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The Iowa Homemaker

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Built-in Features

In the small space allotted to the kitchen of our newer houses we find that every inch must lead itself to one of several uses if the room is going to be a truly efficient work shop. Sometimes the carpenter can help to utilize the space to better advantage by suggesting or even building certain pieces of equipment into the wall, leaving more floor space for the equipment which must be portable. Almost invariably we find, also, that the built-in kitchen is more easily kept clean and orderly than the one in which everything is movable.

We are all quite familiar with the built-in cupboards, cabinets, and ironing boards, which have proved their worth in our own kitchens. Perhaps there are other devices which may be equally valuable.

“Shall we have breakfast in the kitchen?” This question suggests a definite saving of steps to the homemaker. If there is a breakfast nook adjoining the kitchen the question will never arise, the answer will be taken for granted. If there is no such nook and the kitchen is too small to allow the addition of a small table and chairs to the equipment it may be possible to install a small folded table, which comes out of the wall and is large enough for the service of four persons. This table may even be folded into the same cabinet with the ironing board and the ironing board may then be used to support it. Folding benches may also be built in the walls of a new house or be easily installed in the walls of an old one. It is possible to place both the folding table and benches under a group of windows, making a most pleasant place for serving the first meal of the day. This arrangement also adds an extra table in the kitchen which may be used when more working surface is needed. The folding benches and table may also be combined with the storage cupboard to advantage. When folded, they appear to be only thick cupboard doors, wherever it seems to be most economical. The special equipment has to be purchased; the added convenience may make it quite worth while. There is also the possibility of having the ironing board placed in the drawer of the breakfast nook table. This unfolds and locks itself securely in place, offering usually a very pleasant place to work and the breakfast table is an excellent surface on which to place the folded linens.

The built-in features do not need to be limited to the kitchen, however. For the storage of linens upstairs a cupboard or closet, with shelves, having doors which open into both the bathroom and hall is convenient. There may also be several drawers below the shelves which open only from the hall.

Sometimes we find the clothes chute is accessible by opening the door into the linen closet. If there is a built-in dressing table or chest of drawers in the bathroom or hall the lower drawer may have a door hinged at the bottom which, when opened, reveals the clothes chute. If this chute goes through one of the kitchen walls, and has an opening there, it will give maximum service in the disposal of soiled linens.

A small closet, tightly hinged and hermetically sealed may be found in some of our very up-to-date homes. This furnishes an airtight storage space for the more valuable woolens, and furs, as well as garments which are seldom worn.

The possibilities for built-in features in either a new home or one which is being remodelled are almost unlimited. A few ideas, well worked out, will bring added convenience, and make a more compact and livable house.

Experiments With Pressure Cookers

A research experiment on the operation of the pressure cooker in canning has recently been completed at Iowa State College by Dr. F. Mabel Nelson, head of the foods department, Gail M. Redfield, and Gertrude Sunderlin, students in research.

Housewives have been urged to process non-acid vegetables and meat in the pressure cooker, but many of them have had trouble with food spoilage by following this method. Bulletins give widely varying directions as to the use of the cooker. Some recommend that the petcock be kept closed all the time, while others direct that it be closed 3 or 5 minutes after steam issues forth. In this experiment tests were made to determine the relation between the temperature of the retort and the time of closing the petcock.

When the petcock was closed 5 to 7 minutes after the steam appeared, the temperature of the retort varied 4 degrees Fahrenheit from that of the atmosphere. When closed 3 minutes after the appearance of steam, it varied 5 degrees Fahrenheit, and when closed thrice, it differed by 30 degrees Fahrenheit.

This wide range in temperature from 4 degrees to 39 degrees Fahrenheit, the result of the manipulation of the petcock, indicates the reason that some housewives have been unsuccessful. From observations recorded, the closest agreement between the theoretical and the actual temperatures was obtained by leaving the petcock open 7 minutes after the appearance of steam. The test also suggests the need of a thermometer on the pressure cooker to record the temperature of the retort.

Strawberries All Season

Consumers' advertising has made it possible for you to have fresh fruit the year around. For years frozen fruit has been sold to soda fountain management in thirty pound cans or in barrels. Today, fresh strawberry shortcakes can be as popular as ice cream. Quite by accident the possibilities of the frozen fruit industry were discovered. The story of how we have obtained this inexpensive, winter delicacy is centered about the everyday happenings of a Boston grocerman. He had purchased a can of fruit which was to be made into jam. A lady customer, who was in the store when the can was being opened, tasted the fruit. She advertised the product to her friends, who, in turn, advertised to their friends. As a result of the demand for frozen fruit by these individuals, the Fairmont Creamery Co. has put on the market cans in one and two pound sizes.

Fresh, choice fruit is cleaned, sweetened, packed in paraffin paper cartons and frozen in the container. Acid fruits require considerable study to determine the exact amount of sugar necessary. In the case of strawberries one part of cane sugar is added to three parts of fruit. Twenty-four to thirty hours at zero temperature is sufficient for freezing. A barrel of fruit requires five days for freezing. Long processing as low temperature has the same effect on taste and appearance as long processing at high temperature. The fruit is preserved for any length of time at thirty to forty degrees temperature.