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Make It an Inexpensive Meal...

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Make It an Inexpensive Meal...  
By Margaret Stover

Christmas dinners and depressions just don’t seem to belong together. Yet, by some queer twist of fate, they’ve come hand-in-hand these last few years. Christmas dinners used to spell extravagance, elaborateness, and expense, but now they have struck the pace with all the rest of us. One can be just as merry this Christmas to the accompaniment of roast chicken, cranberry jelly and baked potatoes as she ever could to caviar, roast turkey and all the costly trimmings.

Menus are simple, inexpensive, easy to prepare and serve, and unusually delicious. For instance, you may serve a lovely dinner for six people at the unbelievable price of $2.00!

Here is your menu:
Grapefruit Cocktail
Roast Chicken with Dressing
Baked Hubbard Squash
Potatoes in the Half Shell
Cranberry Salad
Rolls
Plum Pudding
Coffee

It doesn’t seem possible? No, of course it doesn’t, but it is. Food is cheaper now than it has been for years.

The shopping list for this dinner is simple, isn’t it? And just because it is so simple one needn’t think it would be unattractive or spell depression. Fix your

HERE IS YOUR SHOPPING LIST

Grapefruit, 3 for .25.......................... .25
Chicken, .15 per pound (less in the country).......................... .75
Squash, 3 for .30.......................... .30
Potatoes, .18 per peck (for one meal).......................... .05
Salad:
   Cranberries, .10 per pound.......................... .10
   Jello.......................... .05
   Dressing, .25 per jar (for one meal).......................... .10
   Rolls, .05 per dozen.......................... .05
   Plum pudding.......................... .20
   Hard sauce.......................... .10
   Green pepper.......................... .05
   Butter, .19 per pound (for one meal).......................... .05
   Coffee and cream.......................... .35

Total cost of meal.......................... $2.09

So, you see, on top of being inexpensive the meal is easy to prepare and serve. Of course, many substitutions may be made in accordance with many pocketbooks and localities. Sweet potatoes, candied or baked, may be used. Creamed onions, scalloped tomatoes and spinach, and scalloped oysters are indispensable to some families at Christmas time. Christmas candies and nuts are parts of many Christmas menus.

Another situation has been brought about by the depression. Many couples and small families who have always traveled hundreds of miles to have Christmas dinner with “the folks” are unable to go this year and are looking forward to a more interesting Christmas in a small home or apartment that won’t permit extensive Christmas preparations. But, after all, they needn’t feel so badly about it. The present day cannery offers numerous opportunities for typical Christmas dinners with little or no cooking at home and quite small expense. A menu like this may be prepared in any medium-sized town, with the starred items purchasable in cans:

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Salads Are Varied...

And Dressing Is Important

The dressing is the most important part of a salad. Whether it is the French or mayonnaise type, its function is to add richness and to accent the flavor of the food to be dressed.

The preparation of a good salad dressing begins with the selection of the material from which it is made. A good oil is essential. Corn oil is used a great deal nowadays. It is smooth and sweet and has no characteristic oily flavor with which one has to reckon in a mixture. It is less expensive than imported oils of the same quality, because it is produced in our country. The acid for the dressing may be either vinegar or fruit juice. Lemon juice or a combination of vinegar and fruit juice is often used. Sugar, salt and spices must never overwhelm the flavor of the salad material and eggs used must be of the first quality. Corn starch is a good thickening agent in cooked dressings.

Salads formerly were used only as a separate course wedged in between the main course and the dessert, but they are now used for every meal, breakfast included.

Breakfast salads are limited to fruits usually of the acid variety, such as pineapple, orange, grapefruit, or apple, and tomatoes and lettuce. French dressing, lightly seasoned, or, for citrus fruits and tomatoes, a dressing of oil and salt only is good. Those who have never eaten a crisp, colorful salad with the breakfast ham or sausage, have a pleasant gustatory experience in store.

At luncheon the salad may be the hors d’oeuvre so common in France—a delicious combination of small cubes of cooked beets marinated in French dressing, in which there lurks a suggestion of garlic or onion. A meal salad is good for either lunch or dinner. Protein food such as fish, eggs, cheese, nuts or legumes are combined with both starchy and green vegetables. Mayonnaise or boiled dressing should be used. Starchy vegetables are better in a salad if they are marinated in a French dressing for an hour before combining them with the remaining ingredients. A meat and vegetable combination salad, hot biscuits, jam and a beverage is a satisfying meal.

Dessert salads are popular. They are made from fruits or fruit gelatines and served with slightly sweetened mayonnaise or cooked dressing or a fruit salad dressing. Whipped cream or whipped evaporated milk is often folded into the dressing. Here is a recipe for fruit salad dressing:

Strain the juice of one orange and a half lemon into a double boiler; add one tablespoon of corn oil, a fourth cup of corn syrup, and three beaten egg yolks. Mix thoroughly and cook until thick, stirring constantly. Fold one cup of whipping cream into the dressing when cold.
characters come alive for the entire family.

Or, if the family likes tramping through the country, it will never get through thanking you for Clarence J. Hylander’s “The Year Round: A Book of the Outdoors Arranged According to Seasons,” which contains many of the author’s own sketches. It tells of Mr. Hylander’s walks with his classes and of many outdoor secrets for which to watch.

Almost any family would be fascinated by “Beasts of the Tar Pits,” by I. and W. Robinson. This describes simply and clearly the animals of long-ago America, and its pictures of the way these animals looked when alive are especially interesting.

For those children on your list who love fairy tales buy “The Unicorn with Silver Shoes” from that very proper place for fairy stories—Ireland. The story-teller is Ella Young.

Young children will love “Ola,” by Ingri and Edgar Parin d’Aulaire. This is a beautiful big picture book about a little Norwegian boy and his country.

“The Little Red Chair,” by Marian Walker, is full of short, simple stories about three-year-olds and their experiences. It is sure to charm children of that age who will love the big colored pictures.

There! Doesn’t that cover almost everyone on your list? And, of course, you are not limited to these more recent books. The old favorites continue to be loved just as much as though the newer books had never appeared.

Books are such personal gifts—if you choose wisely you can flatter as well as please. When you give a book, you as much as say, “Here, I know this will interest you!” So choose books and choose carefully, and you will give much happiness to the fortunate people on your list.

### An Inexpensive Meal

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Tomato Soup</em></td>
<td>Whipped Cream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Whole Canned Chicken</em></td>
<td>(browned in oven)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravy (from browning pan)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Olives</em></td>
<td>Celery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Canned Green Lima Beans</em></td>
<td>Mashed Potatoes (Irish or Sweet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Fruit Cake</em></td>
<td>Coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Salted Nuts</em></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Such a meal would require very little preparation—browning the chicken, making gravy and making coffee! It doesn’t sound much like the old Christmas dinner with days and days of cooking, stewing, roasting, and baking. It is just the thing for working couples or for a very busy housewife.

So, you see, Christmas needn’t be dreaded by many of you who have been worried about where the ten or fifteen dollars were coming from to pay for Christmas dinners, or by you who thought Christmas would be unbearable in a small city apartment with no chance for any entertaining.

And, after all, what is Christmas without a Christmas dinner and all the involved festivity? Here’s to yours—may it be the very merriest ever, because of the depression, not in spite of it!