

Assembly line cooking

It makes good sense for meals for one

By ARLENE VANDERLEUN

Somehow it's hard to get excited about cooking for one, especially if you've just arrived home after an exhausting day at the office.

And then there's that dreary prospect of leftovers — eating the same meal days in a row. And how do you s-t-r-e-t-c-h that ever-shrinking food dollar?

Fret not. One solution is a style made famous by auto manufacturers. In a word, why not try assembly line cooking?

Very simply, assembly line cooking means simultaneously preparing several recipes which use the same or similar ingredients, then whisking the finished product into a one-serving plastic container and into the freezer.

Presto! You have a variety of one-serving main courses waiting to be defrosted and heated. Simply toss a salad, add a piece of fresh fruit for dessert and the meal's ready.

THIS TRIO of cream soups brings together cheese, milk and vegetables for a meal that has protein, vitamins and minerals. But the best thing is the speedy preparation time — about one hour, start to finish.

Each soup uses the same base. Prepare the following for each recipe, then add vegetables of your choice. Yield: 2-3 servings of each.

1 cup boiling water, in which two chicken bouillon cubes have been dissolved.

1 small onion, chopped fine
Butter or margarine
1-2 tablespoons cornstarch, mixed with small amount of milk to form thickening.

Milk to taste, 2-3 cups, depending on thickness desired

Cheese to taste, mild or medium cheddar, cut in small chunks

Celery stalk and top, or dash of celery salt

Garlic salt.

Method:

Sautee onions in butter until golden brown; add water with bouillon cubes melted, allow to simmer for a few minutes.

Add cornstarch thickening and immediately lower to medium heat; begin pouring in milk and toss in celery stalk and top (it gives good flavor).

Add chunks of cheese. When liquid reaches desired thickness, add vegetables of your choice, cooked and drained.

Add a dash of garlic salt and a pinch of pepper. Turn off heat and pour into plastic containers for freezer storage.

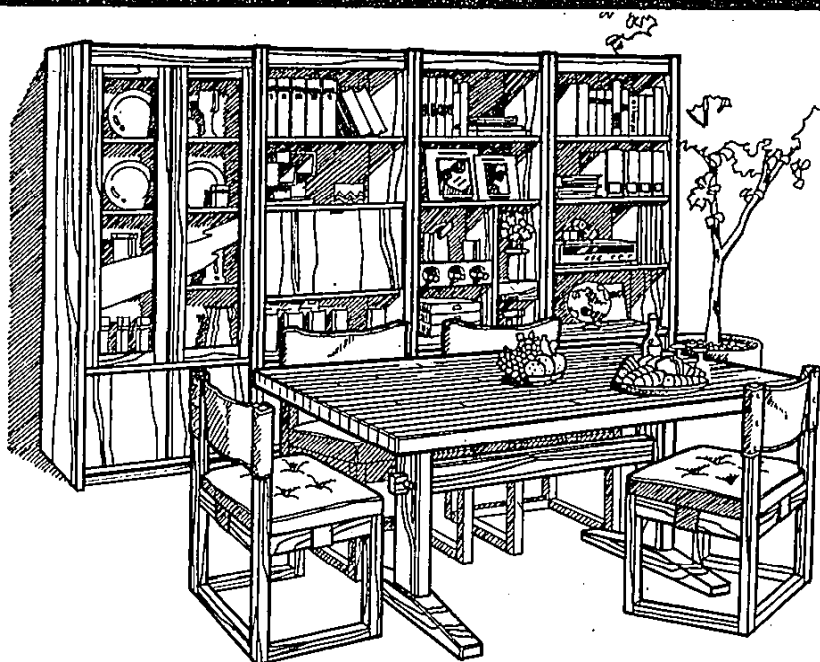
Cream of broccoli... 1 package chopped frozen broccoli, cooked and drained, or 2 stalks fresh broccoli, cooked.

Cream of vegetable... 1 package frozen mixed vegetables, cooked and drained, or 1 16-oz. can, drained.

Corn and potato chowder... 2 medium potatoes cooked in skins, then peeled and cut into chunks, and one can cream style corn.



Arlene Vanderleun lines up pans and containers to get ready a supply of homemade soups. (Staff photo by Art Emanuele)



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