

CULINARY CRAFT....

By Estella Dorgan, Director, Home Service, the California Oregon Power Company

BOILING IDEAS

Just when everyone is busy planning how to keep comfortably cool we come forward with "boiling ideas." Sounds unreasonable, doesn't it? However, these suggestions are actually made with the thought that we may assist you to prepare a delicious and satisfying meal quickly and all in one dish. That means fewer to wash, which is a nice cool idea, too.

For some reason we usually think only of meats, usually steak, when speaking of broiling. The truth is that we are passing up some really interesting possibilities if we do not use the broiler for fruits and vegetables, either by themselves or with meat combinations. Sliced apples, pears, bananas and pineapple among the fruits, and tomatoes, green or ripe, and almost pre-cooked vegetable may be broiled (reheated and flavored to taste).

Practically any kind of meat can be broiled. However, if the meat is tough, by all means put it through the food chopper, season lightly and make it into serving portions. A piece of bacon fastened around the portion adds to the flavor and appearance but is not necessary. A bit of butter on the top gives flavor and browns quickly. Prepared mustard is also a good addition to some meats and vegetables. In other words, don't be afraid to experiment and combine flavors and foods in the broiling pan. You'll be surprised and pleased at the good things you'll be serving if you follow this plan.

Menu I

Rice patties, broiled lamb, shredded carrots, apricot sauce. Shape cooked rice into rounds, season and brush with butter. Place on the broiler pan. Shred the carrots quite fine and place on the pan, sprinkling with a little water. Set the greased rack over the rice and carrots, on it set the chops and a flat pan of apricot sauce. Have the top element on and place the rice patties with all the food directly under the glowing element. Leave the door open. When the meat is nicely browned on one side, turn and brown on the other side, seasoning when you turn or when ready to place on plates. Pour the gravy over the patties. (And set the pan in the sink and fill with water.)

Menu II

Scalloped corn and olives, broiled bacon, apricot sauce, sliced apples, 2 cups celery (diced), 2 cups yellow corn, 1/2 cup olives, minced, 1/2 cup corn flakes.

Seasonings. Cook the celery in boiling, salted water until tender but not soft. Drain. Butter broiling pan and arrange a layer of corn, then celery, then olives. Season to taste and add about one-fourth cup of milk. Sprinkle with corn flakes (or bread crumbs) and dot with butter. Set the pan in the oven under the pre-heated top unit. (Not too close). Let this be cooking while you prepare the apples and bacon. Slice the apples with the peeling in quarter-inch thickness. Arrange on greased rack and set in the pan over the corn. (The door may be closed until you place the meat on the rack). Now slice the bacon thin and place on the rack and set near the element. Leave the door open and watch the bacon so that it does not burn. Remove when nicely browned.

Menu III

Broiled ripe tomatoes, toast. Cut the tomatoes about a half inch thick and cover with butter, crack or crumbs. Place on bottom of the broiler pan. On the greased rack place the oysters and triangles of bread. Place in the oven with pre-heated top unit and leave door open. When the bread is a golden brown, turn and toast the other side. Butter generously and place the broiled oys-

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Shish Kebabs Delicious Food Idea of Near East

By Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

Have you ever picnicked on "kabobas"? Or "kebabs" or "kebabas"? Have your own way with the spelling, but you make these tempting morsels by skewering together small pieces of beef or lamb, and grilling them over a fire. It is gorgeous food in the open air—or anywhere else—but do you know where we got the idea and likewise the name?

A traveler from the Near East could tell you, or any Armenian or Syrian vendor of rugs and embroideries. "Shish kebabs" the Armenians call it, and in his native country they use lamb for the purpose, as a rule, because lamb is their principal meat. "Shish kebabs" is meat broiled on a spit. In the Near East they do it over a charcoal or wood fire.

Meat, however, is not the most important food in the Near Eastern diet, nor are shish kebabs any more distinctive than several other characteristic dishes. The peoples who live in the regions beyond the Mediterranean occupy fertile farms and grazing lands of some of the oldest parts of the world, where for ages their own grains and vegetables and fruits and flocks and herds have supplied the needs of the population. Here they have the makings of a good, well-balanced diet, says the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and the typical dishes of the Near East make interesting use of this variety of foods.

There are breads, but there is also the "pilaf" of rice or cracked wheat usually cooked in meat stock. There are many kinds of vegetables, often-times stuffed with a mixture of minced meat and rice; sometimes added to the pilaf; very often cooked with meat. Milk, as they use it, is sour milk, which they add to soups and sauces and in fact to almost any other kind of food. The "kefir" of the Caucasus, the "yogurt" of the Turks, the "kassio-mleko" of the Bulgarians, or the "matsoni" of the Armenians—all these are sour milks or curdled milks and in many parts of the Near East are used at every meal. They are made with a "starter," like our "cultured" buttermilk, or like the acidophilus milk on sale in many places.

For the soups in these countries, meat stock is the foundation, and for vegetable soup, the vegetables are browned in fat before adding them to the stock. A favorite Armenian soup has "matsoni" (sour milk) blended with the stock, and besides onion, a little mint is used in the flavoring. The Turkish pilaf is the original of many variations. The rice, typically, is first browned in fat, to give it flavor, then added to the broth and cooked until tender. Pilaf with tomatoes, or with fish, or with lamb kidneys (Bulgarian pilaf) are some of the variations. The Armenian "beressa" and Syrian "kebi"—national dishes, both—are mixtures of ground or shredded lamb or cracked wheat which has been boiled in broth.

Vegetables such as egg plant, squash, tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, which are grown in the Near East, are commonly stuffed with rice and minced meat, but they are also cooked in various combinations with each other, or with meat. Okra with meat, a Syrian dish, is dried okra which is first cooked in hot water, drained, then browned in fat, and added to meat broth along with tomato paste and cooked meat cut in small pieces. This is served with cooked rice. The Roumanians bake all sorts of vegetables together in olive oil—chopped cabbage, carrots, green beans, okra, eggplant, onions, tomatoes, potatoes on the toast. Serve lettuce with French dressing with this plate.

Menu IV

Sweet potatoes, pork chops, string beans, pineapple. Use pre-cooked (or canned) sweet potatoes and beans. Place potatoes on greased pan and dot them with a piece of butter. Place the beans on the other side of the pan. On the greased rack place the chops and pineapple slices. Set in pre-heated oven and leave the door open while the chops are browning, turning once and then back again to cook the pork thoroughly.

Menu V

Spinach loaf, tomatoes, ripe, rice with cheese, bananas. Make spinach loaf of cooked spinach, seasoned and held together with one egg, slightly beaten. Make individual helpings and sprinkle with ground walnuts. Sprinkle halves of tomatoes with buttered crumbs or corn flakes. Cooked rice is sprinkled with cheese and a little pimiento. The bananas may be dipped in lemon juice. The spinach and rice are cooked below the other articles.

parboil the cucumber shells in lightly salted water for 5 or 10 minutes, and drain. Fill the shells with the hot "dolma" mixture, place them in a shallow pan or baking dish, add a little water to keep them from sticking, and bake in a moderate oven for 15 minutes, or until the stuffing has browned on top.

The Near Eastern way is to add 2 or 3 tomatoes cut in small pieces (or half a cup of canned tomatoes) and a cup of meat broth to the stuffed cucumbers after putting them in the baking dish. Serve with a dressing made of beaten egg and lemon juice blended with part of the "dolma" gravy.

Authorities on Near Eastern cooking point out the simplicity of the seasonings and the lack of condiments used. Says one writer, "Not a single dish is dependent on the extravagant use of expensive and various ingredients which when counted up make food very expensive, but it is dependent and very much so on the flavor of each different article used in the making."

In the following recipes the Bureau of Home Economics has made some adaptations in cooking method and also from the standpoint of cost, but the essential characteristics of the Near East dish remain. "Shish kebabs" (Meat broiled on skewers) Cut pieces of lean meat (lamb or beef) about 1 1/2 inches square and 1 inch thick. Put four or five of these on a skewer with small squares of bacon between them. Broil these skewered pieces over a camp fire for a picnic supper; or at home broil them on a rack under a flame. Turn frequently to cook uniformly. When the meat is done, season with salt and pepper and serve at once on the skewers. If desired, put slices of onion or tomato on the skewers with the meat.

Pilaf with Tomatoes
2 cups rice
2 tablespoons butter or other fat
2 cups meat stock
1 small onion
1/2 cup cooked or canned tomatoes
Salt and pepper

Brown the rice in butter or other fat, then boil it in the meat stock. Brown the onion, mix with the tomatoes, and add this mixture to the rice just before it is done. Season to taste and boil until done. If necessary, put in a moderately hot oven for a few minutes until some of the moisture has evaporated.

Okra with Meat
2 pounds lamb shoulder
1 pound fresh okra
Butter or other fat
Minced garlic
1 1/2 cups tomatoes (fresh-cooked or canned)

2 cups meat stock
Lemon juice
Boil the lamb until tender. Slice the fresh okra pods and brown the pieces in butter or bacon fat or olive oil with the minced garlic. Add the tomatoes, the meat broth, and the meat cut in small slices. Add a little lemon juice and serve hot with rice. String beans may be used in place of okra.

Stuffed Cucumbers
A stuffing called "dolma" in the Near East is used in cucumbers, eggplant, squash, peppers, tomatoes, grape-vine leaves, onions, or quinces. It is a mixture of chopped meat, rice, browned chopped onions, and chopped parsley seasoned with salt and pepper to taste. To use this stuffing American fashion in cucumbers: Wash and pare the cucumbers and cut them in half lengthwise. Scoop out the seed portion without breaking the fleshy part.

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