

# VEGETABLE COOKERY



No country in the world grows vegetables better than we do, and probably no country in the world cooks them worse. For generations we have wasted our root vegetables by excessive peeling and over-cooking, and boiled most of the goodness out of our green vegetables—only to pour it down the sink.

In peace time such methods are wasteful. In wartime they are a danger to the national health. There is no need to worry about the shortage of fresh fruit, provided we eat enough of our home-grown vegetables, especially if we eat them raw and learn to cook correctly.

Raw vegetables are invaluable as sandwich fillings now that jam and cheese are rationed, and also as salad served with hot or cold dishes.

True, two classes of people will suffer if we make full use of our vegetable crops. First, the vendors of patent medicines, whose wares will be less in demand. Secondly, the makers of too highly-seasoned sauces, because our palates, once accustomed to good eating, will be content with the delicate flavour of well-cooked vegetables.

Once we have discovered that vegetables can be served in a million ways, we shall cease to think of them merely as something to be eaten with meat. We shall look upon them, and rightly, as one of our most important sources of health and strength.



## How to Cook Vegetables

(THIS IS IMPORTANT).

If vegetables are cooked carelessly much of their food value is lost. Their vitamin C—the fresh fruit vitamin—is easily destroyed by bad cooking. Throwing away the cooking water also wastes valuable mineral salts and vitamins.

So when you cook vegetables follow these rules :

1. Use as fresh as possible. If you grow your own vegetables do not gather them until you actually need them.
2. Wash the vegetables thoroughly, but avoid soaking where possible and never soak for long. Half an hour in cold salted water is enough for even the most tight-hearted cabbage.
3. Scrub root vegetables and scrape them, or if tough-skinned peel thinly. Remove the dark outer leaves of cabbage and use them shredded in soups or stews. Do not throw them away because they contain more of the vitamins and mineral salts than the more tender inner leaves.
4. Slice root vegetables and shred the green ones. Break cauliflower into sprigs. They cook more quickly this way.
5. Never drown your vegetables. You need only just enough water to keep the pan from burning—usually a teacupful will do. As less water is used less salt is needed.
6. Cook with the lid on the pan. If you have no lid a plate can be used. This point is important because the vegetables are to be “steam boiled” and if the steam is allowed to escape the pan will go dry and burn.
7. Boil briskly for 10-15 minutes giving the pan an occasional shake. Old root vegetables may require longer.
8. Drain off any liquid and use for making soups and gravies or thicken with flour (1oz. to  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint) and use as a sauce.
9. Serve the vegetables at once. Keeping hot or re-heating will destroy the vitamin C. Before serving, if you can spare it, add a teaspoonful of margarine to the vegetables and toss well.



If these suggestions are followed the vegetables will be crisp and full of flavour. Most important, they will retain the greater part of their vitamin and mineral salts.

Remember that all root vegetables can also be baked round the joint or with fat or water in a tin. Beetroot does not need either fat or water; just bake without peeling.



## **Tops**

Broccoli tops, turnip tops and beetroot tops have good food value and are all excellent if cooked as already described. So are the broad bean tops which gardeners always pick off.

## **Cabbage with Variations**

All sorts of additions can be made to cabbage cooked as described on the previous page. A few bacon rinds chopped small: a few teaspoons of vinegar and a sprinkle of nutmeg, or perhaps a shake of caraway seeds, and you have something quite new and intriguing.

## **Spinach**

Wash the spinach very thoroughly. Shake and put in a pan without any water; sprinkle with a little salt, put on the lid and cook gently until tender (about 10 minutes). Drain and serve or, if preferred, the spinach may be chopped and a little margarine and pepper added.

## **Peas**

When boiling fresh garden peas put a teaspoonful of sugar, if possible, and a little salt in the water as well as the mint, and be careful not to cook them too long or too fast, or they will come out of their skins. If you are cooking another vegetable, peas are delicious cooked in a steamer on the top. Sprinkle with a pinch of salt and put a sprig of mint with them in the steamer. Save the water for soup and gravy.

## **French or Runner Beans**

When young, cook whole with only the tops and tails removed. When older, the stringy vein which develops along the rib of the pod must be removed.

Most housewives like to slice the beans lengthwise. But it is a great saving in time to break them with the fingers into 2-in. lengths, and less flavour is lost this way.

Boil until tender in a very small amount of salted water. If you like your beans to glisten, add a teaspoonful of fat to the water.

Be sure to save the water. It is good as a drink by itself; or use it for gravy or soup.

## **Broad Beans**

When young, broad beans can be cooked, unshelled, in a little boiling salted water and eaten pod and all. Or the beans can be shelled and the pods sliced. The cooked sliced pods are very good as a hot vegetable or served cold in salad.

When the beans are older the pods are too tough to eat as a vegetable, but make good stock for soup.

Broad beans which have been allowed to mature in their pods may be stored for winter use. Make sure they are quite dry before packing in airtight tins. Soak and use as haricots.



## ***Cauliflower Leaves and Stalks***

When buying cauliflowers, always ask for the leaves as well as the flower, as the leaves make a dish by themselves if cooked as cabbage. The stalks, cooked until tender in a very little boiling salted water and then drained, rolled in browned breadcrumbs and quickly fried in a very little hot fat or browned in the oven, have a nutty flavour and are a new dish to most people. They are also delicious grated raw in a salad. If peeled, the whole stem, from the root up, can be used.

## ***Quick Method of Cooking Beetroot***

Scrub and peel the beetroot. Cut into thin slices and put into a pan with just sufficient water to prevent burning (a little margarine can be used if liked). Cook gently with the lid on for 20 minutes, after which time all the water should be absorbed.

N.B. The colour of the beetroot comes out at first but is reabsorbed as the vegetable cooks.

## ***Parsnip or Swede Cakes***

1 lb. parsnips or swedes, cooked.

2 oz. flour (approx).

1 teaspoon salt.

Fat for frying.

Mash the parsnip or swede; add the flour and seasoning and form into flat cakes. Fry in hot fat till golden brown. Serve with a cheese sauce.

## ***Carrots à la King***

1 lb. carrots.

$\frac{1}{2}$  pint white sauce.

1 small onion or leek chopped finely.

Seasoning.

2 tablespoons chopped parsley.

Cook the carrots until tender and drain. Make the white sauce, adding the onion at the beginning and cooking it in the sauce. Season well; pour over the carrots; add chopped parsley and serve.

Ask for War Cookery Leaflet No. 4 "Carrots" and No. 5 "Salads," or send a postcard to :

FOOD ADVICE SERVICE,

MINISTRY OF FOOD,

LONDON, W.1.

