

This Is Carefree Cookery

By Joyce Totten

The day of the casserole is here. No longer is the casserole confined to a hurried, last-minute family meal. The casserole, in any of its many decorative serving dishes, now graces the most formal table. Casserole cookery goes further back into history than most people realize. The first method of cooking was probably nothing more complicated than burying meat in live coals. As man became more civilized over the centuries, he invented woven reed baskets in which to cook his food.

The first one-dish meal was probably prepared by cooking meat and wild vegetables or roots together in a skin or reed basket. The American Indians of the Southwest still make waterproof baskets of this kind. Later, the hunter's spoils were tossed into a big pot on the fire to simmer into edibility. The word "casserole" means "little pot".

CASSEROLES probably came into being because a thrifty cook couldn't bear to throw away a bone with pieces of meat still clinging to it or a lone vegetable.

The virtues of the casserole are many. Some require long hours of cooking but require little attention during the process. Many can be made one day, refrigerated or frozen and served later.

CHILI PIE CASSEROLE
3 c. corn chips
1 large onion chopped
1 can chili, heated
1 c. grated Cheddar cheese
Place 2 cups of corn chips in a 2-quart baking dish. Arrange onion and half the cheese on top. Four chili over onion and cheese. Top with remaining corn chips and cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes. NOTE: All of cheese may be used as topping. Yield: 4-6 servings.

CHOW MEEN CASSEROLE
1 lb. hamburger
2 medium onions, chopped
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1/2 c. rice
1/4 t. pepper
1 T. soy sauce
1 1/2 c. warm water
1 can chow mein noodles
Brown meat; drain off fat. Add remaining ingredients except noodles. Pour into 1 1/2-quart casserole. Cover. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Top with noodles; bake uncovered for 15 minutes. Yield: 4 servings.

LEFT-OVER TURKEY CASSEROLE
3 T. butter
1 T. flour
1 c. chicken or turkey stock
3 T. sherry wine
Nutmeg
Salt and pepper
Milk
1 c. light cream, scalded
1 c. mushrooms, thinly sliced
3 egg yolks, beaten
1 t. onion juice
1 T. green pepper, finely chopped
3 c. turkey, diced
Heat butter and stir in the flour until mixture is bubbling, but not brown; gradually add stock and sherry. Cook for 3 minutes; season with a pinch of nutmeg, salt and pepper to taste. Bring the sauce to a boil; stir in the cream. Stirring occasionally, bring the sauce to a boil again and add the mushrooms cooked in butter. Add a little cold milk to the egg yolks; add to sauce slowly, stirring briskly. Add onion juice, green pepper and the turkey. Taste for seasoning. This mixture may be served on Chinese noodles or rice, or it may be divided into 6 individual casseroles or 1 large casserole. If served in a casserole, sprinkle top with fine bread crumbs and grated cheese. Dot with butter. Put the casseroles on a baking sheet and brown under the broiler or in a moderate oven. Serve bubbling hot. Yield: 6-8 servings.

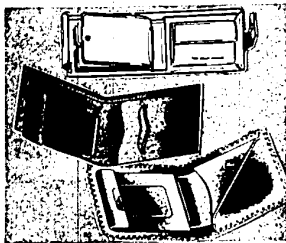
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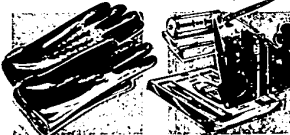
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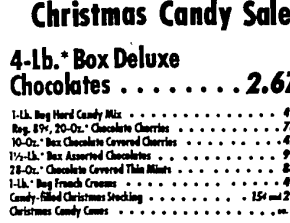
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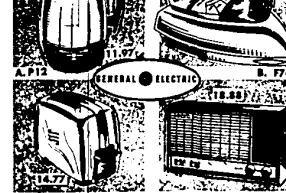
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