

**HANDBOOK FOR THE
BREAKFAST
TABLE: VARIED AND
ECONOMICAL DISHES**

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Handbook for the Breakfast Table: Varied and Economical Dishes by Mary Hooper

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BREAKFAST TABLE.

Varied and Economical Dishes.

BY
MARY HOOPER,
AUTHOR OF "FOR BETTER FOR WORSE," "PAPERS ON COOKERY," &c., &c.

SECOND EDITION.



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PREFACE.

IT is altogether needless to tell housekeepers that there is no meal so troublesome to arrange and provide for as breakfast, and that it is equally so whether from the requirements of the family it be early or late. Whilst a great deal of thought is given to ordering dinner, breakfast is left pretty much to the judgment of the cook, and as it is generally, in her opinion, an affair of secondary importance, the result is one directly tending to promote all the evils which follow in the wake of indigestion. But if we consider to how large a portion of the community it is of the first necessity that they should leave their homes in the morning physically fortified against the fatigues of an anxious day, it will at once be seen that it is at least of equal importance to provide a nourishing appetitive breakfast as a good dinner. Take, for instance, the case of a busy city man, who swallows in haste a breakfast of the truly national

type—which, although sufficiently expensive, is too often wanting in both the above-mentioned qualities—who rushes off to a day of wear and tear of body and mind, and is only sustained under it until a late hour in the evening by an eating-house sandwich and a glass of some liquid the quality of which he is too busy to criticize.

Is it any wonder that such an one has to seek the doctor's advice for headache, or, in the end, for some malady of incurable character which has been induced by a long course of neglected dietetic rules?

Then there are clerks and other brain-workers who are compelled during the day so to economize both time and money, that they can give neither the one nor the other to the unsatisfactory dinners of the chop-house, and who must wait until they return home, utterly exhausted, for the too-often badly-prepared evening meal.

If men in such circumstances could, before leaving for their business, have a suitable breakfast, how great a boon it would be to them! and how many lives, now sacrificed to the pressure of the times, might be prolonged if the physical powers were more duly sustained during the early part of the day by a good breakfast.

Of course, no cooking can be done without time or

trouble, and it is because our French neighbours spare neither in the exercise of the culinary art that they so greatly excel in it. Breakfast with them is never an expensive meal ; but it is, as the celebrated *chef* said of his sauce, "Prepared with brains." If, then, thought is taken the day before for the morrow's breakfast, it may be got up with little trouble and be both suitable and economical.

Now the number of dishes used for breakfast is, in the majority of English families, very limited. Bacon and eggs are the staple, the former generally unsatisfactory, being either over or under cured, too salt or too new ; it is besides expensive, a large portion of it running to fat.

New-laid eggs, when they can be procured in town, are very costly, they properly, after twenty-four hours, can only be described as fresh. The Cockney mind is not, however, very enlightened on this subject, and the vendors of eggs are persuaded, or at any rate try to persuade the public, that eggs are new-laid until they are "an apology for pepper."

The British cook has no idea of making these London eggs more palatable by the exercise of a little skill or the addition of some sauce, gravy, or cold meat, generally at hand even in households of very modest pretensions.

Kidneys, gradually rising to the price of unapproachable delicacies, are much in request, though the wonder is they should be, seeing that, dressed as they usually are, they are wasteful and unwholesome to the last degree. When thoroughly done, kidneys are most indigestible, and those who cannot eat them with the gravy well in them should forego them. One kidney dressed as directed in "*Kidneys Sautés*" will go as far as two dressed in the ordinary way.

It is an instance, if indeed one were needed, of the economy of well-prepared food.

Sausages—one is very unwilling to make allusions to so delicate a subject; but it really is amazing that, after all the revelations respecting them, and the great risk there is of getting diseased meat in so disguised a form, that people can be induced to eat those sold in the shops. If any one is reduced to doing so by sad necessity, there is no more to be said, but one can only pity those who, having the use of their hands and the means to procure a small Kent's mincing machine—an article saving both time and material, and most useful for a variety of purposes—refrain from making at home a very delicious and suitable breakfast delicacy. Some well-tried recipes are given by which sausages can readily be made of a variety of meats,

either with or without skins, and they are not so expensive as when bought at good shops.

Dried fish, of various kinds, is much used with us; of it can only be said, it may be relishing, but it is neither cheap nor wholesome. Chops and steaks are excellent in their way, but both are expensive; and the former appear too often to be relished when piquant sauces do not go well with tea and coffee. Of the steaks need it be said how often they are tough?

“Then what *are* we to have?” cries the perplexed housewife; “every thing nice is so expensive, and it is most difficult to provide variety from cheap materials.”

To this I submit that, although the price of provisions is at the present time enormous, and the general cost of living most serious for small incomes, the chief difficulty does not lie in the expense, but in the want of skill in making the most of things, and also in the want of forethought and management.

Take, as an illustration, a loin of mutton—either roasted or cut into chops it is very expensive; but if you take out the fillet and use for *roulades*, as directed in the following recipe, or simply cut it into neat cutlets and fry them (it may be done without injury to the upper cut of the joint), and you get dish No. 1. For No. 2, cut the meat off nearly level with the chop