

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

9
755R
Planning the Modern Home Kitchen

A radio interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Dr. Louise Stanley, Chief of the Bureau of Home Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Tuesday, April 19, 1932.

- - - - -

MISS VAN DEMAN: How do you do, Everybody:

There are two special weeks which we always mark in red on the Household Calendar. They are Better Homes Week, the last of April, and Child Health Week, starting on May Day by proclamation of President Hoover.

Officially Better Homes Week does not begin until next Sunday. But I understand that right now committees are busy in some 8500 communities all over the United States putting the final touches on plans for Better Homes demonstrations. In many places new houses or remodeled houses, all equipped and furnished for the family of moderate means, will be thrown open to visitors. In other places, the demonstrations will center on the care and repair of the house as a means of keeping up property values and giving employment to men out of work.

Perhaps you'll visit some of these Better Homes houses next week. If so, I believe I'm safe in predicting that you'll get many practical ideas from the kitchens. For the comfort and convenience of any house depends in large measure on how well the kitchen is planned and equipped. And some very modern ideas in kitchen planning are being tried out these days.

Now today, Dr. Louise Stanley is here on the other side of the table to give us the benefit of her wide experience in kitchen planning. I've never yet seen Dr. Stanley's desk when there wasn't a house plan or a kitchen plan on it ready to pick up when a free moment comes.

Dr. Stanley, in all your experience with kitchen plans have you found one you could call ideal?

DR. STANLEY: No. There is no such thing as one ideal kitchen plan that can be followed everywhere. To be convenient, the kitchen must suit the needs of the family using it and must fit in with the rest of the house. So it is impossible to give one plan suited to the needs of all. Still the differences are not so great as this might indicate and there are general ideas on planning which I would like to have you check as you go through these kitchens during Better Homes week.

There are certain pieces of equipment required in every kitchen: A stove, a sink with hot and cold water, work tables or work surfaces at satisfactory heights, refrigeration, and adequate storage suitably located and arranged. In many kitchens these pieces of equipment are scattered around the four walls with little or no relation to each other. Now, the modern, well-planned kitchen has them arranged in a step-saving sequence to form a compact work area. I consider the arrangement of the equipment just as important as the selection of the equipment itself, if not more so.

(over)

The preparation of food for cooking comes first. Vegetables are prepared near the sink, short mixing jobs near the stove, longer jobs at a work table which should be located near the main storage center with staple supplies at hand.

The stove makes up the cooking center. It should be within easy reach of the sink and the work tables.

The serving center is a collecting station between the stove, the refrigerator, and the dining room. If there is a pass cupboard between the kitchen and the dining room, the lower shelf, opening to both rooms, becomes the serving center. Where there is no such cupboard, a wheel table makes a desirable serving place and space should be left for it by the side of the stove.

For the cleaning up or dish-washing center, a mechanical dishwasher located away from the main sink is ideal; but few of us can afford this as yet. If there is a separate pantry, I like a dishwashing sink there. The all-purpose sink must be planned for dishwashing. It should always have a drainboard to the left, and since the kitchen may be used by a left-handed person, a sink with a drainboard on each side is desirable. In any case be sure there is space to the right for stacking dishes. Shelves above the sink, either open or closed, whichever you find more convenient, should be available for storing cleaning materials used at the sink, and a wider shelf here for the storage of cereals, double boiler, coffee and coffee pot, is usually found convenient. Small utensils such as dish scrapers, paring knives, and can openers should be hung within easy reach of the sink.

As to the location, you will probably find many of the sinks you see next week right in front of a window. This is all right, provided there is not too much glare. I believe, however, a window in the wall at right angles will give just as much light with less objectionable glare.

Next, if dishes are to be stored in the kitchen, have the storage cabinet above the left drainboard or within reach of it. Dish storage in cabinets accessible from both dining room and kitchen saves steps.

MISS VAN DEKIAN: Doctor Stanley, is the same sequence of work desirable for the rest of the kitchen work? Does it make any difference whether work is routed right or left? The other day, I heard a man joking his wife about her circle-to-the-right kitchen and asking her whether she couldn't make an apple pie just as quickly if she circled to the left.

DR. STANLEY: I've no doubt she could. For food preparation work centers are equally efficient arranged toward left or right, provided they end at the dining room door or the serving window. In clearing away, however, if we are right-handed, work goes more efficiently toward the left.

For most convenient food preparation, the stove should be at right angles to the sink or just across if the kitchen is narrow. A small preparation surface or table adjoining the burner portion of the stove at the same height as the burners is a great convenience. If this table is near the dining room door or pass cupboard, it also makes a good serving table.

Now, as to the height of the working surfaces. Most of the builders are placing sinks now so that dish washing is not the back breaking job it used to

be. The working surface to be used for long mixing jobs, should permit work sitting down and so should have knee space below. Staple supplies should be stored within reach of the worker so seated. This work table should be near both the refrigerator and the stove.

The refrigerator should, from the point of view of convenience, be as near as possible to both work table and stove. It must be remembered, however, that the higher the surrounding temperature the greater the cost of operation of the refrigerator. In most cases the housewife prefers convenience at a slight increase of expense in operation.

Storage space should be adapted to the size of the articles to be stored, and placed, so far as possible, where the particular article will be used. A place for vegetable storage should be provided underneath the drain cabinet at the left of the sink. This should have outside ventilation if possible, controlled to prevent freezing. The large one-purpose movable kitchen cabinet is now being replaced by built-in units placed where needed. The same amount of cabinet space, if arranged with the activities of the kitchen in mind, will make possible much more efficient work. The advantage of the kitchen units is the flexibility in arrangement they make possible, but back of this arrangement should be a carefully worked out plan.

Most important of all is compact arrangement. This is in large part determined by the size and proportion of the room, the location of the door and windows, and the provisions for water and gas. So if you are building it is important to sketch out the plan for the architect in advance and show him just how you want your kitchen equipment arranged before he finally fixes these structural features. In general, you will find that the rectangular kitchen makes possible a more satisfactory arrangement than a square one, and be sure that the width is not too great. So far as possible, keep the work space free from doorways, so as to prevent traffic ways across it. Good ventilation should be provided, and good light at the work surfaces and stove. Artificial lights should be placed high enough and so arranged as not to throw shadows on the working surfaces.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Do these same principles apply in planning farm home kitchens, Dr. Stanley?

DR. STANLEY: Yes, in planning the food preparation center, but there are other activities that must be provided for in the rural kitchen.

Someday I should like to discuss them in detail. Also we haven't touched on the question of the laundry and on play space for the children so that mother can keep an eye on them as she works. Then, too, there's the much discussed dining alcove.

MISS VAN DEMAN: It seems we haven't half told the story of convenient kitchens today. Thank you, Dr. Stanley, for all these helpful suggestions on kitchen planning.

If any of you listening in are rearranging your kitchens to make work casier, we'll be glad to send you a copy of this talk. Also the Bureau of Home Economics has a free bulletin on "Convenient Kitchens". It is copiously illustrated with floor plans for large and small kitchens and with sketches of all the work centers. From start to finish it discusses the high points in kitchen

planning. If you want this information, just write to the Department of Agriculture here in Washington for Farmer's Bulletin 1513, entitled "Convenient Kitchens".

Next week, we'll have another Better Homes talk. Mr. McCrory, chief of the Bureau of Agricultural Engineering, will be here with me to talk about "Repairs on the House". Goodbye for this time.