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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, February 16, 1931.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Buying Canned Fish." Information from the Food and Drug Administration, U. S. D. A. Menu and Recipes from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D.A.

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My next door neighbor dropped in on her way back from town with an empty basket under her arm.

"To market, to market and home with an empty basket. I'm plain disgusted, if I do say it," she said.

"What's happened?" I inquired, "I thought you were going down to take advantage of the sales of canned goods."

"So I was, Aunt Sammy. I intended to stock up with some canned fish -- salmon and tuna fish and some sardines. But I came home empty-handed because I was baffled. Think of being baffled in a grocery store when I've been doing the family marketing all these years!"

"I can't imagine anything in any store being able to baffle you. What did it?"

"Cans of fish on shelves, Aunt Sammy. Rows and rows of all kinds of fish. I began looking them over and by the time the clerk came up to ask me what I wanted, I couldn't tell him. I had always ordered just plain salmon. How was I to know whether I wanted Chinook, Chum, or Coho salmon, or Red or Pink salmon? The prices differed considerably, but I had no idea which to buy because I didn't know what the many different varieties were. I had no idea whether I would be getting good fish if I ordered "Chum," the least expensive kind, or whether it would be best to pay the highest price and get Chinook. How can poor bewildered housewives like me have what they are buying when they go to the grocery?"

The people to turn to for this sort of information are the government's food and drug experts. They believe that the housewife should let the label be her guide and learn to read labels on food intelligently and buy with discrimination. Under the food and drugs act all labels on containers must be honest and describe truthfully the food on the inside. The food and drug experts are giving a helping hand to the housewife who is interested in getting

the best value for her money and in knowing what she is buying. Understanding how to read the labels on food pays, because the labels describe the contents of the package or can and indicate both the quality and the weight.

Salmon, as perhaps you know, is canned in Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, Oregon and, to a small extent, in Northern California. Nothing but parts of the fish and a little salt go into the can. There are five varieties of salmon, the very ones my neighbor mentioned. They are: Chinook salmon, Red Salmon, Coho salmon, Pink salmon and Chum salmon. The fish having the reddest color usually commands the best price, but all varieties are good eating and are similar in food value. The kind of salmon you purchase should depend on what kind of a dish you intend to make with it. For creamed salmon, the bright color adds to the appearance of the dish and the best flavor is needed. For mixtures like croquettes, salmon loaf or salmon salad where plenty of other seasonings will be added and where the salmon itself is well mixed with other foods, the lower priced varieties are better buys. The value of knowing how to read the label in buying salmon as in buying anything else, is to let the housewife know what she is buying and what she is paying for. Then she can use her own judgment as to whether she thinks it is worth while to buy the most expensive kind.

But I must get back to the different kinds of salmon. Chinook salmon is considered top grade with Red salmon running it a close second because these two kinds have the reddest color. Chinook is also called Royal Chinook or King salmon, as well as Tyee, Quinnet or Spring salmon, while Red salmon may be spoken of as Sockeye, Blueback or Nerka salmon.

The meat of Coho salmon is not so red as the two species just mentioned, nor does it contain as much oil, as you will see if you open and compare two cans of these different kinds. Coho is also called Medium Red or Silver salmon. Pink salmon, known in the trade as Humpback, is usually labeled "Pink." Chum salmon, otherwise known as Keta, Dog or Calico salmon commands the lowest price because of its greyish color. But, when properly canned, it is excellent for salmon loaf or croquettes and makes an inexpensive main dish food. Now, when you find a can marked just "Salmon" without any of these special names you can make a good guess that the fish inside is Chum or low grade salmon of some other species.

Sometimes the labels on Chinook salmon are marked "Spring catch," sometimes Fancy." Both these phrases mean the same thing, because this grade of fish is better in color and richer in oil than the fall catch which is usually marked "Choice salmon." A slight difference in wording you see, may make a difference in the contents of the can.

When you have read the label to learn the variety of the fish, read it again for quantity. Most packages of salmon contain one pound or one-half pound.

Now a word about tuna fish before I read the menu for today. The menu, by the way, is planned to use up the left-over meat from Sunday. I also have a very excellent recipe for a winter pie to give you.



Tuna fish, like salmon, is delicious in creamed or scalloped dishes or in salads. Because of its white color and delicate flavor, it is often called "the chicken of the sea." Both canned tuna and salmon are convenient to have among the supplies on your emergency shelf, ready for a last-minute meal or for unexpected guests.

There are four kinds of tuna fish canned in this country. The Albacore, otherwise known as the Longfin tuna, brings the best price because of the whiteness of its meat. The labels on this variety will probably say "white meat" and also perhaps "finest quality."

Then there is Yellowfin tuna, and Bluefin or Leaping tuna. These sell at about the same price. Their meat is slightly darker than the Albacore, and for this reason is less expensive. The cheapest tuna is the Striped tuna, often labeled simply "Tuna." It has meat with a gamey flavor and the darkest color of any variety. This is packed in oil and salt as all tuna is, but a double amount of salt is added and olive oil is used to fill the cans. Cottonseed oil is used in canning the other kinds of tuna fish.

There are two kinds of light-colored fish often put up in cans with oil and salt, just as tuna is, which are not tuna at all but are often mistaken for it. These are Bonita and Yellowtail fish and the labels most frequently used for them read "White Meat Fish of the Bonita or Yellowtail." If you read your labels carefully, you will not buy Bonita or Yellowtail at Albacore tuna prices.

Now the menu: Scalloped meat dish; Spanish Rice; Cabbage and raw carrot salad; and for dessert, Prune and Apricot pie.

Left-over meat from your Sunday roast, or from practically any cut may be used to make scalloped meat. If you have left-over gravy to add to this dish, so much the better. If not, use white sauce. Beside salt and pepper the seasonings may be scraped onion and parsley. Butter a baking dish and then fill it with alternate layers of diced meat and some sauce or gravy. A layer of buttered crumbs on top protects the meat from overcooking and makes an attractive brown crust. As the meat has already been cooked, use a low temperature for the scallop and be careful not to overcook it which may toughen the meat and spoil the flavor. For success in making this dish remember three points: A low temperature, enough moisture to keep the scallop from being dry and enough seasoning for good flavor.

There is a recipe for Spanish rice on page 22 of your green cookbook, so I shall not spend time on that, except to mention that it is both inexpensive and is what Cousin Susan would call "extra tasty."

Crisp, finely chopped or sliced cabbage may be combined with grated raw carrot, dressed with mayonnaise, French or boiled dressing and served on lettuce to make a winter salad just full of vitamins and minerals.

As for the pie, there are some more minerals, especially iron, in the dried prunes and apricots. The Recipe Lady made this pie just yesterday and gave the Menu Specialist and me each a piece. So when I tell you it is one of

the best pies I ever ate, you'll know I am speaking from first hand knowledge. Of course, I'm prejudiced in favor of dried fruits for winter desserts, because they are so inexpensive and so full of valuable nutrients for their price. And I think this idea of getting variety in flavor by cooking two kinds together is also a good one.

Well, now, the recipe. Eight ingredients for this pie. I'll read them:

1/2 pound apricots	1/2 cup sugar
1/2 pound prunes	1/4 teaspoon salt
2 cups water	1 tablespoon butter or other fat
2 tablespoons cornstarch	Pastry.

Eight ingredients for Apricot and Prune Pie. I'll repeat them: (REPEAT).

Since there is a difference in the sweetness of prunes and apricots, unless you have the sweet variety you may wish to use more sugar.

Wash the prunes and apricots. Cover with the water and soak over night, saving the liquid. In the morning, drain the fruit, remove the seeds from the prunes, and cut the fruit slightly. To the liquid add the cornstarch, sugar, and salt, and cook for a few minutes. Add the fruit and cook until it is heated through. Pour the mixture into a deep pie pan lined with pastry. Dot the top with butter. Moisten the rim of the dough slightly with water. Roll out the dough for the upper crust, allowing about a half inch extra around the edge. Fold the sheet of dough in half, make a few slashes through both thicknesses, near the center, lift onto the pie and spread out over the filling. Press lightly around the edge of the pan and allow enough dough to fold under well. With the tines of a fork press the rim lightly down to the pan.

Bake about 30 minutes in a moderately hot oven (400 degrees F.). Sprinkle the pie with powdered sugar while hot and serve it either hot or cold.

