



## COOKING WITH OATMEAL

By EVA TOPPING, *Rural Sociologist, Auckland.*

**I**S it true that one must go to Scotland to learn the uses of oatmeal? Perhaps the New Zealand housewife does not make so much use of oatmeal as does her Scottish counterpart; probably it appears on the table only as porridge. It is a good cereal, richer in food material than most of the others. The high starch content makes it an excellent heat and energy producer, and as it contains some protein it is also a tissue builder. It may be a little less easily digested because of the tough fibres and so requires thorough cooking, especially for children, elderly people, and those whose digestion is impaired through sickness.

### Oatcakes

**S**COTTISH oatcakes are cooked on one side on a girdle until the edges curl up; then they are toasted on the other side before the fire on a wire rack which is made to hang on the bars of the grate. Excellent oatcakes can be made on the hot plate of an electric stove and finished under a grill or the top element of the oven.

Put  $2\frac{1}{2}$  handfuls of oatmeal into a basin with  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of salt and pour over it  $\frac{1}{4}$  pint of boiling water in

which 1oz. of bacon fat, dripping, or butter has been melted. Mix them well with a wooden spoon, turn the mixture out on to a board sprinkled with oatmeal, and knead it a little with the hands. Divide it and shape the pieces into rounds. Roll each as thin as possible, keeping the rolling pin dusted with meal to prevent sticking, and cut each round into four. Take the board to the well-heated hot plate or girdle and slide the oatcakes on—any attempt to lift them is almost certain to crack or break them. Cook the oatcakes until the edges begin to curl, then remove them to a hot baking sheet and toast the uncooked side under the grill or top element of the

oven. To test the heat of the girdle or hot plate sprinkle it with water; if the drops "dance" on the surface, the plate is hot enough for baking the oatcakes.

If the oatcakes must be baked in the oven, try this recipe:

1 cup of oatmeal	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup of dripping
1 cup of flour	melted in 1 table-
Boiling water to mix	spoon of boiling
$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of salt	water

Put the flour, oatmeal, and salt into a basin and add the melted dripping and water, using extra boiling water if the mixture is too dry. Roll the mixture thin on board, using oatmeal to dust the rolling pin and board. Cut the oatcakes into triangles or squares and bake them on an oven sheet sprinkled with oatmeal until they are lightly browned.

Store oatcakes in an airtight tin to keep them crisp. Serve a glass of milk, buttered oatcakes, a piece of cheese, and a stick of celery or lettuce leaves for a healthful mid-morning snack.

### Oatmeal in Biscuits

Fine oatmeal makes biscuits which are crisp and nicely flavoured, medium oatmeal is used for the spicy parkin type, and rolled oats for the maca-

#### HEADING PHOTOGRAPH

Rolled oats can be used in place of bread-crumbs to coat rissoles in preparation for cooking.