



With her "Fannie Farmer's" in hand, Mrs. Burnett stands before her secretary-desk, hand-decorated by the late artist, Ralph Cahoon of Santuit.

Esther Burnett:

... her
cooking
brings
compliments

"I didn't really learn to cook... to enjoy cooking... until after my first child was born," Esther Burnett said while sitting in her comfortable living room and talking about recipes. "Then I became truly interested in preparing good meals and grew concerned about our family's nutritional needs. I guess that's when I grew up!"

Married while still in her teens and not long after graduating from high school, Esther remembers those earlier years as "a crazy time because everyone's husband was in service during World War II, and many of us young wives doubled up together or lived with parents or our sisters. We didn't give much thought to cooking or what we were eating.

"Mother was always a wonderful cook, just as my Grandmother Adams was. Mother's menus were planned a week in advance and, when served, each meal looked as good as it tasted. Foods were arranged on plates so colors complemented one another, and the table was always set attractively. Except for giving each of us girls ample opportunities to learn. Mother didn't force cooking lessons on us. I guess she knew my sisters and I would take to it naturally once we had homes of our own."

Mrs. Burnett's favorite is Fannie Farmer's **Boston Cooking School Cookbook**, "but I'm a 'clipper,'" she says. "When I read a recipe that sounds good, I clip it out and add it to my collection. I keep my recipes in big manila envelopes, each marked: brunches, desserts, casseroles, fish, and so on. And every year or so I go through them to sort out those recipes I've tried and liked from those we didn't like or ones I never attempted.

"If I didn't do that," she laughed, "I wouldn't have room for anything else in this house, just envelopes full of recipes!"

Esther's husband, Jay, grew up on an Ohio farm where his family was accustomed to eating a lot of starchy food. Heavy farm work made energy-rich starches a natural choice. All

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COOK-OF-THE-MONTH

She's a "clipper"

by Lydia Lovell

... but her creative efforts bring compliments!

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meats were very thoroughly cooked; although Jay has learned to enjoy medium-roasted beef, he still prefers the sweet-sour flavors vinegar and mustard bring to potato salad and baked beans.

"When I make something for the first time, Jay is usually the guinea pig. He always compliments me when a new dish is a success and says, 'Let's have that again.' He tries anything...and I've tried some awful things! Sometimes, though, I try out new recipes when I have company. I don't often need to apologize.

"I hate to waste food, so using up leftovers in delectable ways is my most creative effort," Mrs. Burnett says. "One of my most successful experiments was a casserole dish I often make now for guests. It's that good! And, depending on the quantity of leftover chicken or turkey, it serves anywhere from two to ten people. You can make it ahead of time, even the day before, and enjoy your own party while dinner is baking."

For an entree that makes use of leftover chicken, Esther suggests Chicken Souffle. Another, just as delicious, she says, uses uncooked chicken thighs and/or breasts, baked with a sherried mushroom sauce and raw rice.

With either main course, she would serve peas ("because Jay loves 'em") and apple salad. To top off the meal, she recommends Lemon Chiffon Pie, a dessert she prepares well in advance and serves straight as it comes from the refrigerator.

Butter lightly a square or oblong casserole or baking pan. Place four slices of bread on the bottom of the pan. Scatter chicken pieces over bread. Sprinkle with onion flakes and top with four more slices of bread.

Beat eggs well, add milk, and pour slowly over bread. Cover and refrigerate for at least three hours or overnight.

An hour or so before planning to serve dinner, preheat oven to 350°. remove casserole from refrigerator, and spoon a can of cream of mushroom soup. Bake, uncovered, one hour.

SHERRIED CHICKEN (serves 6)

1 C. long grain rice (raw)
1 envelope dry onion soup mix
8 chicken thighs, breasts, or combination
¼ C. orange juice
¼ C. sherry wine
1 can golden mushroom soup

Butter a large baking dish or casserole. Pour rice over bottom. Place chicken pieces, skin side up, on rice. Mix soup, sherry, and orange juice, and pour over chicken. Sprinkle with onion soup mix. Cover with lid or foil. Bake 2 hours at 325°. Remove cover and continue baking for 15 to 30 minutes until chicken browns.

To vary this recipe, use loin pork chops instead of chicken pieces. After browning chops, place in baking pan (with or without rice), pour the sauce over the chops, and bake 1 to 1½ hours at 325°. Bake uncovered another 15 minutes.



Slowly, Esther Burnett pours mixture of eggs and milk over prepared Chicken Souffle before refrigerating to permit flavors to "marry."

APPLE SALAD DRESSING

½ to ¾ C. orange juice
2 or 3 T. mayonnaise

Pour orange juice over diced fruit to prevent discoloration. Lightly mix in enough mayonnaise to coat fruit. Serve on bed of shredded lettuce in individual salad bowls. These can be prepared in advance and kept refrigerated an hour or more before serving. A spoon is useful for scooping up the last drops of juicy dressing!

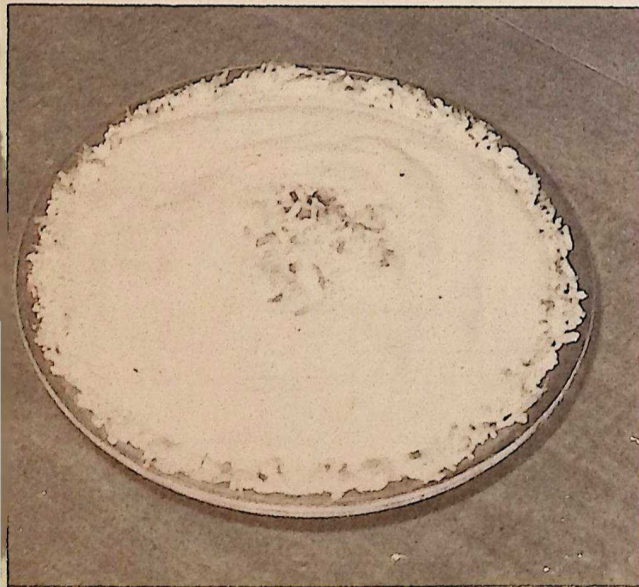
LEMON CHIFFON PIE

1 pkg. lemon pudding mix (not instant)
2 eggs, separated

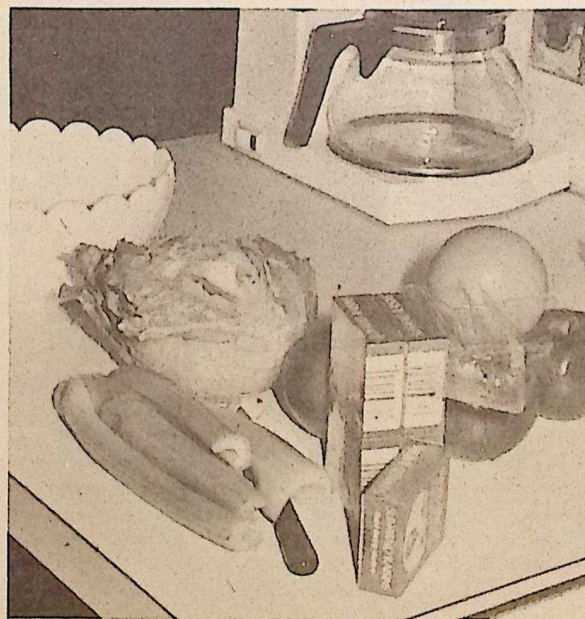
Prepare lemon pudding according to package directions for Lemon Meringue pie, using the egg yolks in the pudding. Instead of making a meringue, beat the egg whites until stiff and fold them into the pudding mixture. Heap into a baked pie shell or a graham cracker crust. Dust top with shredded coconut (optional), and refrigerate until ready to serve.

"When I have company, I want to be with them, not busy in the kitchen half the time they are here," Esther says. "With this menu, everything is ready to serve whenever everyone is ready to eat. All I have to do before putting it on the table is bring frozen peas to a boil and ring the dinner bell."

Photos by
Pat Germani



Lemon Chiffon Pie edged with shredded coconut, a Burnett family favorite dessert.



Celery, lettuce, apples, orange, and raisins, ingredients ready to assemble for Apple Salad.

CHICKEN SOUFFLE (serves 4)

2 cups leftover chicken meat, cubed bite-size (add any bits and pieces too)
8 slices white bread
1 T. dried onion flakes
3 eggs
1½ cup milk
1 can cream of mushroom soup, undiluted

APPLE SALAD (serves 4)

2 or 3 unpeeled, cored, red apples, diced
1 C. chopped celery
handful of raisins, ½ C. coarsely chopped walnuts (optional), and add any other fruit you want to use up