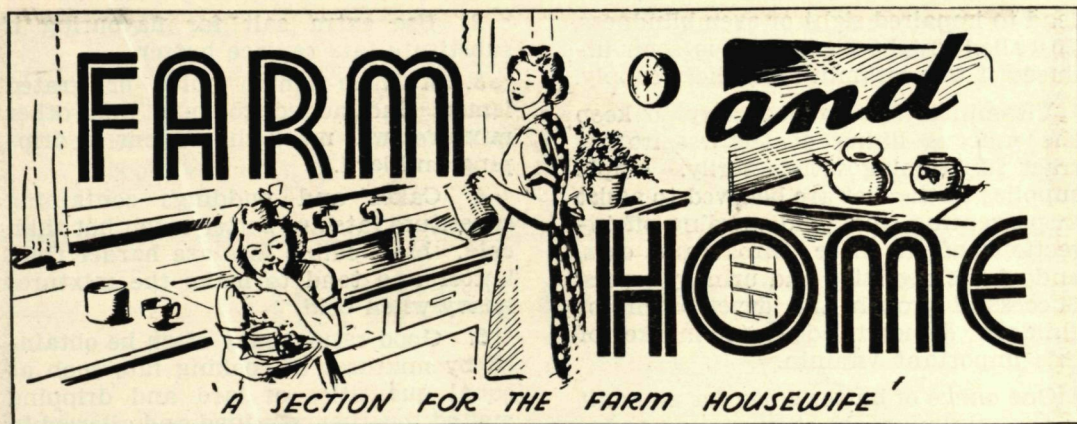
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FOR BUTTER OR WORSE

By HELEN M. GLOSTER

"THE King asked the Queen, and the Queen asked the Dairymaid, 'Could we have some butter for the Royal slice of bread?'"

A. A. Milne's lines have been somewhat plaintively paraphrased in many Australian households during recent months—for as a nation we are very partial to butter and the enforced reduction of consumption has not been kindly received.

We must face facts, however. It is not my province to discuss the reasons for the current shortages in this article, but we must take cognisance of the fact that butter production has decreased and Australia's population has increased. Unless something is done to adjust the balance it would appear that our occasional seasonal shortages will soon give place to permanent butter shortages in many households.

Even when supplies are adequate, to-day's butter prices are apt to impose a strain on the family budget and it appears that we must accustom ourselves to eating less butter and making greater use of substitute fats.

Many other countries have been doing this for years and have evolved cheap and palatable butter substitutes which resemble butter in texture,

flavour and—by the addition of vitamins—run it a close second in nutritional value.

Here in Western Australia we have yet no real rival to butter—no substitute fats to approach its palatability, its fine texture and its ease of digestion and assimilation by the normal healthy person. Regarded from the nutritional angle, butter is a valuable source of Vitamins A and D.

True, in Western Australia the average person does not have to worry about Vitamin D providing he or she gets fresh air and sunshine on most days.

There is a serious danger of Vitamin A deficiencies occurring, however, if the milk and butter intake is drastically reduced. Other edible fats are apt to be deficient in Vitamin A—a lack of which will cause eye troubles and may

lead to impaired sight or even blindness. So-called "night blindness" is soon induced if this vitamin is in short supply.

Vitamin A is also necessary to keep the mucous lining of the respiratory tract functioning satisfactorily. Ample supplies in the diet are believed to assist in preventing colds and warding off infections of the nose, throat and ears, and of the digestive and urinary tracts. Successful growth and development of children demand adequate intake of this important vitamin.

One ounce of butter a day for an adult is the minimum quantity recommended for the maintenance of good health. If the consumption falls below this level and substitute fats are used, the Vitamin A intake should be increased from other sources.

Eggs, cheese, lamb's liver, fish (especially the oily varieties such as mullet and herring) are all good sources of Vitamin A, but, if none of these is available in sufficient quantity, a daily dose of cod liver oil will be needed to supplement the diet.

Green and yellow vegetables, especially carrots, and freshly-picked lettuce, silver beet and turnip tops contain a substance called carotene which the human body can convert into Vitamin A.

When the butter ration is restricted, the available butter should be apportioned out to each member of the family and eaten on bread or toast or used in making sandwiches rather than used in cooking.

Use substitute fats in cooking, at least until we have vitamin-fortified edible fats available in Western Australia.

Lard and dripping may be used together with proprietary preparations such as margarine, Copha and White Cloud, and they all give good results if handled correctly. A few points to remember are:—

1. Use slightly less quantities of substitute fats than the recipes stipulate for butter.

2. Use extra salt for flavouring if substitute fats replace butter.

3. A little lemon juice or grated lemon rind added to cake and other mixtures will mask the flavour of dripping and lard.

4. Cakes and puddings containing substitute fats are better eaten hot than cold. Most edible fats are harder than butter and tend to make the mixtures heavy when cold.

5. Good results may often be obtained by mixtures of cooking fats such as equal quantities of lard and dripping melted together, strained and allowed to reset. Equal quantities of lard, copha and margarine will give excellent results when making flaky pastry.

RENDERING FAT

A good housewife should not need to purchase dripping if she saves the fat when preparing each day's meals. Fat scraps from the meat, pieces of suet, etc., should be cut into pieces and placed in a baking dish in a slow oven. Melted fat should be strained off and allowed to set.

Soups and stews should be carefully skimmed and the skimmings allowed to cool so that the fat may be recovered. Better still, allow soups to cool and remove the fat when it has set firmly.

When dressing poultry, keep the fat for rendering down, instead of throwing it away with the entrails. It makes an excellent substitute for butter in cakes and pastry. When boiling a fowl, save the liquid and remove the fat when cold. The liquid should then be used as the basis for soups.

Beef fat is more satisfactory than mutton fat in cooking as it is softer when cold and more readily digestible.

MARROWBONE DRIPPING

This is an excellent cooking fat for cake and pastry making—

(1) Obtain some beef marrow bones. Wash thoroughly and crack if necessary.

- (2) Cover well with cold water.
- (3) Simmer gently for four to five hours.
- (4) Strain off liquid and allow to cool overnight.

- (5) Remove fat and scrape off any meat scraps which may have adhered.

The liquid makes a foundation for delicious soups. Bones will still yield fat if boiled a second or even a third time.

HAYBOX COOKERY

By H. M. GLOSTER

IN the humble haybox we have an inexpensive form of fireless cooker which will be found ideal for the preparation of soups, stews and other dishes requiring long, gentle, even cooking. The haybox operates by retaining the heat in partly cooked pre-heated dishes, long enough for the cooking process to be completed.

The farm housewife—so often condemned to stay in an overheated kitchen when the mercury is climbing high, even in the shady spots—will find the haybox particularly useful. Food transferred to the haybox needs no further attention as it cannot burn or over-cook, so there is no need for long vigils by the hot stove.

At extra busy periods such as shearing-time and harvesting, porridge and other breakfast dishes may be prepared at night and placed in the haybox so that they will continue to cook and be available for an early breakfast. Similarly, on shopping days, a stew or boiled meat dish may be left to complete its cooking in the haybox while the family is away at the township. On their return, the meal will only need a brief "finishing off" before it is ready to serve.

In the cities and suburbs the haybox has already made many friends. It is particularly useful for working women who do their own housekeeping—and it can help to keep down fuel bills whether they be for gas, electricity or wood.

TO MAKE THE HAYBOX

Obtain a stout wooden box with strong hinges and clasp. The box must be at least eight inches wider than the diameter of the saucepan or billycan

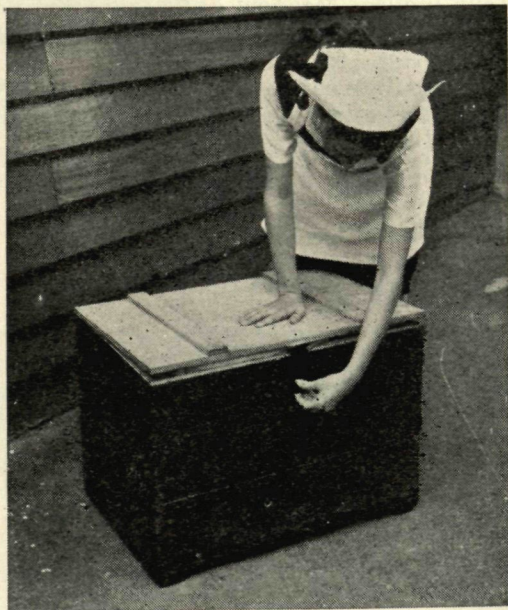


Fig. 1.—Exterior view of the haybox. It should be a stoutly-constructed wooden box with strong hinges and clasp.

that it is intended to use as a container, and should be about eight inches deeper than the depth of the container. This is to ensure that there will be at least four inches of insulating material surrounding the container in order to retain the heat.

The home - made haybox shown in the photograph measures 26in. x 17in. x 16in. and will take two containers.

Line the box, including the lid, with layers of newspapers and tack a lining of felt or flannel over the paper to keep everything in position. Old blankets or rugs which have been well laundered make excellent linings.

Now pack the bottom of the box with hay to a depth of four inches. Meadow hay or dried grass will be better for this purpose than oat or wheaten hay which is apt to be coarse and brittle, but either kind may be used.

Stand the container or containers on the hay, keeping them at least four inches apart if more than one are used.



Fig. 2.—Interior view of box. Note thick lining of old newspapers covered with blanket cloth. There should be four inches of hay between the billy and the sides of the box and a similar hay-filled space between the billys if two are used. The hay-stuffed cushions fit on top of the billys.

Pack hay firmly between and around the containers.

Make one or, preferably, two cushions stuffed with hay to place on top of the containers. They should fill all the space in the box tightly so that the lid can only be closed by applying pressure.

RULES FOR HAYBOX COOKERY

1. All foods must be at boiling point and place in heated containers when transferred to the box.

2. The containers must have tightly-fitting lids.

3. Containers must be filled with the food



Fig. 3.—Porridge cooked for only five minutes and then left overnight in the haybox is cooked and ready to be served for breakfast.

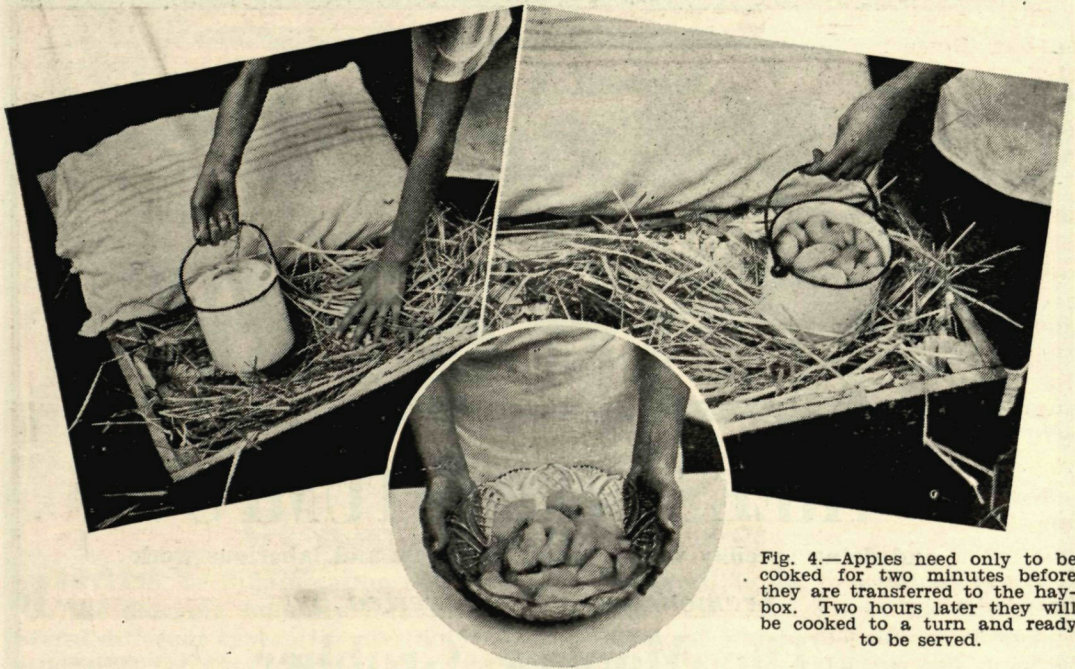


Fig. 4.—Apples need only to be cooked for two minutes before they are transferred to the haybox. Two hours later they will be cooked to a turn and ready to be served.

that is to be cooked. If the container is not full it will be found that the food cools rapidly and stops the cooking process before it is completed. If the container used is smaller than the space allotted, the extra space should be filled up with screwed-up paper or more hay.

4. Do not open the haybox until you are ready to take the food out.

5. Foods cooked in a haybox take about four times their normal cooking periods.

6. Food should be re-heated just before serving.

7. For large joints of meat or any food requiring a long time to cook, it may be necessary to remove the container from the box at the end of about

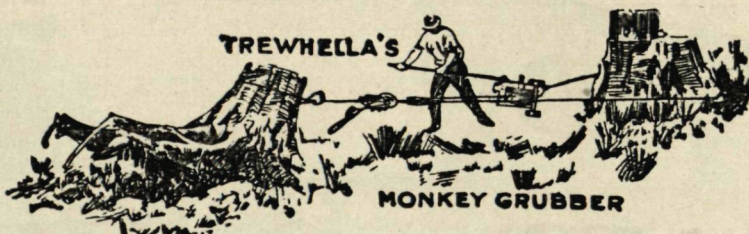
four hours and bring the contents to the boil again before returning to the box to complete the cooking.

TIMING TABLE FOR HAYBOX COOKING

Food	Preliminary Cooking on Stove	Additional time in Haybox
Soup	45 min.	6 hours
Fish	5 min.	30 minutes
Irish Stew—		
Meat	30 min.	2½ hours
Veg.	5 min.	
Boiled Meat	45 min.	4 to 5 hours for 6lb. joint
Beef Stew	45 min.	3½ hours
Vegetables	5 min.	1½ hours
Porridge	5 min.	All night
Rice	2 min.	2 hours
Stewed Fruit	2 min.	2 hours

AN ECONOMY HINT

Instead of discarding coarse green outer leaves of lettuce when making salads, wash them thoroughly and break up roughly between the fingers. Carefully remove any discoloured portions then cook the remainder as one would cook silver beet or spinach. Serve with butter, pepper and salt as a green cooked vegetable.



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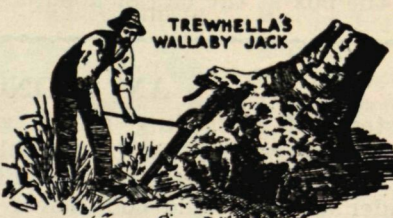
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