1938

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Recommended Citation

Campbell, Myrtle Marie (1938) "Behind the Kitchen Door," The Iowa Homemaker: Vol. 18 : No. 3 , Article 4.
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol18/iss3/4

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Adept planning is required before the dorm dinner bell can ring

Behind the Kitchen Door

by Myrtle M. Campbell

Imagine planning meals for a family of several hundred. Think of the giant measuring pans and the mixing bowls. Many Iowa State College women are now receiving valuable experience to supplement their regular curriculum by helping to feed this large family.

The students, by a process of share and share alike, do all the work in the dining halls. The women's cooperative residence halls where no cooks or maids are employed. They are divided into five committees: lunch and breakfast, dinner, first floor cleaning, second and third floor cleaning, and fifth committee which is free of duties for the week. Each woman serves for a week on each committee.

The dining hall service for these cooperative residence halls is under the supervision of the Institution Department. Miss Grace Severance is food director and Miss Mildred Baker serves as assistant food director. In addition to supervising the planning and preparation of the meals, they keep a record of daily food costs and keep their own financial books.

Students are chosen every six weeks to serve as chairmen. Printed sheets are issued which list the work each girl on the committee is to perform. This work is shifted from day to day. The girls on the breakfast and lunch committee prepare breakfast and the early part of the lunch from 6 a.m. to 6:45 a.m. The cooking and preparation is done quickly and efficiently. Two girls are responsible for all the measuring. They take each recipe and set the required amount of ingredients on trays with the recipe card, ready to be mixed.

The girls working in the kitchen act as waitresses. At breakfast all the girls carry out their own dishes. Lunch is served cafeteria style to make the most of the limited time during the noon hour. Dinner is served family style with a hostess at each table.

Miss Florence W. Walls supervises the dining room service for the four "non-coop" halls with Miss Elsie Guthrie acting as her assistant. Miss Guthrie plans the menus a week in advance. To simplify the quantity cooking and preparing, time-saving equipment is used such as a mechanical dish washer, electric mixer, electric slicer, grinder, potato peeler, and a large pastry oven. The head cook has her helpers besides the salad and dessert girls. Miss Lizzie Lunde, head cook for Birch Hall, has cooked for Iowa State women since meals were first served in Margaret Hall. Nearly one hundred students earn their board by serving as waiters, kitchen help, or at the desks in the dining halls. These students are sufficient to fill a dining hall themselves.

Differences are apparent in kinds and amounts of foods required by the women and the men, according to Miss Severance. The men eat more potatoes, always want meat, prefer fruit to vegetable salads, and eat twice as much bread as the women. The men like white bread best, but the girls prefer dark bread.

Each man drinks about a quart of milk a day and his favorite deserts are pie and ice cream. In the men's cooperative halls, a cook is in charge of the men's kitchen with the students cleaning vegetables, dish washing, mashing potatoes, making coffee, tea and cocoa, and waiting on tables.

The big rooms with their light colored walls and rows of white linen covered tables are a pleasing sight at dinner time. Eight women sit at each table. During the week each person has an assigned place which changes every two weeks so that she may make new acquaintances. For breakfast, Wednesday night dinners, and during the week ends they may sit wherever they please.

Throughout the school year there is added festivity on birthdays when some lucky girl orders her favorite kind of cake and frosting and gives her friends a party.

Liver and bacon, frozen fruit salad, steamed puddings and corn fritters are favorite dishes. They even forget to watch their waistlines in respect to roast dressings, raised doughnuts and the ever popular hot rolls. That the food is pleasing is evident by the demands at the end of the year for recipes to take home and the rush to the kitchen after dinner in the evenings to buy extra cookies or pie.

Planning food for a "family" eating in just one dorm means large quantity marketing. Two crates of oranges or grapefruit are needed for just one breakfast; 125 to 160 pounds of meat for one meal. Seventy-five to a hundred gallons of milk are consumed each day and sixty loaves of bread are needed.

When baking is done, it is not a matter of planning for a dozen rolls; twelve hundred rolls must be baked. Fresh fruits and vegetables are ordered daily as needed. Other groceries and stores of canned goods are kept on hand as in a small scale household.

Cut by courtesy of Practical Home Economics

The Iowa Homemaker