

Calory Count Important In Planning Meals for Differnt Requirements

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

If you are trying to plan meals by the best rules of diet, and at the same time be most thrifty about it, you want to know how much food the family really needs—which may be more or may be less than some members of the family actually want. So you turn, perhaps, to the books, where you find that a moderately active man, for example, needs food enough to furnish about 3,000 calories a day.

Now a calorie is a unit of measure which is not very easy to define. It measures fuel for a kind of engine—in this case the human body. That body needs fuel to furnish the energy necessary for keeping alive, for digesting food, and for doing the day's work. The more work we do, the more energy and consequently the more food we need. So the scientific finding that a man uses up each day a certain amount of energy if he lives a moderately active life, and more if he is very active, measures the fuel required to produce that energy and tells us it takes about 3,000 calories in one case, and more, up to about 4,000 calories, in the other. A woman needs less fuel—about 2,500 to 3,000 calories. Children need varying amounts, according to their sex and age.

All foods have some fuel value, but some have much more than others—so much more that they are classed as fuel foods, or energy foods. Their value in calories is high because they contain unusual amounts of the best fuel substances, which are carbohydrates, or starch and sugar, and fats.

Breadstuffs and cereals—that is, wheat, flour, corn meal, hominy, oatmeal, barley, rice and the rest of the grains—are our most important fuel foods. Their fuel value is high chiefly because they contain so much starch. They are plentiful, and they are cheap. Therefore, say the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, when we have to make a very little money go a long way, we can do it by using enough bread and cereals to supply rather more than a third, or even as much as 40 percent of our total calories for the day.

More than a third, or even as much as 40 percent. And why not more than that? If high-calorie foods are cheap, why not use more of them, or even get all your calories from a few foods that would furnish the most calories for the money? As a matter of fact, such a diet might be the cheapest you could find, but it would be a very bad one. Fuel foods are not the only kinds you need. You must have the kinds that furnish plenty of material to build bone and blood and muscle, and keep your body in good running order. To get enough of those substances, you need milk, vegetables and fruits, and meat or fish or eggs or cheese, besides plenty of bread and cereals.

In fact, these body-building and health-protective foods are so important the Bureau of Home Economics suggests that you provide them first and then all your fuel foods. In milk, vegetables and fruits, and in lean meats or fish or eggs or cheese, you get fuel values, too, along with the other values for which you need these foods. So you might plan this way:

Count, in first all the milk and vegetables and fruit for the day—a quart of milk per child, a pint for each adult, to be used either as a drink or in soup or gravy or sauce or custard or some other way. Then count for everybody in the family at least one medium-size potato, a good serving of greens or salad vegetables and fruit, also some meat or fish or eggs or cheese, as you may be able to afford. In cooking you will have used some fat, and you will get some fat in the meat. In all these foods you should be able to provide nearly two thirds of your calories.

Then count in bread for the day, cereal for breakfast, rice or macaroni or noodles or dumplings for at least one other meal, and perhaps pie or cake or cookies, too. There you have the other third or more of your calories.

The calories count up fast in bread and cereals. You get, for instance, about 100 calories in two thin slices of the ordinary loaf of bakers' bread, and during the day you probably eat several times that. You get 100 calories in a 4½ inch griddle cake, in a muffin, or an average biscuit. In three-fourths of a cup of cooked oatmeal, or if cooked macaroni, or cooked rice, you get 100 calories.

But now we meet another problem—a very practical problem for

the cook. With such a large proportion of bland, starchy foods, how can you make the meals interesting? Toast and breakfast cereal, hot biscuits, muffins, griddle cakes, hot pone, coffee bread, cakes, and cookies will doubtless be on your bill of fare during the week. Rice, hominy, hominy grits, dumplings, macaroni, and noodles will come in place, and you can vary those surprisingly. The East Indian, for example, seasons his rice with curry powder, and we copy him in our curry of rice. The Turks and other peoples of the Near East have their pilaf, which is rice or ground wheat served in mutton broth, and boiled oftentimes with meat or vegetables or both. The Italians add cheese to their rice, as well as to their macaroni, the Spaniards and Mexicans add tomatoes and peppers to make several interesting dishes.

As for corn products, you can provide a change from the everyday fare by making tamales pie as the Mexicans do—a filling of chopped meat, onions, tomatoes and peppers, and topped with corn meal mush. Or, for dessert, you can make a date pudding with hominy grits, or use other fruit with the grits if you prefer.

Of oatmeal, if you are Scotch, you will have your "bannocks" maybe—thick cakes of coarse oatmeal. The Bureau of Home Economics offers an oatmeal recipe for a meat loaf which you may like to try. Whole wheat chowder, and several other whole wheat dishes may well be on your list if you have a wheat crop, or if you can visit a feed store somewhere and get a peck or so of clean whole wheat.

RECIPES

Oatmeal and Meat Loaf
1 cup rolled oats
2 cups water
1½ pounds ground beef
½ pound ground pork
2 to 3 tablespoons chopped onion
2½ teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon celery seed
½ teaspoon pepper
Cook the rolled oats in the usual way in the 2 cups of water. Mix all the ingredients. Form into a loaf on a piece of heavy paper on a rack in a roasting pan. Bake about 10 minutes in a hot oven (about 400 degrees F.), reduce the temperature to moderate (350 degrees F.), and continue to cook for 1½ hours. Serve hot or cold.

Whole Wheat, Fish, and Tuna
½ pound canned fish
1 quart canned tomatoes
½ cup chopped celery
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
2 cups cooked whole wheat
Drain the fish, reserve the liquid and flake the fish into small pieces. Cook tomatoes, celery and fish liquid until the mixture is fairly thick. Add the seasoning, wheat, and fish, cook a few minutes longer, stir to blend well.

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