

# Home economist: Not just cooking, sewing

One Oregon State University home economist is a steady customer at McDonald's, Burger King and similar fast food restaurants.

Zoe Ann Holmes can cook pretty well but her work gets in the way, she says, explaining that she is single, lives in an apartment with limited kitchen space and devotes a lot of attention to laboratory research she does for OSU's Agricultural Experiment Station.

She isn't the only home economist who doesn't fit the public's image, she believes.

"Cooking and sewing and the other household arts are very important—our foundation," she said. "But home economics is a broad scientific field and the approach, even in traditional areas, has changed."

"Scientific" is the key word in her statement. As a girl, Holmes pulled weeds from her parents' land on the outskirts of her home town in southeastern Kansas for the paltry

wage of two cents a dozen until she earned enough to buy herself a do-it-yourself chemistry set.

Now that she's parlayed that childhood fascination with science into a Ph.D. in food science, and joined the foods and nutrition department of OSU's home economics school, she gets a bit annoyed with those she thinks take a simplistic view of the work she and her associates do.

"If I tell people we're working on a meat project," she said, "they think we're going to do some cooking and taste the food and label it good or bad. But we go after objective information, too."

"We're going to check the moisture content of the meat with a centrifuge method. We're going to analyze the color with a photovolt reflectance meter and run shearing tests with an instrument that measures tenderness. We'll probably look at the molecular level with an electron microscope," she added.

"That way, we learn chemically

what's happening during thermal stress (cooking) and can do a better job of figuring out how to make improvements. Really, the chemistry of food science isn't much different than the chemistry of, say, soil science."

Some of Holmes' research includes establishing the lowest safe temperature pork can be cooked at (137 degrees Fahrenheit); studying how cooking temperatures can save energy; studying how drying affects food nutrients, and a current study of the quality of meat tenderized in a water pressure device.

The work is rewarding, she says, noting that she majored in food science in college simply because it seemed to be a field women were breaking into.

"I'm glad I did now," she said. "I like the home economics approach—taking lots of different research and applying it to solving family problems."

Although the mix is shifting, his-


torically the majority of home economists have been women. Is the women's rights movement influencing home economics?

"A lot of home economists haven't made the connection with the militant women's rights movements," Holmes said. "Maybe because we stress the importance of the family and think being a homemaker is a productive career. But a lot of home economics pioneers made giant strides for women's rights... helping women join the work force and solving child care problems and that sort of thing."

"Personally," she said, "I feel very strongly that working women deserve the same rights as men. I take Ms. magazine. But I feel homemakers have their rights, too. I don't see the homemaker as some poor unsatisfied person. Maybe that sort of extreme view has disturbed some home economists and kept them out of the women's movements."

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As their name suggests, Cornish Splits are usually split and served with thick Devonshire cream and jam. They're shown here with apple cider, another popular refreshment along the coast of Cornwall.

## Splits for breakfast

**C**ORNISH SPLITS are very much like raised biscuits. As the name suggests, they are usually split and served with Devonshire cream, jam or treacle (syrup to us). If eaten with treacle and cream they are called "Thunder and Lightning."

Cornish Splits are made from a kneaded yeast dough and shaped into flattened rounds. After baking they are golden on the outside and soft within. Cornish Splits may be served in much the same way as biscuits. In fact, with their jam and cream, the English turn them into a kind of shortcake. Try them as a snack or dessert with strawberry jam and whipped cream.

### CORNISH SPLITS

- 3/4 cup milk
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) margarine
- 1/4 cup warm water (105°-115°F.)
- 1 package or cake yeast, active dry or compressed
- 2 1/2 cups unsifted flour (approx.)

Scald milk; stir in sugar, salt and margarine. Cool to lukewarm. Measure warm water into warm bowl. Sprinkle or crumble in yeast; stir un-

til dissolved. Stir in lukewarm milk mixture and 1 1/2 cups of flour. Beat until smooth. Stir in enough additional flour to make a soft dough. Turn out onto lightly floured board. Knead until smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes. Place dough in greased bowl, turning to grease top. Cover; let rise in warm place, free from draft, until doubled in bulk, about 40 minutes.

Punch dough down. Turn out onto lightly floured board and divide into 12 equal pieces and form into smooth balls. Place on greased baking sheets and flatten with palm of hand. Cover; let rise in warm place, free from draft until doubled in bulk, about 35 minutes.

Bake in hot oven (400°F.) about 10 minutes, or until done. If desired, split rolls and serve Cornish-style with cream and jam or syrup. Makes 1 dozen small rolls.

### Household Hints

**DAINTY CURTAINS**—For a simple, harmless and effective whitener for dainty curtains and fine linens, a tablespoon of powdered Borax added to the final rinse water helps.

**WINDSHIELD WIPERS**—Sometimes the windshield wipers on your car aren't doing a very good job. Try rubbing the rubber blades with some fine sandpaper to clean and smooth them.

**EASIER MEASURING**—Make a measuring job easier, by sticking the other end of the measure down with adhesive tape. That way you don't have to bother anyone to help you measure something.

**SPOTTY FURNITURE**—You may have white spots on your furniture from someone scratching it. Sponge these spots with turpentine or mineral spirits, and then apply fresh wax.

**ELECTRIC CORDS**—Rub a thin coat of wax or paraffin at periodic intervals, to protect the cords against premature drying out and cracking.

**SANDPAPERING**—Put an old nylon stocking over your hand and rub it lightly over the wood. It is a good test to see if your sandpaper job is done well enough.

**CLEANING WINDOWS**—To help prevent the glass you are cleaning from streaking and looking filmy all over again, pour a little vinegar in the water you are using.

**PAINT STIRRER**—Stir up your small cans of paint with an old dinner fork. It does just fine.

**WINDOW SHADES**—You can cover window shades with wallpaper, and give them an interesting pattern or color.

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