Dehydrated Foods Gain New Victories

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Dehydrated Foods

Gain New Victories

Dehydrated foods are gaining importance in military and lend-lease programs, according to Janet Wilson

NOODLE soup, the scientist, and World War II have brought the dehydrated food business into the foreground. About two and one-half years ago a noodle soup company featured a package of chopped dehydrated vegetables with the soup so that the homemaker could have vegetable-noodle soup in seven minutes. The success of this venture helped bring dehydrated foods into the limelight.

Ideally, the dehydrated fruit or vegetable has a 5 to 10 percent moisture content. It will keep indefinitely and will return almost to its original shape when soaked and cooked in water. So different from this ideal were the products of dehydration during the first World War that soldiers dubbed the potatoes "shoe black" and complained about the toughness and unpleasantness of the dried peas, beans and onions.

Dehydrated food has several advantages over fresh, canned or frozen food. Packages of dehydrated food are much lighter in weight and easier to store. They are a boon to the shippers who send food to allied countries and to our own expeditionary forces since they weigh from one-fifteenth to one-fifth as much as fresh food and present practically no refrigeration problem.

In general, most vegetables adapt themselves to this method of preservation with little difficulty. The dehydrated soup and puree mixtures are satisfactory. Peas, string beans, carrots, spinach and potatoes are claimed to be equal in color to the fresh ones, but fall short in regard to flavor, texture, aroma and appearance. Dehydrated potatoes have proven to be the best sellers, with tomatoes, onions and cabbage next in that order. The vitamin research of dehydrated food is not complete, but present indications show that much of the vitamin content is retained.

The cranberry jelly you eat next Thanksgiving may have been made from powdered flakes of cranberry. The clam broth may have come from flat clam "pennies" or maybe the hostess dropped a capsule of powdered oyster into hot milk for the oyster stew. Yellow grains of dehydrated molasses may go into the gingerbread, and banana and pumpkin flakes might accompany the breakfast cereal.

In the kitchen the homemaker has to soak the dried vegetable or fruit for several hours if it is the kind that has been dried in pieces. She can cook the powdered ones, however, in about five to ten minutes. But if she served an entire dish of powdered carrots to her family, they would accuse her of feeding them sawdust. Therefore, the powdered and flaked goods go into soups and creamed mixtures.

Army men are serving as subjects for the experiments, but dehydrated foods will undoubtedly find a place in feeding the armies of our country, our allies and the people of famine-stricken Europe.

Attractive as well as nutritious is prune and dried apricot mold, easily prepared.

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