

1932

Mayonnaise or Turtle Soup...

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Mayonnaise or Turtle Soup . . .

By Jean B. Guthrie, '31

Just Ask the Foods Editor

TWO years ago I was in the final throes of being a senior. That involves much dashing about to assorted business meetings of doubtful importance, shuddering over "practical" exams and initiating spinach into the lives of objecting youngsters. I was eventually stamped and filed on the shelf marked "Recent Graduates—No Experience."

One year ago I was tucked away snugly in a New York office writing radio script and book reviews and running magazine departments on good health and better babies. Luck and a volley of letters had produced the miracle.

Today a grand break and the good fortune to be so trained at Iowa State as to be able to swing it, has landed me in what I believe to be one of the hardest and most fascinating types of jobs open to scribbling "home ees"—newspaper foods editing.

NINE months ago when I came to Chicago I was very green—the first foods editor I had ever met. If I had thought about them at all, it was to wonder what kind of animals they might be, whether they ever ran out of recipes, where they got all their funny ideas, how they knew everything they told people, and in general what they did with their time.

I've discovered that foods editors are very much like other folks, though sometimes a bit plumper, due to the temptations of their profession. They obtain recipes from their own testing kitchens, from food experts in countless commercial concerns and from contributing readers. They dig ideas out of magazines and books, from the chef at the corner hotel, the troubles of writers-in, jaunts through the markets and from the bucket loads of mail which drift in every week.

Next, they *don't* know all they tell folks—not, that is, before they get the S. O. S. They couldn't, no matter how

long they studied. The questions are too utterly diverse and specialized. But what they do know is where that information is to be found. And that, if it isn't bromidic to say so, is the reason they went to college.

BUT about the job. Every week brings something under nine newspaper columns of food chats and recipes to be written. They're great fun. I'm lucky in being able to choose my own subjects, dig up my own material and write my own style. I even split an infinitive now and then, but my copy reader generally nails it. That makes about 6,500 words to tap out each week.



Jean Guthrie, former Homemaker editor, writes foods articles for the Chicago Tribune under the name of Mary Meade.

Then there are the pictures to be taken. The Sunday articles are usually illustrated. That calls for a seance in the apartment kitchen and a visit from the Tribune photographer. Food pictures always seem to appeal to photographers. The rewards are frequently so tempting.

Next, letters. "I have live turtles. How do I get soup?" That was from a man. Then, "What happened to my mayonnaise when it curdled?" "Why did my bread spoil in the middle?" "How do you get grease off the sofa?" "How shall I feed my family of seven on charity rations and no income?" Why, when, what and how much? These and many hundreds of other requests for menus and recipes arrive each month to be answered either by letter or

through the daily column. And the things one learns!

There's also a busy telephone to attend all day long, but that is the job of a marvel of a secretary who holds down the office desk during the day while I am at home pounding out "copy" in my studio-office-apartment.

AND then there are talks—to women's church groups, social centers, local home economics clubs and city journalism classes. These are great fun and make you glad you quaked through a course or two of public speaking. Sometimes there are food shows at local fairs to judge, table setting contests to make decisions over, foreign chefs to interview for stories, and new products and equipment to try out for producers.

Last fall for three weeks there was the pleasure of talking to about 5,000 women for a few minutes each day at the huge cooking school demonstration offered to Chicagoland women by the Chicago Tribune.

Today our latest baby is radio work. That means a new and interesting job to add to the things that keep me busy. It consists of the preparation and broadcasting of a 15-minute chat to homemakers every Saturday morning over station WGN. The subject—tips on marketing and best buys for the weekend. It's really loads of fun, good experience and surprisingly enough not scareful at all as long as one can keep frogs out of the throat.

NO job is all cake and candy and smooth sailing. Mine isn't. There are times when a gal shakes in her oxfords—when inadvertently she has panned or praised something or somebody through the column and thunder has rolled up above, or when she wonders desperately, as the last edition is being "put to bed," whether she really did put the pumpkin in the pumpkin pie. And now and again there are times—in the wee

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Did You Know That . . .

Run-proof hosiery has been announced by two prominent hosiery manufacturers? But that no satisfactory run-proof mesh has yet been found?

Stitched belts and cuffs are good on chiffon dresses?

Organdy, (often embroidered) guimpes are worn with frocks which are formal when the guimpe has been removed?

Black evening dresses with white chiffon petals at the shoulders are new for spring?

Scarfs fill in the neckline of coats and suits to give that "very high" appearance?

White cotton knitted collars and cuffs on dark woolen suits are one way to give a brighter effect?

New girdles and foundations are being made of two-way stretch material?

Striped gingham collar and cuffs are chic on a white blouse? And white organdy or pique on a colored blouse?

Padded shoulders in spring coats give that desired tailored-line?

A sports model hat is made of pig-skin silk?

Push-up sleeves and bateau necklines are new?

One writer refers to the spring silhouette as a "mermaid" one? Because dresses cling to the figure, outlining it at least to the knees, where the flounces or flares give the needed width at the bottom of the skirt. "Glorifying the figure" might be taken as a spring slogan!

Nine or ten inches from the floor is considered the correct length for afternoon?

To Be Fat or Thin

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VEGETABLES: Eat four servings green vegetables daily, hot or cold, cooked or raw. Vary their uses in stews, salads, hash, soup. They are good for breakfast, also. Salad of uncooked vegetable every day is advisable.

EGGS: One whole egg a day; extra whites may be used in desserts.

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MEAT AND FISH: Use lean kinds.

CHEESE: Use cottage cheese as the fat has been removed.

DESSERTS: Gelatin, white of egg, skim milk, fruits, sherbet without sugar. No pie or cake or ice cream or sodas.

MAYONNAISE DRESSING: Should be made with mineral oil instead of olive or other vegetable oils.

SUGAR OR CANDY: Sweets should not be taken in the diet. Instead, eat fresh fruits.

John Langdon-Davies, English author and critic, in a comparison of England and America, says, "We English, in our amateurish way, still eat food rather than vitamins and calories." It may be that we Americans need not so much the added complexity of nutritional information as we need to develop a taste for our food.

Every woman who plans meals for her family must be something of a psychologist to give the family what they need in a way in which they will enjoy it. In order to appreciate food and digest it properly, one must eat it with pleasure. One old doctor in prescribing medicine to children always told them they could not taste what he gave them unless they smiled before each dose. It is surprising how much less bitter the medicine can taste when one concentrates on the smile instead of the dread of medicine-taking.

A Cherry Pie

(Continued from page 2)

remembers the time when pies were distributed without charge. In the spring of 1922, at the first Veishea, tea and wafers were served in the "shacks" which housed the Art and Institution Departments west of the present Home Economics Hall.

In earlier years the pie-making was sponsored by girls in the Foods and Nutrition Department. More recently, however, the responsibilities have been transferred to Institution Management. Now the 2,000 pies, served with whipped cream, are sold for 10 cents apiece. Profits are credited to the Home Economics Club MacKay Loan Fund.

Ask the Foods Editor

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small hours of the morning—when one wonders why she ever left a 7-hour job for a 14-hour one. But always there is the answer. There's a thrill in working with stimulating, eager men and women, of producing something you hope sometime will be good, of believing that you are getting the knack a little better of digging out new thoughts from big scientific words and passing them on to women in a popular, understandable style—and finally there's the wallop one gets from doing all this against a background of the action, speed, hard work and hard play of a great daily newspaper.