

CHAPTER IV

THE HOME BREAKFAST

LESSON 17

SUITABLE BREAKFAST DISHES

WHAT do we like for breakfast?

When the Pleasant Valley cooking class began to ask this question, there were so many different answers that the chairman of the luncheon committee for the week was glad that they were not having breakfast at school, because it would be harder than ever to suit everybody.

How can you explain such differences as these? Miss James said that in the warm weather, even when she was teaching, she was satisfied with fruit, boiled eggs, buttered toast, and cocoa or coffee; on a cold morning, in addition to the other things, she liked a large portion of oatmeal or some other cereal with cream or with but-

THE HOME BREAKFAST

ter and sugar; but she seldom ate meat for breakfast. Most of the pupils reported that their fathers were not suited at all with such a meal; that for breakfast they called for ham and eggs, or bacon and eggs, boiled potatoes, and hot biscuit or corn bread, perhaps doughnuts, or even pie. Mollie Stark said the doctor told her father that it was no wonder he had indigestion on Sunday when he ate sausages and buckwheat cakes with maple sirup for breakfast, and did much less work than usual; and that, on a week day in the winter, if he were working in the wood lot at chopping trees, it would be quite another matter.

This led to a very interesting talk about the kind and amount of food for different people, at different times.

Breakfast plans. Several different plans for breakfast were put on the blackboard, somewhat as follows:

BREAKFAST PLANS				
I	II	III	IV	V
Fruit	Fruit	Fruit	Fruit	Fruit
Toast	Cereal	Meat	Cereal	Cereal
Beverage	Toast	Toast	Meat	Meat
	Beverage	Beverage	Toast	Another hot dish
			Beverage	Toast
				Beverage

Miss James explained that bread or biscuit might take the place of toast, and that eggs, milk, or fish could be substituted for meat. Miss James said, also, that in all these plans the foodstuffs are present; that is,

starch and sugar, fat, protein, mineral substances, and water. In breakfast V there is a greater quantity of food all together, and more of the protein and fat than in breakfast I.

How can there be so many kinds of breakfast? They are all real, because somewhere just such meals are being eaten by somebody.

One reason for a light breakfast. When you are traveling on the continent of Europe you have coffee or chocolate, and rolls, with perhaps a little honey, given to you for the first meal of the day; and you soon find it is all you want, because your last meal the evening before was dinner, the heartiest of the day. In some of the cities of our own country, many people eat very little breakfast, and that of a simple kind, because they, too, have had their dinner at night. So, after a heavy meal late in the day, a light breakfast seems to be the natural thing. But that is only one reason for the differences.

Work and eating. There are people in the big city who want a breakfast like IV or V, and who might be willing to go without the fruit for something more "heartly." The man who is working hard with his muscles in the open air eats more and can digest kinds of food that another cannot who is quieter, and who is sitting at a desk all day. Marjorie Allen said that her uncle, who is the cashier of a bank, wants a breakfast something like Miss James's, or like I, II, or III. The amount and kind of physical work that you are to do

after breakfast, then, should affect what you eat. If you yourself should eat sausages and breakfast cakes with sirup for breakfast and then should sit down to work on a problem in square or cube root, you would probably find yourself sleepy. But if you are in good health, if it is a Saturday morning in winter, and if you are going skating, you will be better able to digest such a breakfast.

How does the season of the year affect the meal? In the summer time it is hard to digest sausage and griddle cakes with sirup. Meat is not the best food for hot weather. Yet the farmer needs a hearty breakfast to do a day's work. Give him some cheese. Indeed, in haying time bread and milk would make one of the best of breakfasts, if Father could be persuaded to think so. If he thinks that would not "stay by" him, why not oatmeal, with bread and milk, then?

Size and eating. Who eats more, the baby or a grown person? A strong man, six feet tall, weighing say 180 pounds, must eat more for breakfast than a small person; somewhat as a large stove takes more fuel than a small one. If he is in health and working hard, he can digest food and the body can use food of a kind that gives other people indigestion. But such a man even can make mistakes in his food sometimes.

A few breakfast dishes. Suppose we plan for a breakfast like No. IV, — baked apples, oatmeal with milk and sugar, a meat dish, corn bread, and cocoa or coffee. What shall we have for the meat dish?

Do you know how to make a good corned-beef hash?

Corned-beef hash.

What. Cold corned beef, and cold boiled or baked potatoes.

How much. Equal amounts of both and enough to fill the large frying pan, or "spider," as it is sometimes called, if that is enough for your family.

How to make. Chop the meat and potatoes together; add a little water and a tablespoonful of flour. Mix all well. Heat the pan, and put in enough fat — say beef fat — to cover the bottom of the pan. Turn in the meat and potatoes, and smooth the top. Let it cook where it will brown but not burn. It should be put on when you are beginning to get breakfast. When breakfast is ready, slip a knife around the edge and under the hash. Turn it out on a hot plate or platter. It should have a nice, brown crust. Never mind if the crust breaks, for the hash will have a good flavor, even if it does not look so well.

Another way is to use mashed potato. Then the chopped meat must be mixed with the potato while the latter is hot. This mixture can be baked and served in an earthen dish.

Fish hash.

What. Salt codfish, raw potato; fish shredded, and potato cut into small pieces. 1 or 2 eggs.

How much. Equal parts of the two: 2 cups of codfish, and 2 cups of potato. 1 egg will make a good dishful.

How to make. Have a saucepan ready with enough boiling water in it to cover the potato and fish. Turn into it the fish and potato. Let them cook until the potato is tender — about 20 minutes. Drain off the water, break the egg into the hash, mash, and beat hard for a minute. While the potato and fish are cooking, grease a baking dish. Turn the mixture into the dish, and brown the hash in the oven.

Another way is to cook 2 eggs hard while the potato and fish are cooking, slice them, and put them on top of the hash in the dish in which you will serve it. Do not brown the top. Which of these two ways is quicker?

Creamed dried beef.

Do you ever smoke beef on your farm? You are fortunate, if you do.

What. Dried beef sliced, milk or skimmed milk, beef fat, flour.

How much. Enough beef to nearly fill the frying pan. 2 tablespoonfuls fat, and about 2 tablespoonfuls flour. Enough milk to cover the beef, a cup or more.

How to make. Put the beef in the pan. Pour on hot water and let it stand a few minutes on the stove. Pour off the water and let the beef steam off for a minute. Add the fat and stir until the fat begins to "sizzle." Shake on the flour, from a shaker if you have one, and stir again until the flour is mixed in evenly. Pour in the milk, cold; stir once more. Let the pan stand back on the stove, stirring once in a while until the milk is thickened. Serve as it is, or on toast.

"Frizzled" beef with egg.

How to make. Do everything as you did with the creamed dried beef, through stirring in the fat. Then add 2 or 3 beaten eggs; stir very fast, — *scramble*, in fact, — until the egg is cooked; then serve at once.

We shall find some other breakfast dishes farther on in the book.

How can we make it easy to get breakfast? We have said nothing about Mother, so far, in our talk about breakfast, but she is probably the one who is interested in preparing the meal and in having it ready quickly.

One way to save time in the morning is to make some things partly ready the night before.

Read the two recipes for hash again, and see what could be done beforehand. These recipes and the two for dried beef are planned to use as few utensils as possible. This saves dish washing. In the lessons on cereals we shall find there are other ways of saving time for Mother in the early morning.

Making coffee for breakfast. Many grown people think that they cannot do without the cup of fragrant coffee in the morning. Miss James explained to the cooking class that, although young people should not drink it themselves, they ought to know how to make it well for other people. She advised them to use, instead of true coffee, a hot drink made from grain roasted and ground.

What is cereal coffee? Mollie Stark's grandmother told her that crust coffee could be made from the old-fashioned brown bread, which is a mixture of rye and Indian meal, sweetened with a little molasses. The crusts should be dried in the oven, made fine with a rolling pin, and kept dry in a jar, ready for use. The beverage is made by putting a cupful of these crumbs into a coffeepot, pouring on a quart of boiling water, and letting the pot stand at the back of the stove for about half an hour.

Very few people make this kind of brown bread nowadays, but we may still have cereal coffee. If you have grain on the farm take equal parts of popcorn, shelled

rye, and wheat grains, roast them slowly in a pan in the oven until they are brown all the way through, keep the parched grain in tight jars, and grind in the coffee grinder just as you would coffee grains. A little practice will tell you just how much water to use to a cupful of the ground grain. Gentle boiling for half an hour gives a beverage of very good flavor. This homemade cereal coffee is less costly than the kinds that may be purchased.

What is real coffee? The coffee bean comes from a tree growing in tropic countries, which first came from Arabia. Now most of our coffee comes from Brazil, from Central America, and from the West Indies, although we still use the names Mocha and Java. The berries are cured



Courtesy of the Bramhall Dean Co.
FIG. 68. — A pot for boiling coffee and a pot for drip coffee.

and roasted before we grind them for making. Has your mother ever thought of buying green coffee by the bag from some wholesale firm and roasting it in a slow oven from time to time? If this seems too much trouble, she can buy good coffee, already roasted, from the wholesale dealer, for not more than 19 or 20 cents a pound. It is much better to buy it this way than ground in tins, for you will have a better flavor when you grind it just before using.

Coffee contains two substances that are not especially good for us. One is caffeine, very much like the theine



Courtesy of Landers, Frary and Clark.

FIG. 69.—A coffee percolator.

of tea, and the other is a form of tannic acid. While we may like the flavor of coffee boiled a long time, it is much better to boil it only a minute or two, or to make drip coffee. The long boiling draws out the harmful tannic acid. Also the liquid coffee should be poured off the grounds at once. Here are pictures (Figs. 68 and 69) that show the different kinds of coffeepots. In the "percolator" the water boils up through the coffee; in the drip coffeepot the water is poured on from above and slowly drips through the coffee grounds. *If you buy a percolator, the directions usually come with it.*

Boiled coffee.

What. Ground coffee, water, cold or boiling, white of egg or eggshell for boiled coffee. The coffee should be ground to medium fineness for boiled coffee; to a finer powder for the percolated and drip coffee.

How much. One part of coffee to 5 or 6 of water, depending upon the strength desired. One eggshell or half the white of an egg, to 1 cup of ground coffee.

How to make. Measure the coffee and water. Stir the white or the shell of an egg with the coffee, adding a little of the water. Put this into the pot. Add the remaining water *cold*. Stir thoroughly. Allow the water to rise slowly to

the boiling point and to boil one minute. Remove the pot from the fire. Pour in a small amount of cold water. Then let the coffee stand for five minutes or until the grounds settle. During the cooking close the lip with clean, soft paper, if the lip has no lid. The actual boiling is continued for a brief period only. Coffee made by this method is considered by some people to have a flavor lacking in drip or percolator coffee. The egg is added to clear the coffee. Pour off the liquid coffee from the grounds, and keep hot until it is time to serve it.

A *second method* differs from this in that the water is poured on at the boiling temperature, allowed to reach the boiling point in two or three minutes, and boiled for five minutes. The first gives uniformly better results. It is true, however, that different kinds of coffee need different treatment. There is room here for much experimenting.

Drip coffee.

How to make. In this method the coffee is put in the upper part of the pot, and the water passes slowly through, collecting below in the pot from which it is served. Stand the lower part of the pot in a pan of hot water, or where it will keep hot. Measure and bring the water to the boiling point. Heat the ground coffee slightly, put it in the upper section of the pot, and pour on the water very slowly. Of course the water is not actually boiling when it touches the coffee. If the liquid coffee is not strong enough, pour it from the lower part and pass it through the grounds again.

EXERCISES AND PROBLEMS

1. Take one of the breakfast plans most nearly like the breakfast you have at home, and make several breakfast menus, writing in the names of the different dishes, as is done on page 147.
2. Look up the meaning of the word "menu."

3. Explain, as you would to your mother and father, why fat pork would be better for breakfast in winter than in summer.

4. When you are quiet, why do you need different foods from those when you are exercising all day?

5. Here is a question that you perhaps cannot answer yet; it will set you thinking. If you have slept out of doors, are you hungrier in the morning than if you had slept in a closed room all night?

6. Explain why coffee should be poured off the coffee grounds at once.

7. Why is drip coffee supposed to be less harmful than boiled coffee?

LESSON 18

BREAKFAST CEREALS

WHY are breakfast cereals a valuable food?

It is our custom to use a cereal¹ for breakfast, more often than at other meals. For this reason the name "breakfast food" is sometimes given to ground cereals. If we have learned to like these grain foods, we shall find them good for supper, and sometimes for the midday meal as well.

If you have read about life in Scotland, you know that oatmeal in porridge is one of the dishes on which the Scotch grow strong and efficient. Our forefathers found the American Indians using corn; and they themselves learned to grind the corn and to make the meal into "hasty pudding," or "mush," over the open fire, in a kettle hanging on the crane.

¹ "Cereal" is derived from the Latin word "cerealis," pertaining to Ceres, the Roman goddess of agriculture.

Nowadays, we use not only the oatmeal and corn meal, but many varieties of "flaked" and rolled grains, such as wheat, barley, and even rye. We raise rice in some of our southern states; this adds one more valuable food to the wealth of our supply.



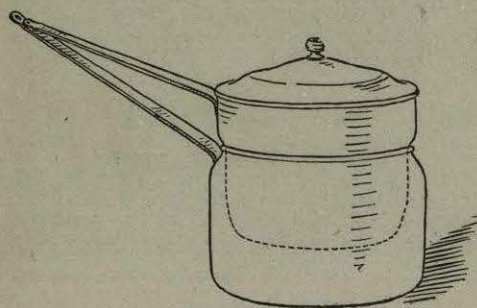
Courtesy of Miss Jessie D. Ebert.

FIG. 70. — Cooking a cereal at the Big Tree School.

Why are cereals valuable to us? Recall what was said about wheat in the lessons on bread, and you can answer this question. Ground cereals are easy to prepare for eating, and this makes them welcome in a busy home.

Ready cooked cereals. The ready-to-eat breakfast cereal is a quickly prepared food for the first meal of the day. A few of these are made in clean places, but they are sometimes manufactured from poor grain. The grit that we sometimes find, shows a lack of cleanliness in the process. It is a question, too, whether or not the starch has been heated long enough, and whether these prepared cereals can be chewed enough to make the grain digestible. It is better not to give them to young children. For older people, these prepared foods add variety to the diet, but they usually cost more than the home-cooked breakfast foods, even if one counts the cost of fuel.

What happens to the cereal when we cook it? Taste a grain of raw oatmeal, and you can mention several changes that the cooking makes. The raw grain is



Courtesy of Ohio State University.
From Extension Bulletin, Vol. IX, No. 4.

FIG. 71.—A double boiler is used for steaming cereals. The lower part should be one third full of water.

hard; the cooked grain soft. You notice a change in the flavor; and, when you look at the cooking oatmeal, you see that it is thickening as it cooks. Remember what we said about the starch in the potato, recall the way in which laundry starch thickens, and you can explain this change. These changes are brought about

by moisture, heat, and *time*. Our great-grandmothers made "hasty" pudding, but it is better for us to take plenty of time in cooking our grains. We find two kinds of cereals on the market, — the flaked and the granular. Weigh them, and you find the granular the heavier. Which will take more water? We need enough water to soften the cereal, but not too much. If the cooked cereal is very stiff, use more water next time; if it is too thin, use less water.

Cooking cereals.

What and how much. 1 part, by measure, of flaked cereal to 2 or 3 of water. 1 part granular cereal to 3 or 4 of water. 1 cup of dry cereal will serve three or four people. Sump, cracked wheat, and coarse corn meal will take from 4 to 6 parts of water. Salt. A tablespoonful to a quart of water is an average amount.

Utensils. A measuring cup; a double boiler; a fork.

A picture of a double boiler is shown in Fig. 71. Or you can set one saucepan into another larger one, putting something in the bottom for the smaller pan to stand upon.

How to make. Measure the cereal and water; put the water into the inner part of the double boiler with the salt. Have the lower part of the boiler ready, about half full of hot water; place the inner boiler directly upon the stove or over the flame. When the water is boiling rapidly, shake the cereal into the water from a cup *so slowly that the water does not stop boiling*. This is the first secret of a well-cooked cereal. The rapidly boiling water keeps the grains of cereal in motion. Thus they do not stick to the vessel nor to each other, and the heat reaches the starch in the grains equally.

If the grains begin to settle, shake the vessel gently; but do not stir, even with a fork. Do this for about five minutes, or until you see a thickening of the mass, — so much that the separate grains do not settle. If toward the end of this stage there is danger of sticking, *lift* the mass with the fork, but do not stir it, as stirring will break the grains. This first process opens the starch grains. Place the inner part of the boiler in the outer part over boiling water and allow the cooking to continue for *at least* one hour. For this is the second secret of the perfect cereal, — a long cooking that softens the fiber and develops flavor. One cereal, advertised as being cooked in three minutes, is hardly eatable after that length of time, but is delicious at the end of two hours. If you have a fireless cooker, put the cereal, in the double boiler, into the cooker overnight for the second stage.

The uses of cold cereal.

Never throw away cooked cereals. The cold cereal is useful in many ways.

(a) Mold in small cups with dates or other fruit, and serve with sugar and cream for supper, — or for luncheon at school.

(b) Cool corn-meal mush in a flat dish, cut it in slices when cold, and brown the slices in a frying pan with beef fat, or a butter substitute. Serve with sugar, molasses, or sirup for breakfast or supper.

(c) Rice or hominy may be mixed with a beaten egg, molded into small cakes, and browned either in the frying pan or in the oven.

(d) A small remaining portion of any cereal may be used to thicken soup.

(e) Any cooked cereal may be used in muffins or even in yeast bread.

Using Indian corn. As Americans we should be very proud of our Indian corn. The early settlers found it grown by the Indians. We have improved it, learned how to cultivate it, and made it one of our great crops. Have you heard of the "Corn Clubs," for boys and for girls, too? Do you know that the same grain is found in other parts of the world, where the sun is hot enough to ripen it? It grows in South America, and it is an abundant food in Italy, where the people make a delicious porridge, "polenta." What is there more beautiful than a field of waving corn? It might well be planted for its beauty in the flower garden, as it is sometimes in England.

Corn products. You can make a list of the different kinds of corn and some of the corn products, can you not? Sweet corn, popcorn, and field corn, yellow and white. The cattle would call the stalks or leaves a corn product. The poultry like their corn whole sometimes. We prefer meal, or hominy, or samp. Have you ever heard of "hulled corn"? This was much used in early days. The hard ripe kernels were soaked in a weak solution of lye (wood ashes) until the "hull" came off, and then the whole grains were cooked.

Something more about corn meal. We have two colors in corn meal, yellow and white. Some people prefer one and some the other. There are also two ways of grinding: the old method, between stones; and the new process, by rollers. The old method seems to give a better flavor, because the oil of the germ is in

the meal; but the new process meal keeps better. All the old-fashioned rules for cooking Indian meal have to be changed for the new kind, as the latter needs more wetting and more fat added. Perhaps you know where your meal is ground, and can tell if it is new or old fashioned. If it comes in a box with a label, it is *probably* new process.

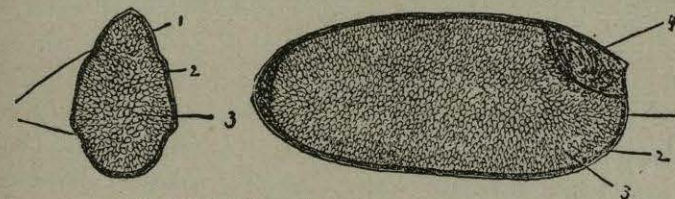
Corn or Indian meal mush.

How to cook. This is cooked by the same method as the other cereals, except that the amount of water is larger and the first boiling should continue longer. The meal must be scattered slowly into the boiling water, or else be mixed first with cold water, as it lumps very easily. The second stage of the process should continue several hours.

A word about rye and rye meal. We Americans are forgetting to use rye as our forefathers used it. This is a great pity. Rye is a most wholesome grain, ground into meal and made into "mush." Mixed with corn meal it gives us delicious yeast bread and quick breads. If rye is raised in your neighborhood, do supply yourselves with rye meal, and use it. Rye flour is easier to find for sale than rye meal, but it cannot be used in quite the same way. The rye flour will make a yeast bread.

Cooking rice. Rice varies very much in quality and in the shape of the grain. Louisiana and Chinese rice are among those that have a firm and large grain, keeping its shape well when cooked. Inferior varieties

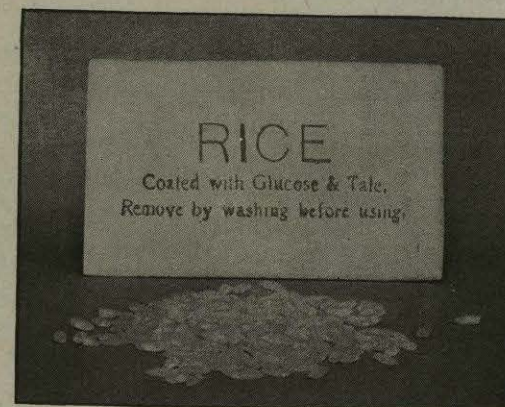
become too soft, and the finished product is pasty and poor in color and flavor. Much is said at present about



From Hart's "Cereals in America." Published by the Orange Judd Company.

FIG. 72.—Sections of a rice kernel: 1, bran coat; 2, aleurone layer, containing valuable mineral salts; 3, cells packed with starch grains; 4, germ, containing fat and mineral matter.

the harmful effect of the polishing process upon the quality of the rice. An unpolished rice may sometimes



Courtesy of New York College of Agriculture at Cornell University.

FIG. 73.—Pure food regulations require the dealer to label coated rice.

be found on the market, brownish in color and with a good flavor.