



## A Question of Taste

By Hilary Keating Callaghan

# Don't sulk! Try an easy-on-the-cook week

When my youngest son was about 4, I made him a robe of quilted material printed with Richard Scary figures. Scary's book, "Busy, Busy World," which spoofs the stereotypes of various nationalities, was one of our favorites at the time. My husband has even done interpretive readings on Saint Patrick's Day of the story of Patrick Pig, who kisses the Blarney Stone and never stops talking again.

I have always had a problem trying to correspond pattern sizes with ready-to-wear sizes. Consequently, he was just growing into the robe when, after three years of hard wear, it began to disintegrate.

As his 7th birthday approached, he requested a new robe — one that I would make, not buy. Touched that he cared that I make it, I went out and — in a fit of "Nothing's-to-good-for-my-boy" — I bought the plushiest, most expensive terry cloth in the store. I spent the next four weeks force-feeding the too-thick terry cloth through my machine.

I finally arrived at the home stretch last night and had him try it on so that I

could adjust the hem. As soon as it was on his back, he whined that it was too hot, gave him a headache and he doesn't want to wear it.

**THERE ARE TWO** appropriate responses to such an announcement.

One is to respond that he is going to wear it because you're going to wrap it around his neck. The other is to respect his decision and simply resolve to never — ever — sew anything for him again. In fact, never try to do anything at all nice for him ever again.

This same situation arises frequently in regard to cooking.

Spend a week cultivating your own wild yeast for salt-rising bread. Your family will not only enjoy a special taste treat but will have a better understanding of what the pioneers went through before commercial yeast was available for bread-baking.

If you are fortunate enough to get as far as the baking stage before someone disposes of the foul-smelling potato-starter, you should end up with a fragrant, crusty loaf which is likely to be met with up-turned noses and the ques-

tion, "Why can't we just have plain, white store-bought bread like Grandma puts out on a plate at dinner?"

Anyone who spends any amount of time in the kitchen has his own examples of such lack of appreciation, of course. The options here are not as simply as with sewing, however. It is simply not practical to "force" anyone to eat anything.

Nor is it practical to refuse to food your family.

**THE BEST YOU** can do is retreat — or sulk, if you will.

This is not the best time to embark on any new ambitious cooking experiments. On the other hand, it is not recommended that you go too far in the other direction. Presumably you are eating the same food you are serving. Even a few days of hot dogs, canned soup, and packaged macaroni and cheese would add unbearable insult to injury.

Instead, plan a week of easy-on-the-cook, easily-identifiable, tasty dinners. You will benefit from the extra time away from the kitchen and your chil-

dren, especially, will probably not mind a week without special favors for dinner.

You might try some of the following recipes during that week.

### TOSSED SEAFOOD AND FRESH VEGETABLE SALAD

Serves 6

Salad greens  
1 1/2 cups sliced celery  
1 cup shredded carrots  
1 1/2 cups cooked potato balls or diced potatoes  
1/2 cup chopped green onions (bulbs and tops)  
2 cups fresh or canned lobster, shrimp, crabmeat, or tuna  
1 1/2 tsp. fresh lemon juice  
4 tsp. salad or olive oil  
1 1/2 tsp. salt  
1/4 tsp. ground black pepper  
Tomato slices or wedges  
Fresh parsley  
Sour cream (optional)

Line a bowl with washed dry salad greens. Top as desired with the vegetables and seafood. Combine lemon juice, oil, salt, and black pepper. Pour over

salad. Toss lightly. Garnish with fresh tomato slices or wedges and fresh parsley. If desired, serve with sour cream or mayonnaise, or a mixture of both.

Note: I used left-over white fish, flaked, for the fish in this salad and found the results delicious.

### VEGETARIAN BASKETS

Serves 4

1 large onion, chopped (1 cup)  
3 tbsp. margarine  
1 1/2 cups shredded Swiss cheese  
1/2 cup toasted wheat germ  
3 hard-cooked eggs, chopped  
2 tbsp. minced parsley  
1 1/2 tsp. chili powder  
1/4 tsp. salt  
1 can (8 oz.) refrigerated buttermilk biscuits

Cook onion in margarine until lightly browned. Mix with the next six ingredients set aside. Grease four 6-oz. custard cups. Press 2 biscuits into each cup, covering bottom and sides completely. Fill with cheese-egg mixture. Cut remaining two biscuits in half and stretch over filling. Bake at 450 degrees until biscuits are lightly browned

and cheese is melted, about 10 minutes. Serve with a hearty soup and green beans.

### PEPPER-CHEESE HASH

"A vegetarian Sloppy Joe"

Serves 4 to 6

3 tbsp. peanut oil  
2 onions, chopped  
8 large mushrooms, sliced  
4 to 6 Italian sweet peppers  
1 8-oz. can tomato sauce  
1 tsp. oregano  
1 garlic clove, minced  
Salt  
Freshly ground pepper  
6 oz. mozzarella cheese

Saute the onions and mushrooms in the oil until limp. Cut peppers in half, cut into 1-inch pieces. Add to the onion-mushroom mixture. Stir in the tomato sauce, oregano, garlic, salt, and pepper. Cut the cheese into chunks and place them on top of the mixture. Cover the pan and simmer for 15 minutes.

Just before serving, stir together and ladle over hot buttered toast or use between halves of crusty bread. (from "More Taste Than Money" by Harriet Hands)



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