

The Farm Home and Kitchen

Contributed by the Association for Country Education

Give the Cabbage a Fair Chance

CABBAGE will be our most used green vegetable for the next few weeks. It depends on the cook whether this will be a pleasure or a hardship, and whether we shall be better or worse off nutritionally for every meal we eat that has cabbage in it.

The cook who knows no other way than to serve her cabbage boiled to death commits a threefold crime. First, she makes us grow tired of a wholesome food by her lack of variety in ways of serving it; secondly, she upsets our digestions by so overcooking the vegetable that it decomposes and poisons us; and, thirdly, she robs us because she boils away and pours away practically all the special nourishing factors which only the cabbage could bring to the meal.

"Ring the Changes"

The cook who, on the other hand, "rings the changes" of a variety of dishes, serving her cabbage raw when possible, and at other times always lightly cooked, will always have us asking for more, will stimulate our appetites, improve our digestions, and give us a good part of our daily need of certain extremely valuable protective food substances.

It is well proven that there is a great loss of minerals and vitamins when green vegetables are cooked for a long time, but in the matter of digestibility people may question the superiority of short as opposed to long cooking. This has, however, been more than proved, as the following recent experiment will serve to illustrate.

Effects of Cabbage

There are certain people with whom the eating of cabbage is very frequently followed by such disturbances as belching, gas, unpleasant after-taste, regurgitation, abdominal pain, nausea, headache, etc. In a scientifically-controlled experiment 20 such persons

undertook to test the effects of cabbage cooked to different degrees in producing these disturbances. The experiment lasted for five days, and on each day care was taken to give the experimentees only very easily-digested food so that nothing else which was eaten could cause any trouble.

For lunch every day they had potatoes, bread, butter, fruit, and a drink, as well as the cabbage to be

Increasing Flavour

If the meat for stews is rolled in flour and browned in a little fat before vegetables and water are added, the stew will have a richer flavour and the meat a more appetising appearance.

A drop or two of vanilla in the breakfast cocoa carries the flavour and often creates new interest in this beverage.

Apple Brown Betty made with wholemeal bread has a "nut-like" flavour not obtained when white bread is used in preparing this dessert. The pudding will be richer in nourishment, too, as wholemeal bread furnishes more iron and Vitamin B than white bread.

tested. On the first day the cabbage was served as salad, raw and finely cut up. On the second day, cooked only until tender (12 minutes). On the third day, as salad again, but this time raw and coarsely cut up (¼ in. strips). On the fourth day the cabbage was cooked for three-quarters of an hour, and on the fifth day it was cooked for one and a half hours.

The experimentees were asked to record any digestive disturbances which they felt following the luncheon. The results were:—Two were affected by the finely cut up raw cabbage; four

by the coarsely cut up raw cabbage; one by the cabbage cooked until tender; five by that cooked for 45 minutes; and 15 by that cooked for 1½ hours. Thus, the longer the cabbage was cooked the more digestive trouble it caused.

So, housewives, take courage! You can safely serve "cole slaw" knowing that raw cabbage is digestible; your "last-minute" cooking of cabbage is right, that is, if you want the cabbage to be digestible and nutritious. Take no notice of those who insist that they will be upset unless it is cooked to a pulp.

How to Cook Cabbage

My advice is to cook cabbage like this:—Wash it and shred it fairly finely; have boiling salted water in a saucepan (about one-quarter full); add the cabbage and heat to boiling point quickly, leaving the lid on, but not fitting, until the cabbage is boiling hard. Turn cabbage over in the water, put on lid tightly, and leave it to boil fairly fast for 10 to 20 minutes. Drain off the water and reserve it for soups or gravy, and add butter or other seasoning to the cabbage.

If the cabbage is very old, one should use more water, as there will be more strong-flavoured vegetable acids coming out of the cabbage, and the larger amount of water is necessary to dilute them.

Why waste fuel—destroy food properties—increase indigestibility—and sicken people of a wholesome food, just because tradition says that cabbage must be boiled, and boiled to a pulp.

Once the cabbage is cooked it may be served plain and buttered, or with a gravy made from fried bacon, flour, and milk, or as an *au gratin* dish, that is, with a white sauce and grated cheese and breadcrumbs. It may be