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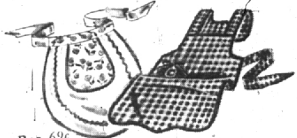
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THE COMMUTER'S WIFE

Left Over Foods Create a Problem For the Homemaker

By HELEN BRUNSON
Special Writer For The Birmingham Eccentric

You open the refrigerator and are confronted by seven string beans, two boiled potatoes and a baked apple—all strictly past their prime. Left-overs. And what to do with them?

The potatoes could have been used in patties, by adding egg and grated onion and frying in butter or margarine, if you'd done it yesterday. But now all these items will have to go into the garbage.

When they do, most housewives feel a twinge of conscience in these days of high food prices. Figured in pennies and nickels, the total of such waste in a year might be something important—an endowment policy for one of the children, maybe.

HOMEMAKERS have a number of ways to overcome this waste. One is to freeze the left-over vegetables, hoping to use them in stews, etc., later on. But these wizened-up bits look even worse, when frozen.

Home economics people tell us that there is a loss of vitamins when food is processed so many times. A second cooking or even a moderately long exposure to air, cuts down vitamin value.

Another, is to be a good guesser and estimate the amount your family will eat at a given meal. But you have to be a super-cook and psychologist to do that, and most mothers would rather have left-overs than have too little on the table.

IF YOU BRING out the left-overs the very next day, the chance of selling them to the family at lunch is much better than if you keep them longer.

Another way to get rid of them, other than the garbage route, is to put them out on the kitchen table in the evening, after the manner of some sorority houses, hoping they'll be eaten.

Salads are a good way to get rid of dills and dabs of fruit, vegetables and fowl, without vitamin-destroying re-cooking. Left-over cake can be made into a cottage-pudding, by covering it with a thickened sauce flavored with fresh lemon-juice. Or make left-over sponge-cake into a Spanish-cream sponge.

USE LEFT-OVER bread for French toast, croutons, bread pudding or stuffing for pork-chops or fowl. Left-over egg-white will make meringues, boiled frostings or foamy desserts.

Fruits, left over, can go into fruit desserts, and dolled up with whipped cream.

Food specialists caution, though, against putting new food with old to make too much—lest you have left-over left-overs. But—the one sure way not to have left-overs, is to have a 14-year-old boy in the house!



Helen Brunson

'Coons Outsmart Even Humans, Nickel Advises

"Smart as a fox" may be a flattering enough compliment to most people, but naturalist Walter P. Nickel, Cranbrook Institute of Science, would rather be called "smart as a 'coon."

Raccoons are smarter than foxes any day, or night, according to Nickel. They can think up as many tricks as a fox in getting away from hunters and dogs, and are much better at exploiting mankind for food and shelter.

One 'coon ruse when fleeing a pack of dogs is to climb one side of a tree and make a long leap down the other side. Following the scent to the tree, the pack mulls about in confusion until one of the hunters and dogs, and are fans out and picks up the new trail. By then, Mr. Coon has gained valuable yardage.

BUT THE MEANEST of all 'coon deceptions is to lead a pack into a lake or stream. Being as much at home in water as on land, the coon soon maneuvers himself on top of the lead dog and jumps from back to back until he reaches shore, leaving a frantic and half-drowned mess of rangers.

Left to his native forests and streams, the raccoon is content to eat a variety of things, from small mammals and birds, fish, crayfish, frogs and reptiles. He also likes to raid stands of sweet corn in the milk stage. But if suburban areas spread into his forest, he is willing to change his eating habits and is less likely than most other animals to move away. This adaptability to change is another measure of his intelligence, according to Nickel.

Suburban 'coons learn quickly how to handle all kinds of garbage cans. They merely push over the standing type and roll it around until the lid is dislodged. Sunken cans with heavy step-pedal lids present more of a challenge, but are by no means impossible to deft 'coon paws.

SO FAR NICKEL has no evidence of 'coons picking locks, but he finds them skillful enough at avoiding traps. "Live" traps, made of wire mesh arranged with doors at two ends and a balanced trigger in the center, are used by conservationists to catch small animals alive so that they can be re-

leased where they will be less of a nuisance.

Most animals will enter one of the two openings and touch food on the trigger, which closes both doors. Instead of entering 'coons reach their monkey-like paws through the mesh sides. They seldom get the bait, but they almost never get caught either, unless the trigger is protected with a finer mesh.

Being semi-hibernators, 'coons are less active in the winter months. Some of them have found, however, that a chimney can be much cozier for winter sleep than a hollow tree. One harried householder called Nickel to investigate strange snoring noises in a little-used fireplace, and he found not only a sleepy mamma coon but a brood of squeaking little ones tucked in a hidden cranny.

A TELEVISION owner ran an aerial to his roof by way of an unused chimney, only to find he had provided a 'coon highway. The aerial's insulation was soon worn off, resulting in a short.

Pointing out that killing coons is illegal in many communities, Nickel urges householders bothered by them to contact county conservation officers. Although 'coons make excellent pets, they cannot be kept in captivity legally without permission of a conservation officer.

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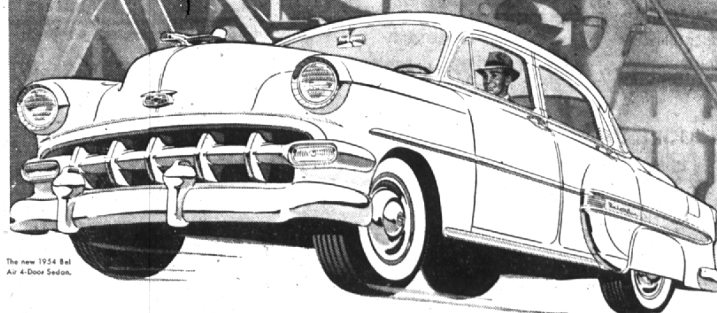
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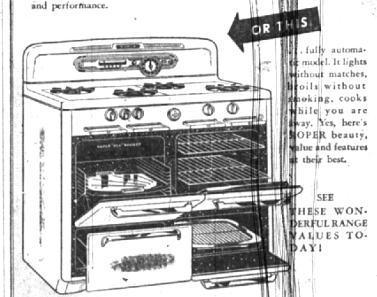
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