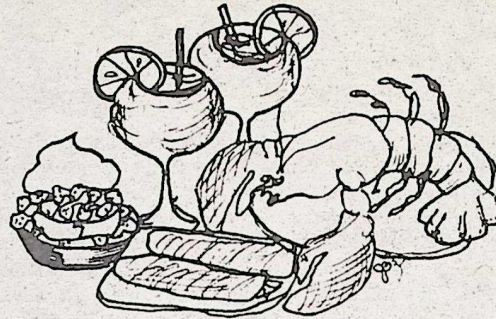


From Aunt Olivia's Kitchen

by Lydia Lovell



Preparing meals for one's immediate family is the way most people... even those who go on to become world-famous chefs, establish names for themselves as hosts and hostesses, write cookbooks, conduct cooking schools, or appear on television shows to demonstrate their culinary arts... are introduced to kitchen equipment and the wonders it performs.

Perhaps a family crisis first brings the novice face-to-face with raw comestibles and the implacable gleam of a stove. Or perhaps a busy parent suggests a helping hand would be appreciated.

Possible, too, a child receives early lessons in teamwork by sharing cooking activities, and is rewarded with scraping sweet morsels from a cake or cook's mixing bowl. That's how things went in Aunt Olivia's kitchen.

But, however grows the urge to create tasty dishes, the successes gratify the experimenter. Most people look forward to mealtimes and express appreciation for the cook's efforts. No greater encouragement can be given any cook than praising the production.

Not only do good meals satisfy bodily hungers, hours spent at the table break daily routines and are welcome pauses in busy pursuits. Even for those who sit down alone, eating is restful and relaxing, pleasant and peaceful, comforting to mind as well as body.

We could survive (and in prehistoric times doubtless did) taking food as it comes to hand. At what stage of human development man learned to cook, no one knows. Probably, long before fire was harnessed, humans found enhanced flavor in cooked foods. After a lightning bolt ignited a fast-moving forest fire, a roasted animal may have provided the first impromptu barbeque. We've come a long way since that day.

Now we cook three times a day for one or two, four or seven, and sometimes for as many as 30, 50, or a hundred. If accustomed to preparing meals for no more than a couple, dinner for eight may loom large, but if six is the usual number that gathers, feeding eight or ten is easily handled. It's a matter of practice.

Differences in head-count mean differences in quantity, of course; that's why we use recipes. Not only do they tell us measurements and introduce flavors, they direct handling of equipment and indicate how many servings to expect.

Never let it be said no new recipes can be invented! With the variety of meats, vegetables, seasonings, grains, nuts, and fruits, possible combinations might confound a computer. And I hope that's always true, for we'd lose more than we'd gain were unimaginative machines to supplant creative cookery.

Aunt Olivia and my mother were both fine cooks; but

give both the same recipe and let them follow it to the letter, and the results would never be identical. Why? No two cuts of meat are precisely alike. No vegetable, although of the same variety, tastes exactly like any other. No two fruits contain the same amount of sugar. Flours... milled, packaged, and sold by different companies... are not identical. Eggs vary in size, even in taste. Carefully measured seasonings aren't quite the same. One may be fresher than another, contain more oils, come from a different place, have grown where earth or climate varied.

Nor is it necessary two dishes be just alike, or even desirable. What a monotonous future we'd face were every serving of a specific dish to taste always the same! The variables of taste and flavor offer an infinity of freshness.

In a newly-published collection of recipes, Marion Vuilleumier and Anita Buddington offer **What's Cooking on Cape Cod**, a revised edition of a cookbook copyrighted in 1973 and long out-of-print. Now available again at local bookstores and from Craigville Press (Box 86, Craigville, MA 02636), its recipes are old favorites among Cape Cod cooks. Well-organized and indexed, the paperback is not only a guide for family meal-preparation, but includes dozens of recipes for quantity servings.

Suppose, for example, you decide to serve Cheese Fondue, a fruit salad and Chocolate Fudge Pudding for dessert to six. At the same time, consider the possibility of using the same basic menu for a party of 24. Then think of inviting two dozen more guests to drop in for after-dinner coffee and dessert.

How do you plan? This book makes it easy.

CHEESE FONDUE

For 6 For 24

6	24	slices bread, crusts removed and cubed
1/4	1	pound cheese, grated
2	8	eggs, beaten
2	8	cups milk
1/2	2	teaspoons salt
1	4	cups ham, cubed or ground pepper and mustard to taste

Put cubed bread in greased casserole. Beat eggs, add milk and seasonings. Toss cheese and ham together with bread. Pour egg mixture over bread mixture and let stand 30 minutes. Bake at 350° until set (about 45 minutes for smaller quantity; 1 1/4 hours for larger).

Fruit salad for six is no problem. For 25, keeping it simple and making it ahead are imperatives.

FRUIT SALAD FOR 25

1 No. 10 can fruit cocktail, drained
1 pint sour cream
1 large bag miniature marshmallows

Mix and let stand overnight

BAKED CHOCOLATE FUDGE PUDDING

For 8 For 50

1 Cup	6 Cups	flour
2 tsp	4 tbsp	baking powder
3/4 cup	4 1/2 cups	sugar
Pinch	1/2 tbsp	salt
2 tbsp	3/4 cup	cocoa
1/2 cup	3 cups	milk
2 tbsp	3/4 cup	shortening, melted
1/2 cup	3 cups	nuts, chopped
1 cup	6 cups	brown sugar
1/4 cup	1 1/2 cups	cocoa
1 3/4 cups	2 3/4 cups	hot water

Mix first 5 ingredients, gradually stir in milk and shortening. Add nuts, mix thoroughly. Spread batter 1" thick in well-greased pan (for 8 servings, 9"x9" pan; for 50 servings, two steam table pans).

Mix sugar and cocoa and sprinkle over batter. Pour boiling water over entire batter, and bake at 350° for 45 minutes. Serve with fudge sauce on top, with whipped cream, or ice cream over pudding.

If you don't happen to have a 50-cup coffee urn in the cupboard, borrow one. Coffee will be hot and good through early arrivals, dinner, and on into the evening.

Or, in summer, serve:

COFFEE FRAPPE FOR 50

Beat together with a wire whip until thoroughly mixed:

3 quarts strong cold coffee
1 1/4 quarts heavy cream
1/2 cup sugar

Then add:

2 1/2 quarts cold milk
3 tbsp vanilla
1/2 tsp salt

Mix thoroughly.

Just before serving, put small scoops of ice cream in tall glasses and fill 3/4 full of coffee mixture.

Whether having a small intimate dinner for eight or feeding a crowd, you'll use this cookbook to guarantee even the cook has a good time.