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SPARE THAT ROAST

By MARGARET SPENCER

WE still speak of roast dinners when we should really refer to them as baked. Originally, the term "roasting" was used to describe cooking on a spit over an open fire, but today most of our meats are baked in ovens.

Whatever the method however the meat should be tasty and juicy when served, for nobody can enthuse over a dry, unpalatable joint.

How can we be sure of providing appetising fare? First of all we must choose our joint carefully.

That rich, red, coarse-grained piece of steak may make a fine full-flavoured stew but it will not make a good roast. Unlike the "moist heat" methods of cooking which soften tough connective tissue, baking does not make tough meat tender.

But even tender meat—and you can pick it by its fine close grain, the lean portions marbled with fat and its light, clear colour—can be made tough by high temperatures.

If you are still following the old routine of putting your meat into a hot oven for 20 to 30 minutes to "seal in the juices" you are way behind modern practice.

Extensive experiments have shown that this "sealing" actually causes constriction and squeezing out of juices resulting in greater shrinkage and loss of flavour than when a constant, moderately low temperature of 300°-325° is maintained.

Meat is best cooked in an uncovered pan, preferably standing on a wire meat stand, with the fatty side of the meat up. If the meat is very lean some dripping may be placed on top. No basting is necessary.

In large pieces of meat, salt may be added at the commencement of the cooking process without increasing loss of juices to any extent.

Cooking time is usually based on so many minutes per pound—but if the timetable is to be worth anything, oven temperature must be controlled. Remember, too, that a compact and chunky piece of meat will require several minutes per pound more than a long thin joint of the same weight. Boned, rolled roasts too will take longer. Very large joints take fewer minutes per pound than smaller ones. The following table gives a good general guide:—

	Minutes per lb.
Beef	25-30
Beef (thick or rolled)	30-40
Mutton	30-40
Veal and Pork	35-45

FROZEN AND CHILLED MEAT

With the increasing use of frozen meats it is interesting to note that meat may be

cooked directly from the frozen, partially thawed or completely thawed state with practically no difference in shrinkage and flavour when properly cooked.

However, if cooking from the frozen or semi-frozen state, extra cooking time must be allowed and it is easier to get accurate time if meat is thawed first. But don't put the meat into water to thaw it. It is best thawed in the refrigerator as meat spoils quickly if kept too long at room temperature, but whether thawed in the refrigerator or outside it, cook as soon as the meat is thawed, and never re-freeze it.

CARVING AND STORING

If you find carving difficult remember that meat will cut more easily if it is allowed to stand 15 to 20 minutes after

removal from the oven, and it should be cut across the grain. Before storing cooked meat in a refrigerator let it cool for at least one hour then wrap it in greaseproof paper and place in the meat compartment or a cold part of the refrigerator. Cooked meat is best wrapped if drying out is to be prevented.

The care you take in selecting, cooking and serving meat pays dividends in tasty meals, rich in body-building nutrients. Heed the golden rule that meat—like all of the protein foods—is better cooked slowly and longer than quickly at high temperatures.

And finally, in cooking that roast why not introduce a new flavour note? Salt and garlic rubbed on mutton before cooking add greatly to the interest of the dish.

QUICK TRICKS IN THE KITCHEN

Ice cubes may be ready for instant use if you remove them from the tray and place them in a paper bag and return them to the freezer compartment. They will not stick together.

* * * *

A sprinkle of nutmeg or mace and a little lemon juice adds a new and delicious note when serving asparagus.

* * * *

Paper towels or tissues are fine for removing excess grease from frying pans, etc., before washing.

Egg whites may be more easily separated from the yolks when eggs are at refrigerator temperature. Egg whites beat more readily when at room temperature to separate them immediately on removal from the refrigerator and allow to stand till they reach room temperature before beating.

* * * *

Paprika sprinkled over light coloured foods such as rice, mashed potato, cauliflower and macaroni adds colour and character too.

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We suggest that the Journal is worth keeping and that a year's issue will make an attractive and useful volume for your library—a volume that is full of sound factual information, attractively presented.

Arrangements have been made for the compilation of a comprehensive index to be incorporated in the December issue—a feature which will greatly enhance the value of the Journal as a work of reference.