The Art of Garnishing Foods

By MILDRED B. ELDER

Good pictures deserve good frames, and the success of dinners depend largely upon the way in which they are put on to the table. Linens, glassware, china and silver all are necessary accompaniments and in the arrangement of foods in an attractive way, the artistic taste of the hostess is shown.

In the modern table service garnishing forms an important part, for the eye must be satisfied as well as the palate and the most delicious dish may not be enjoyed if its appearance is against it, for garnishes have a usefulness beyond their aesthetic value. A poor appetite is often tempted by a tastefully garnished dish when the same food of variously served would seem quite unpalatable.

Good food attractively served and garnished adds much to our sense of well being; there is no need to spend much time, money or materials doing it. Just a little care—that's all!

It is a good thing to remember that a garnish is in reality just what the word implies—a trimming. It puts on the finishing touch that makes all the difference in the world in the effect of a dish. Then, too, it has the virtue of economy to recommend it for many leftover fruits and vegetables make attractive, edible garnishes. They need no apology for themselves and they not only hold their own but they throw a glamour of attractiveness over the foods which they garnish.

Vegetables and fruits form the principal garnishes for most dishes. It is evident, however, that in garnishing very much must depend on the good taste of the cook and the materials at her command. A general idea of various garnishes is given here but their adaptation must be left to the taste of those employing them.

We have grown accustomed to the elaborately decorated "planked" dishes which are equally attractive whether actually cooked on a plank or merely placed there for serving with attractive border arrangements of flags and other garnishes. The housewife who makes a plaything of her pastry-bag of heavy duck with an assortment of tubes, can work miracles with mere mashed potatoes. She may make a border by using the plain tubes, or, when the proper tube is inserted, lovely potato roses will bloom. These roses are very decoratively arranged on a platter; they may have a sprinkle of paprika on them or perhaps a sprig of parsley on one side. The creations from the pastry-bag may be sent to the table at once or they may be placed in the oven until they become a delicate brown color, assuring the hostess that the food will be piping hot. Not only is the pastry-bag adept in making attractive potato forms for it is equally as effective in decorating cakes. All sorts of flower forms may spring into being on the birthday cake if the frosting is forced thru a pastry-bag.

Potatoes may appear in many other attractive fashions with the help of tiny French vegetable cutters. They will cut potatoes, carrots and beets into any fanciful shape the garnisher may desire. Lat-tis potatoes are made with a simple cutter which may be obtained at most department stores. These make an effective garnish when the potato is desired in smaller amounts.

Potato or other vegetable balls known as "roulettes" are then piled cannon-ball fashion on the platter with the food they garnish. A butter and parsley sauce makes these seem more complete.

A few left-over carrots or beets when sliced or diced and piled in an original fashion around the steak will surprise the family as well as provide a variety of flavors for the meal.

Stuffed baked potato or potato nests served either as a container for creamed peas, carrots or creamed dried beef or filled with brown gravy make a most complete accompaniment for chops or a roast. Potatoes are not the only containers of this sort for boiled beets or turnips hollowed out are equally as good when filled with creamed cabbage or other leafy vegetables. Medium-sized onions stuffed with creamed mushrooms or chopped ham or some other left-overs make a tasty garnish for the onion loving family, while a single glazed onion with a top-knot of parsley, or fried onion rings will be sure of a welcome.

Many vegetables, such as peas, canned corn, or spinach, that do not keep their shape easily when used as a garnish are successful in molds or when served on triangles of toast or pastry. Portions of vegetables that might otherwise be discarded can sometimes be utilized as an effective garnish, thus increasing the quantity of the dish as well as its attractive appearance.

Lettuce ribbons are another bit of garnish. The large outer leaves, unsuited for use for salads, are rolled tightly and cut with a sharp knife. The result is tiny green ribbons, that can be used to garnish cold or hot meats or perhaps salads, trailing their brightness here and there or in mounds, according to the artistic idea of the garnisher.

Celery seems especially adapted to garnishing salads, and perhaps stuffed with butter with roast fowl than crisp celery. It is originally cut when in pieces two or three inches long, slitt down at either end and allowed to stand in cold water. After standing for a short time the ends become curled. This is always appropriate for vegetable and fish salads and is good accompanied by green or ripe olives. Celery is sometimes cut in pieces about three inches long and filled with pimento cheese, making a nice addition for certain salads and meat dishes. Economy may be practiced in the use of olives for they are effective as a garnish for many things when sliced or when cut in spirals. The latter is accomplished by cutting around the olive until it is entirely removed from the pit, making a tiny spiral—it makes a different sort of decoration for fish or for an individual salad.

There are many ways to use the tomato or “love apple” as a garnish. They are all simple and furnish excellent suggestions for the housewife who has the good fortune to have at her command a garden with an ample supply of ripe tomatoes that must be disposed of before the first frost.

A slice of grilled tomato makes an appropriate trimming for broiled liver topped with tiny strips of bacon and bits of parsley. Slices of tomato browned in a little butter may be arranged across the front of the steak plank, giving a touch of color as well as a piquant taste. Raw tomatoes are one of the most pleasing garnishes that we have for with such a touch of brightness any dish gains a festive air. Whether sliced, quartered or left whole and perhaps stuffed with celery and cucumber mixture they are equally as effective a garnish for the

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summer meal of sliced tongue or jellied tongue may tempt some members of the family to partake of a poached egg reposing on a spinach nest. Left-over dishes can be topped with a small piece of steak or a small roast will serve several accompaniments. Small yellow string beans as a garnish, and potato roses, on either side stuffed green peppers and at the tiny spaces left at the ends of ideas in platter arrangements if one will cultivate her originality in this art. Red color schemes are always pleasing and afford a variety of foods. Breaded pork chops, veal birds or lamb roasts are lovely with stuffed baked potatoes filled with creamed peas and red cinnamon apples to adorn the platter. These apples are cooked in a thin syrup to which candy cinnamon drops have been added. If they do not give enough color, a few drops of red vegetable coloring may be added. If not so much apple is desired and still the red color and cinnamon flavor seem best, the apples may be sliced and cooked in syrup until they are transparent. Molds of cranberry jelly, tiny pickled beets, cubes of red aspic jelly and radish roses all help carry out a red color scheme, while nothing is more attractive to top off the fruit cocktail or dessert than a large red cherry.

A most novel garnish for pork chops or veal cutlets is a row of fat spley prunes. They add a delicious flavor to the meal and make a unique garnish.

Tiny radish roses, nestled in a spray of parsley are especially worthy of notice. Place three of these roses on an individual plate the next time you serve a buffet luncheon, and place beside them a spoonful of salad and a sandwich.

All of these suggested garnishes are what are classed as "edible" and they form the most interesting group. Alto there are many other forms which are equally effective for certain types of foods. Natural flowers are used as a garnish especially for desserts. A single rose, a daisy or other flower which will carry out the decoration or color scheme is always effective on a dessert plate or alongside the macaroons. Autumn leaves are a beautiful garnish for the October dinner party, as is also holly or mistletoe to trim the plum pudding or Christmas dessert.

Bavarian cream and some fancy cakes make a lovely picture when smilax or some dainty green vine is twined around them.

After you once get the "garnish habit," rarely will you never stop for you will become so fascinated in serving your foods attractively and with originality that it will play as important a part in your planning as does the real food itself.

**HARRIET SCHLEITER WINS PRIZE FOR MAY FETE THEME**

"The Return of Spring," by Harriet Schleiter, is the story chosen by the Woman's ten dollar prize offered for the most attractive, original and suitable theme to be worked out in the presentation of the May Fete, May 11, in connection with "Yeishah."

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