

by Lydia Lovell

Looking back on the halcyon days of childhood, I find it difficult to believe there might have been times when Aunt Olivia and Uncle Henry felt pressured or rushed. I can't recall a single instance when either of them seemed too busy to pay attention to me, or welcome an unexpected visitor, or share with one another some small incident or piece of news.

Whenever Uncle Henry came into the kitchen where Aunt Olivia was bustling about preparing a meal, she looked up at him expectantly, knowing he was about to tell her how he startled a pair of quail taking dust baths in the garden, or how many little green globes had formed on the tomato plants, or how much the pole beans had grown since yesterday. And she always had time to listen; he always had time to tell.

Whenever I brought in a baby bird or a new-born bunny rabbit, Aunt Olivia had time to assess the circumstances and decide whether I should return it to wherever I had found it so the parents could care for it, or if a make-shift cage was needed temporarily until the little creature could shift for itself.

Whenever a neighbor dropped in to borrow a cup of sugar or an egg, or just to pass the time of day, a warm welcome was always accompanied by hot cups of tea or coffee and a plateful of fresh-baked cookies.

It is difficult to imagine, then, that Aunt Olivia needed to gather time-saving recipes, yet collect them she did. Among them we find a preponderance of fish foods, undoubtedly because fish was always in good supply and is particularly well-suited to preparation in less than half-an-hour.

Although I never gave it a moment's consideration at the time, Aunt Olivia's **Zucchini and Oyster Fritters**, it turns out, were one of her specialties when she felt rushed.

1 lb. raw oysters (shucked)    1 C. zucchini, chopped fine  
1 1/2 C. flour    1 egg, beaten  
2 t. baking powder    1 T. milk  
1 t. salt    1 1/2 C. cooking oil for frying  
1/4 t. garlic powder

Drain and chop oysters. Combine flour, baking powder, salt, garlic powder. Combine oysters, zucchini, egg and milk. Add oyster mixture to flour mixture, stirring only until blended. Heat oil in electric frying pan to 375°. Drop batter by tablespoonful in a single layer into the hot oil. Fry for three minutes or until golden, turning once. Drain on absorbent paper. Serve immediately with **Horseradish Sauce**. Serves six (makes three dozen fritters).

1/2 C. prepared horseradish    1/4 C. mayonnaisse

Combine horseradish and mayonnaise in a one-quart saucepan, heat, stirring, but do not boil.

Another hurry-up dinner dish that was enjoyed as much by grown-up Lovells as by the children in the family was **Linguine Marinara**. Aunt Olivia kept on hand her own supply of tomato sauce because when tomatoes were glutting Uncle Henry's garden every August, she stewed up batch after batch, processing the sauces for just such occasions. You may keep a few jars on your pantry shelves, too, but you'll probably bring them home from the grocery store.

1 lb. raw shrimp, fresh or frozen  
2 16-oz. jars marinara spaghetti sauce  
1/2 t. salt, 1/2 t. oregano, 1/4 t. pepper, 1 bay leaf  
1 8-oz. pkg. linguine  
chopped parsley for garnish

If shrimp are frozen, thaw, peel and devein them. Cut large ones in half or quarters. Put a pot of water on to boil and cook linguine according to package directions. Combine sauce and pieces in a 10-inch frying pan; bring to a boil. Add shrimp, lower heat, and simmer five minutes. Remove bay leaf. Drain



linguine and divide into four servings. Spoon sauce over pasta and pass a shaker of grated Parmesan cheese. A salad of fresh spinach leaves tossed with oil and vinegar goes well with Linguine Marinara.

As often as once a week or so, someone would bring Aunt Olivia a fresh fish. Sometimes it came as a gift; sometimes a barefooted lad would offer his catch for sale. Either way, Aunt Olivia welcomed the opportunity to serve us a **Fish and Broccoli Casserole**.

2C. cooked fish (cod, scrod, haddock, bass or sole)  
2 10-oz. pkg. frozen broccoli spears (or fresh if available)  
2 cans condensed cream of mushroom soup  
1 C. milk  
1/2 t. salt (optional)  
1/8 t. pepper  
sprig of tarragon  
1 C. crushed potato chips  
sliced lemon and sprigs of parsley for garnish

Cook frozen broccoli for three minutes (fresh for 10); drain. Place in a single layer in a greased shallow casserole. (Corningware is ideal because you can use it first to cook the broccoli, then grease the same pan and use it as a casserole. In Aunt Olivia's day, of course, Corningware was yet to come on the market.) Combine cooked fish, soup, milk and seasonings. Spread fish over broccoli and sprinkle with crushed potato chips. Bake 12 minutes at 425°. Garnish plates with parsley sprigs and lemon slices.

This recipe may be halved for two people, is ample for four or five; for six, you might want to prepare **Whole Fried New Potatoes** to help satisfy hearty appetites. Serve cabbage slaw on the side in any event.

1 16-oz. can whole boiled new potatoes  
salt, pepper and paprika  
2 T. butter or margarine

Melt 1 T. butter or margarine in a 10-inch frying pan. Drain canned potatoes; put potatoes in frying pan; shake salt, pepper and paprika on potatoes. Turn potatoes seasoned-side-down. Cover and fry over low heat for 10 minutes. Remove cover, add 1 T. butter or margarine, shake on a little more salt, pepper and paprika. Again, turn seasoned-side-down. Cover and cook over low heat another 10 minutes until crisp and brown on the outside and hot inside.

An unusual recipe Aunt Olivia filed with her in-a-hurry collection is one she may never have used, but it sounds so delicious I'm tempted to try it. You may be too. That was probably the reason she kept it. She called it simply **Baked Fish With Orange** and its preparation could not be easier.

1 1/2 lb. raw fillets of fish    1 1/4 C. cracker crumbs  
1/3 C. cooking oil    1 T. melted bacon fat  
3 1/2 T. orange juice    1 t. paprika  
4 t. grated orange rind    1/2 t. seasoned salt  
1 orange, sliced for garnish

Cut fillets of fish into serving-size pieces. Grease a 1 1/2 quart shallow casserole. Preheat oven to 450°. Combine cooking oil, orange juice and orange rind. Mix finely crushed crackers, melted bacon fat, paprika and salt. Dip fish in orange mixture, then roll in cracker crumbs. Place fish in a single layer in casserole and pour remaining orange mixture over fish. Bake 10 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Garnish with orange slices.

Any firm white fish fillets may be used except that sole will cook in less than 10 minutes in an oven that hot, so watch carefully. Thicker fish fillets (cod, scrod, haddock) are better choices for this recipe.

Finally, do try this **Oriental Salad** for lunch. I keep frozen shrimp on hand in the freezer for emergencies and find this recipe stretches a half-pound of shrimp to four servings.

1/2 lb. cooked, peeled, deveined shrimp (thawed)  
1 10-oz. pkg. frozen peas, thawed and drained  
1 C. finely chopped celery  
1/2 C. mayonnaisse  
1 T. lemon juice  
1/8 t. each: curry powder, garlic salt, pepper  
1 3-oz. can chow mein noodles  
1 7-oz. can water chestnuts, drained and sliced  
salad greens and parsley sprigs

Cut shrimp in quarters. Thaw peas by pouring them into a sieve and dipping them into a sauce pan of boiling water. Combine the first eight ingredients in a large bowl and mix well; chill. Add noodles and water chestnuts. Toss lightly. Serve on salad greens, garnish with parsley sprigs.

Need I say, bon appetit?