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Louise L'Engle
Iowa State College

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And So We Have Grapefruit...

By Louise L'Engle
Assistant Professor, Foods and Nutrition

GRAPEFRUIT has a fascinating and romantic background.

The story goes that Mrs. Frank Leslie, the wife of the founder of the Leslie Publications, was probably responsible for putting grapefruit on our breakfast, luncheon and dinner tables. In 1887, Mr. Leslie was visiting Mrs. Henry Plant in Tampa, Florida. A story is told about Mrs. Leslie while on that visit that shows her part, and the role that Mrs. Plant played, in making grapefruit history. From this article, which appeared in Leslie's Weekly, is the following quotation:

"WHILE driving out one morning at Barrow, we visited the home of Jacob Summerlin. Mrs. Leslie noticed upon the ground in Mr. Summerlin's grove great numbers of yellow fruit, the ground being covered with them. Mrs. Leslie asked Mr. Summerlin what they were, and he told her 'Grapefruit.' She asked me if it was the same kind of fruit which we had at breakfast and lunch. I answered 'yes' and she said to Mr. Summerlin, 'Why don't you sell them?' He replied, 'Bless you, madam, I sent 20 barrels to New York last fall and they brought me 50 cents a box. I will never ship another one; people do not want them.' She asked him if he would sell her a few. 'Sell you, no,' he said, 'I will give you all you can carry off. And he filled the bottom of the carriage with the finest fruit to be had on his trees, refusing to put in any that were picked off the ground. That evening at dinner, Mrs. Leslie said: 'Something should be done for the grapefruit. We who are here can help. I live at the Victoria, Mr. and Mrs. Plant at the Brunswick and Mr. O'Brien lives at the St. James, all in New York. If you will send me some grapefruit I will give them to my friends, and I will ask for one every morning and have my friends ask for grapefruit too.'"

This was agreed upon, and that season Mrs. Leslie was sent more than 50 barrels of grapefruit. Thus grapefruit was introduced to the American people. You are aware of the tremendous extent to which grapefruit has become a crop in Florida and Texas.

While grapefruit has grown in popularity very rapidly, it was recognized that it could not be universally consumed unless it was conserved in some acceptable manner. There are two general methods of conserving fruit—drying and canning. A method to dry grapefruit has not been found satisfactory. But canned grapefruit, though a comparatively new product, has proved very satisfactory when properly put up.

We are assured that only the best grade of fresh fruit is used by the canners. It is of a superior quality, riper than that which is shipped as fresh fruit to northern, eastern and western markets. Not only is this superior ripe fruit available in whole sections to us all the year round in convenient cans, but the packers are also putting up delicious grapefruit juice. It is the natural juice as it comes from the ripe fruit with but a small percentage of simple sugar syrup added to enhance the flavor. Although grapefruit is known as an acid testing fruit it has an alkaline reaction in the blood which offsets the acidity caused by such foods as meat, fish, eggs and cereal grains. There is evidence that a high content of vitamin B and C in both the canned whole section and in the fruit juice. Vitamin B, which is found in grapefruit, stimulates appetite and growth. Vitamin C is necessary to teeth and gum hygiene as well as to prevent the world old disease, scurvy.

DURING the winter months it is usually quite a simple problem to have fresh fruit, but for a considerable period during the year we readily welcome this excellent canned grapefruit. There are many unique and delectable ways that this canned product may find its way to your table, adding a new note to relieve the humdrum question—what shall we eat today?

To start the meal off in a gay manner, what is more refreshing or sparkling than a grapefruit cocktail? A favored recipe is:

1 can grapefruit juice
1 1/2 pint of carbonated water
Green minted cherries—1 or 2 for each glass
Chill the grapefruit juice thoroughly. Place green minted cherries in each glass. Mix grapefruit juice and carbonated water just before serving. If you wish to carry out a green color scheme beyond the addition of the green cherry, a few drops of green vegetable coloring will do the trick.

Another appetizer intriguing is sections of chilled canned grapefruit on grape leaves garnished with sprigs of mint. Still another cocktail worthy of note is prepared by lining a cocktail cup with sections of orange and meats of grapefruit arranged alternately. Fill the center with pitted black cherries, add a little sugar, chill, and let stand until fruit juices have accumulated in the glass.

For the main course a grapefruit garnish around a broiled or baked ham is delicious. But to make your guests clamor for the recipe, try grapefruit fritters with broiled chicken, broiled lamb chops or veal birds. To make the fritter batter:

2 cups flour
1 tbsp. oil or butter
2 eggs
pinch of salt
1 tbsp. sugar
1 1/2 c. sweet milk
4 tsp. baking powder

Separate eggs, make batter, leaving out whites of eggs. When ready to fry, add baking powder to batter and stiffly beaten whites. Drain grapefruit and wipe dry. Dip each section of grapefruit in dry flour, then in batter. Fry in deep fat at 365 degrees F. or 185 degrees C. until a golden brown. Place on a brown paper to drain. Because of the tartness, an individual flavor of the grapefruit, no sauce is needed.

And now for the salad course a great number of interesting salads present themselves. Starting with a basic salad of grapefruit meats on crisp lettuce leaves, many different dressings and garnishments may be used for variety. Any of the standard dressings such as French, Thousand Island or mayonnaise may be added. Have you tried this dressing and garnish?

1 Philadelphia cream cheese
1 finely diced green pepper or mange
3 or 4 tbsp. mayonnaise

Soften the cheese with a little cream or milk, add the green pepper and stir in the mayonnaise. Thin the cheese mixture with mayonnaise until it has the consistency of a very thick mayonnaise. Garnish and dress grapefruit salad. Another garnish for a grapefruit salad which has been covered with French dressing or mayonnaise is chopped celery and pecan or walnut meats. Also, a banana may be crushed into the mayonnaise to serve as a dressing.

IT SEEMS hardly consistent with summer, the open season for cold beverages, not to include a word about them. Delicious thirst quenching drinks may be made with clear, refreshing grapefruit juice as a basis. One recipe is:

1 can chilled grapefruit juice
1 pint grapefruit juice
1 pt. ginger ale

Chill all material. Pour over cracked ice, mix, sweeten if taste demands and serve with sprig of mint. Really the method of making these many fruit drinks is very simple. The main problem is deciding what fruit drink you want to make.

Some of these are simple combinations of fruits, others are served over crushed ice, some with a diminutive garnish such as sliced banana, sliced strawberries, or whole raspberries, blackberries, or loganberries.