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Raccoon Meat Is Delicious
Say Tasting Panel

by Elizabeth Adams

Muskrat-burgers or broiled coot in game season may soon be as commonplace as roast chicken.

Formerly many people shied away from game such as coot, musquash or raccoon. Experiments conducted by Miss Anna M. Olsen, research associate of the Departments of Foods and Nutrition and Zoology and Entomology, are aimed at making universal use of native game.

For game and particularly wild duck enthusiasts, musquash should be a new favorite. Musquash, more commonly called muskrat, is a dark, fine-grained, tender meat. It has been a favorite dish at banquets and dinners in the East and South for many years. Coot has a gamey flavor, and is frequently mistaken for wild duck, opossum or raccoon, especially when cooked in a casserole.

This experimental program is directed by Dr. George Hendrickson, of the Department of Zoology and Entomology, in cooperation with the Iowa State Conservation Commission.

A panel of 10 judges made blind tests on the cooked products. The judges have included Dean P. Mabel Nelson, of the Division of Home Economics; Dr. Grace Augustine, head of the Department of Institution Management; Dr. Ercel Eppright, head of the Department of Foods and Nutrition, and Dr. Louise Peet, head of the Department of Household Equipment.

Interesting and mouth-watering recipes have grown out of the judges’ decisions. Garlic adds zip in the roasting or broiling of coot. Turnips and coot can be fashioned into a tasty casserole. Musquash burgers with a dash of ketchup are a fitting dish for a hunting picnic. Spices and vinegar pep up the flavor of musquash sauerbraten.

The common squirrel comes into his own in the Brunswick stew, an old recipe originated in Virginia. No barbeque was complete without it. Squirrel and dumplings is a favorite Ozark special. For a beef substitute in Italian spaghetti, and maybe used with tomatoes.

At the close of this project Miss Olsen plans to compile her recipes into a cookbook. In it, as in her experiments, she will emphasize game not usually used for the table, to familiarize the homemaker with the new foods.