

NEW DOMESTIC HINTS.

FROM "SOYER'S GASTRONOMIC REGENERATOR."

DIRECTIONS FOR LARDING.

Choose the firmest bacon you can obtain, quite fat, and not at all red, or it would break and cause a deal of trouble. To cut it, take off the piece of lean at the bottom, lay it upon a board with the rind upwards, and beat gently with a cutlet bar, trim the sides, and cut it into bands the breadth that you may require your lardons in length; if for a fillet of beef, two inches; for fricandeau, turkey, poularde, fowl, pheasant, or sweetbread, an inch and a half; and for lamb's sweetbreads much smaller. Take one of the bands, place it before you with the rind downwards, and with a sharp knife cut it in slices, (but not separating it from the rind), of the thickness you require for the article you are about to lard, then place your hand at the top, press lightly, and draw your knife straight along as if cutting the bacon in slices, so as to form the lardons square at each end, commencing cutting from the heel of the knife, and finishing at the point.

POULTRY.

Never use turkeys before Michaelmas, and not after the latter end of March. Ditto turkey poult before the end of June, and not after September. Capons, poulards, pullets, and fowls, use all the year round. Begin about March with the spring chickens, till the beginning of July. Geese are in almost all the year round.

Goslings, or green geese, commence early in the spring, and are called so till the end of September; thus there is hardly any difference between them and the Michaelmas geese.

Ducks and ducklings the same.

Rabbits and pigeons may be used all the year round; but it is only in the early part of the spring that I use tame rabbits.

Guinea-fowls are used when pheasants go out, which is about the latter end of January, and are used till the end of May. Their eggs are very good, more delicate than the common ones.

Never use grouse before the 14th Aug., and after the 22nd December.

Black cocks and grey hens about the same time as grouse, but they are more uncertain.

Partridges are sent from Norway about the middle of January, and continue till March, but that depends much upon the weather.

Though the shooting season for partridges is the 1st of September, and lasts till the end of January, I never cook one before the 3rd, except being desired to do so, but I often keep some for three weeks after the shooting season is over.

The same with pheasants, which begins from the 1st of October till the end of January. By hanging them by the necks and putting a piece of garlic in the beak and a little cayenne, I one cold winter kept one six weeks after the shooting time had expired, which I afterwards presented to a party of real gourmets, who said it was the best they had partaken of during the season.

Use wild ducks, widgeons, teal, pintails, larks, golden plovers, snipes, woodcocks, from the commencement of November till the latter part of March, after which the flesh becomes rank and unfit for the table.

Young pea-fowls are very good, and make a noble roast, and are in season from January till June, but they are very uncertain.

Plovers' eggs, my favourite, an unparalleled delicacy, come about the middle of March, and are not considered good after the latter end of May; but when I can get them fresh in June, I do not discontinue their use, because they are, in my estimation, worthy of the patronage of the greatest gourmet.

FISH.

For the last few years there has been quite an alteration in the description of the seasons for these golden and silvery inhabitants of the deep.

Except the cod-fish, which come in September, and by strictness of rule must disappear in March, the season for all other sea-fish becomes a puzzle; but the method I follow during the season is as follows:

Crimped Gloucester is plentiful in June and part of July, but it may be procured almost all the year round.

Common salmon from March to July.

Salmon peale from June to July.

Spey trout from May to July.

Sturgeon, though not thought much of, is very good in June.

Turbot are in season all the year round.

John Dories depend entirely upon chance, but may be procured all the year round for the epicure, May excepted.

The original season of Yarmouth mackerels is from the 12th of May till the end of July; now we have Christmas mackerel; then the west of England mackerel, which are good at the beginning of April.

Haddock and whiting all the year round.

Skate all the winter.

Smelts from the Medway are the best, and are winter fish; the Yarmouth and Carlisle are good, but rather large; the Dutch are also very large, which often lose in the estimation of the epicure.

Brill is like turbot as to season.

Slips are similar to soles, good all the year round.

Gurnets are rather a spring fish.

Flounders and diamond plaice are in full season from June to July.

Red mullets vary very much now, but the beginning of the season was formerly the 12th of May; we had none this year, except at a very extravagant price. Always use them when they are to be obtained.

Fresh herrings are in season from November to January.

River eels all the year round.

Lobsters in the spring and part of the summer.

Prawns ditto.

Crabs are best in May.

Oysters begin in August, but are not very good till September.

Barrelled oysters begin on the 15th of September, and last till the end of February.

Barrelled cod, Lent fish, are best in winter or about March.

Sprats come in about the 8th of November.

HOW EVERYTHING SHOULD BE IN COOKING.

All clear soup must not be too strong of meat, and must be of a light brown, sherry, or straw colour.

All white or brown thick soups must be rather thinnish, lightly adhering to the back of the spoon.

All purées must adhere little more to the back of the spoon.

Any Italian paste must be very clear, rather strong, and the colour of pale sherry.

All kinds of fish sauce should be thicker for boiled fish than for broiled or fried. Brown sauce should be a little thinnish and the colour of a horse-chesnut.

White sauce should be of the colour of ivory and thicker than brown sauce.

Cream or Dutch sauce, must be rather thickish, and cannot be too white.

Demi-glacé requires to be rather thin, but yet sufficiently reduced to envelop

any pieces of meat, game, poultry, &c., with which it is served.

Every description of fish should be well done, but not over-boiled, broiled, stewed, or fried.

Beef and mutton must be underdone, even for joints, removes, and entrées.

Lamb requires to be more done.

Veal and pork must be well done.

Venison must be underdone, red in the middle, and full of gravy, but not raw.

Poultry, either broiled, stewed, boiled, or roasted, must be done thoroughly, not cutting in the least red, but must still be full of gravy.

Pheasants and partridges must be well done through, yet full of gravy.

Grouse, black cocks, grey hens, and ptarmigans, must cut reddish, with plenty of gravy, but not too much underdone.

All kinds of water-fowl must be very much underdone, so that the blood and gravy follow the knife in carving.

Plovers must be rather underdone, but done through.

Rabbits and pigeons must be well done.

Second-course savoury dishes must be rather highly seasoned, but with a little moderation.

Pastry should, when baked, be clear, light and transparent, and of a beautiful straw colour; the body of a croustade the same.

Large pies, timbales, and casseroles of rice must be of a yellowish brown colour.

Jellies require to be very white and transparent for fruits, and not too firm, but better so than too delicate.

Orange jellies should be of a deep orange colour, and all fruit jellies as near as possible to the colour of the fruit.

Creams should be very light and delicate, but fruit creams must be kept of the colour of the fruits they are made of.

For all the demi-glacé removes the ice must be firm, but not the least hard.

All kinds of soufflé or fondu must be well done through, or they would be very indigestible, clog the delicate palate, and prevent the degustation of the generous claret which flows so freely after dinner on the table of the real epicure.

I recommend sugar in almost all savoury dishes, as it greatly facilitates digestion and invigorates the palate, but always increase or diminish the quantity according to the taste of your employer.

I often introduce onions, eschalots, or even a little garlic in some of my most delicate dishes, but so well blended with other flavours that I never have a single objection even by those who have a great dislike to it.

Horseradish and herbs of every description may always be used with discretion to great advantage.

Contrary to the expressed opinion of every other previous publication, I say that too much seasoning is preferable to too little, while you fear over-seasoning you produce no flavour at all; by allowing each guest to season for himself, your sauce attains a diversity of flavours. The cook must season for the guest, not the guest for the cook.

I have always found great advantage in dressing the greatest part of my entrées on a thin roll of mashed potatoes; this has never been found objectionable, as it is so thin that it is imperceptible when covered with the sauces, and serves to prevent any entrées dressed in crown from being upset, before going on table, by the carelessness of the servant. The mashed potatoes which are to be used for dishing up are simply prepared as follows:—Plain, boil, or steam six or eight large mealy potatoes; when well done peel and put them into a stewpan with two ounces of butter, and a little salt; then with the prong of a fork whisk them till quite in purée; then add two tablespoonsful of milk, work up with a small wooden spoon till forming a paste; then lay a small quantity on a clean cloth, roll it to the circumference of a fourpenny or sixpenny piece, and form a round with it in your dish according to the size of the entrée; alter the proportion according to the size of the flanc or remove.

NEW AND ECONOMICAL LOBSTER SAUCE.

Break up a fresh lobster, use the solid flesh for salad or any other purpose, pound the soft part and shell together (in a mortar) very fine, place the whole in a stewpan, cover with a pint of boiling water, place over the fire, and let simmer ten minutes, when pass the liquor through a hair sieve into a basin, and use for making melted butter as in the last, to which add a little cayenne pepper and a piece of anchovy butter the size of a walnut; if any red spawn in the lobster, pound and mix it with a small piece of fresh butter, and add to the sauce with a little lemon-juice when upon the point of serving; an anchovy pounded with the shells of the lobster would be an improvement, some of the flesh may be served in the sauce.

SHRIMP SAUCE.

Is very excellent made by pounding half a pint of shrimps with their skins, boiling ten minutes in three parts of a pint of water, finishing as directed for lobster sauce, and always serving very hot.

ANCHOVY SAUCE.

Is made by adding a spoonful of Harvey sauce and two of essence of anchovy, with a little cayenne, to half a pint of melted butter; shrimps, prawns, or even blanched oysters may be served in it.

WHITE AND BROWN SAUCES.

Cut and chop a knuckle of veal, weighing about four pounds, into large dice; butter the bottom of a large stewpan with a quarter of a pound of butter, add two onions, a small carrot, a turnip, three cloves, half a blade of mace, a bay-leaf, and a sprig of thyme, and six of parsley tied in a bunch; add a gill of water, place over a sharp fire, stirring round occasionally, until the bottom of the stewpan is covered with whitish glaze, when fill up with three quarts of water, add a good teaspoonful of salt, and let simmer at the corner of the fire an hour and a half, keeping well skimmed, when pass it through a hair sieve into a basin; in another stewpan put a quarter of a pound of butter, with which mix six ounces of flour, stirring over the fire about three minutes, take off, keep stirring until partly cold, when add the stock all at once, continually stirring and boiling for a quarter of an hour; add half a pint of boiling milk, stir a few minutes longer, add a little chopped mushrooms if handy, pass through a hair sieve into a basin, until required for use, stirring it round occasionally until cold; the above being a simplified white sauce.

For a brown sauce use the same proportion as for the white, but having beef instead of veal for the stock, which must be made brown by placing four large onions cut in halves at the bottom of the stewpan, which must be well buttered, placing the meat over, standing upon the fire, and drawing down to a brown glaze before filling up, the thickening must also be made brown, by stirring a few minutes longer over the fire, and the milk omitted. Sometimes I make both stocks in the same stewpan, pass one half for the white sauce, and put a couple of burnt onions into the remainder, allowing it to simmer an hour longer, when pass and use for a brown sauce.

TO MAKE A COLOURING OR BROWNING FROM SUGAR.

Put two ounces of whitepowdered sugar into a middling-sized stewpan, which place over a slow fire, when beginning to melt stir round with a wooden spoon until getting quite black, when set it in a moderate oven upon a trivet about twenty minutes, pour a pint of cold water over, let it dissolve, then cork it up in a bottle for use.

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For a brown sauce use the same proportion as for the white, but having beef instead of veal for the stock, which must be made brown by placing four large onions cut in halves at the bottom of the stewpan, which must be well buttered, placing the meat over, standing upon the fire, and drawing down to a brown glaze before filling up, the thickening must also be made brown, by stirring a few minutes longer over the fire, and the milk omitted. Sometimes I make both stocks in the same stewpan, pass one half for the white sauce, and put a couple of burnt onions into the remainder, allowing it to simmer an hour longer, when pass and use for a brown sauce.

TO MAKE A COLOURING OR BROWNING FROM SUGAR.

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THE DEADLY NIGHTSHADE.

The Deadly Nightshade (*Atropa Belladonna*) is indigenous to Great Britain, and usually met with in sheltered situations, hedges and wasteground, on a calcareous soil. The plant dies down to the ground every winter, shooting forth early in the spring, growing rapidly, and with great luxuriance; stems branching, and slightly downy, with large healthy-looking leaves, mostly two together of unequal size, ovate and acute, very different in appearance from all other kinds of Nightshade. The flowers which appear in June are imperfectly axillary, solitary, stalked, drooping, dark full purple in the border, paler downwards, about an inch long, and have no scent. The berries are of a rich purplish black, sweetish, about the size of a small cherry; are ripe in August, and of a deadly narcotic quality.



THE DEADLY NIGHTSHADE.—(*Atropa Belladonna*.)

Atropus was the name of one of the Fates in the Heathen Mythology, and as her duty was especially to cut short the thread of human life, this poisonous plant is very appropriately named after her; but why *belladonna*, which signifies a beautiful lady, was added, is not known.

The effect that is usually produced upon any one who has eaten of the berries is to dilate the pupil of the eye, in a most extraordinary manner; obscurity of vision, giddiness, delirium, and death, soon follow. It has been supposed that it was the juice of this plant which produced such remarkable and fatal effects on the Roman soldiers, during their retreat from the Parthians. Buchanan relates that the Scots mixed the juice with bread and drink, which, by their truce, they were to supply the Danes, who so intoxicated them, that the Scots killed the greatest part of Sweno's army while asleep. Shakspeare is supposed to allude to the plant under the name of the *insane root*, in *Macbeth*. And we have had many recent illustrations of its fatal effects upon persons who have ignorantly eaten of the berries. In August, 1844, several persons became alarmingly ill, and were with difficulty restored, one dying. In August of 1846, no less than three persons lost their lives from eating berries, purchased of a man in the streets; the man who sold them was taken up and tried for his life; but, by the advice of his counsel, he pleaded guilty to the minor offence of manslaughter, and received six months imprisonment.

The remedy in a case of poisoning, is to empty the stomach as quickly as possible. Domestic emetics are always at hand, in mustard and salt. A dessert spoonful of flour of mustard, or a table spoonful of salt, may be taken, stirred up in a tumbler full of warm water, tickling the throat with a feather dipped in oil; but the stomach-pump should always be preferred when it can be obtained. After which, drinks of vinegar and water, or lemon juice in green tea, should be given every ten minutes.

Our engraving, (Fig. 1) represents a flower cut open, showing the position of the stamens; fig. 2, the calyx with the pistil; and fig. 3, a berry cut in half, to show its two cells, in each of which are several seeds.

TO PRESERVE CUT FLOWERS.

The most simple rules are, not to put too many flowers in a glass, to change the water every morning, and to remove every decayed leaf as soon as it appears, cutting off the ends of the stems occasionally, as soon as they show any symptoms of decay. A more efficacious way, however, is to put nitrate of soda in the water; put about as much as can easily be taken up between the forefinger and thumb, into the glass every time the water is changed, will preserve cut flowers in all their beauty for above a fortnight. Nitrate of potash, (that is common saltpetre), in powder, has nearly the same effect, but is not quite so efficacious.—*Mrs. Loudon*.

TO HASTE THE BLOWING OF FLOWERS.

The following liquid has been used with great success; this is, indeed, what is usually sold under the name of "liquid guano":—Sulphate or nitrate of ammonia, four ounces; nitrate of potash, two ounces; sugar, one ounce; hot water, one pint; dissolve, and keep it in a well-corked bottle. For use—Put eight or ten drops of this liquid into the water of a hyacinth glass or jar, for bulbous-rooted plants, changing the water every twelve or fourteen days. For flowering plants in pots, a few drops must be added to the water given to them: rain water is preferable for the purpose.

SHERRY COBBLER.

(Canadian Receipt)

Take a lump of ice; fix it at the edge of a board; rasp it with a tool made like a drawing-knife or carpenter's plane, set face upwards. Collect the fine raspings—the fine raspings, mind—in a capacious tumbler; pour thereon two glasses of good sherry, and a good spoonful of powdered white sugar, with a few small bits, not slices, of lemon, about as big as a gooseberry. Stir with a wooden macerator. Drink through a tube of macaroni or vermicelli.

ADULTERATIONS OF BREAD AND FLOUR.

This is often carried to a fearful extent: Mr. Accum says—"The bakers' flour is very often made of the worst kinds of damaged foreign wheat, and other cereal grains mixed with them in grinding the wheat into flour. In this capital no fewer than six distinct kinds of wheat flour are brought into the market. They are called fine flour, seconds, middlings, fine middlings, coarse middlings, and twenty-penny flour. Common garden beans and peas are also frequently ground up among the London bread flour. Caution.—If you purchase bread from the bakers, by all means buy the best. When you make it yourself, however, various additions may be made of a wholesome kind, that will render it cheaper. Thus, mashed potatoes, ground bran, potato farina, and several other articles may be added at pleasure. Mixing the flour up with a decoction of bran, pumpkins, Iceland moss, and some other similar substances has been recommended; and it is said that flour so mixed, will yield one quarter more bread than when water alone is used, and that it will keep good for some time.

BUTTER.

Rancid butter is butter in a state of decomposition, and capable of producing dangerous symptoms when eaten. Two cases of poisoning by bad butter are detailed in the Paris "Journal of Chemistry and Medicine," 1842. Rancid butter may be restored by melting it in a water-bath, with some coarsely powdered animal charcoal (which has been thoroughly freed from dust by sifting), and straining through clean flannel.

TO KEEP CHEESE.

When a whole cheese is cut, and the consumption small, it is generally found to become unpleasantly dry and to lose flavour before it is consumed. This is best prevented by cutting a sufficient quantity for a few days' consumption from the cheese, and to place the remainder in a cool place, rather damp than dry, spreading a thin film of butter over the cut surface, and covering it with a cloth to keep off the dirt. This removes the objection existing in families against purchasing a whole cheese at a time. The common practice of buying cheese in small quantities should be avoided, as not only a higher price is paid for any given quality, but there is little likelihood of obtaining exactly the same flavour twice running. Should cheese become too dry to be agreeable, it may be used for steaming, or when grated cheese is wanted.

CHOICE OF FISH.

In the choice of every kind of fish, stiffness, brightness of the eyes, and redness of the gills, may be regarded as invariable signs of freshness. A peculiar elasticity will also be perceived in fish recently caught; little or no permanent impression being made by the ordinary pressure of the fingers, from the flesh immediately rising when the pressure is withdrawn. Fresh fish also lie in a partly curled position, and never quite straight, as is the case when they have been kept for some time. Thickness and fleshiness are deemed marks of the good condition of all fish.

Of all the various substances used as aliments by man, fish are the most liable to run into a state of putrefaction, and should, therefore, be only eaten when perfectly fresh. Those that are whitest and most flaky when cooked, as whiting, cod, flounders, soles, haddock, turbot, &c., are the most easily digestible; and those abounding with oily matter, as salmon, eels, herrings, &c., are most nutritious, though more likely to offend the stomach. Salt water fish has been said to be more wholesome than river fish, but without sufficient reason. Salted fish is very hard of digestion unless well cooked. Acid sauces and pickles are the proper additions to fish, from their power of retarding the progress of putrefaction, and of correcting the tendency of large quantities of oil and butter.

PICKLES.

In the preparation of pickles, it is highly necessary to avoid employing metallic vessels; as both vinegar and salt corrodes brass, copper, lead, &c., and thus become poisonous. When it is necessary to heat or boil vinegar, it should be placed in a stone jar in a water bath, or on a stove. Glazed earthenware should be avoided either for making or keeping the pickles in, as the glazing usually contains lead. Pickles should be kept from the air as much as possible, and only touched with wooden spoons. They are also better preserved in small jars, or bottles, than large ones, as the more frequent opening of the latter exposes them too much. If a green colour be desired, it may be imparted by steeping vine leaves, or the leaves of parsley, or spinach, in the vinegar; a tea-spoonful of olive oil is frequently added to each bottle to keep the pickles white.

TO PRESERVE CABBAGES.

Cut them so that they may have two inches stem left below the leaves; scoop out the pith as far down as a small knife will reach; then suspend them, by means of a cord, exactly perpendicular, but in an inverted position, and daily fill up the hollow part of the stem with clean water. It is stated, that by this method, cabbages, cauliflowers, brocoli, celery, &c., may be preserved for some time in a cool place; it affords an easy means of keeping a supply of green vegetables during the winter.

DECANTERS.

There is often much difficulty experienced in cleaning decanters, especially after port wine has stood in them some time. The best way is to wash them out with a little pearl ash and warm water, adding 1 spoonful or two of fresh slaked lime, if necessary. To facilitate the action of the fluid against the sides of the glass, a few small cinders may be used. Another annoyance which frequently occurs, is that the stoppers of glass bottles and decanters become fixed in their places so firmly, that the exertion of sufficient force to remove them would endanger the vessels. In such cases, knocking the stopper gently with a piece of wood, first on one side, and then on the other, will generally loosen them. If this method does not succeed, a cloth wetted with hot water and applied to the neck, will generally expand the glass sufficiently to allow them to be easily withdrawn.

CHINA.

Is best cleaned, when very dirty, with finely powdered fuller's earth and warm water, afterwards rinsing it well in clean water. A little clean soft soap may be added to the water instead of fuller's earth. The same plan is recommended for cleaning glass.