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Selection and Care of Common Kitchen Utensils

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MATERIALS AND THEIR ADAPTATION TO COOKING PURPOSES

Material	Adaptation to Types of Cooking	Advantages	Disadvantages
Earthenware	Where little or no moisture is necessary as,—roasting, frying, baking.	Retains heat for some time. Heats evenly—less noisy than metals. Used for serving as well as cooking. Smooth, unaffected by foods. Suitable for storing foods.	Heavy to handle—chips and crackles. (When crackled is unsanitary).
Aluminum	Where moist or dry heat is necessary.	Light in weight and color—does not rust—very durable.	Darkens with use—more expensive than metals.
Enamel ware (plain color) Agateware (Mottled in color)	Where moist heat is necessary.	Smooth, easily cleaned, attractive in appearance, unaffected by acids or alkalis—used for both storing and cooking.	Chips off when heated to a great heat.
Iron and Steel	Where high temperature is retained for some time.	Takes and keeps an even heat, very durable, grows better and smoother with careful use.	Heavy to handle, rusts easily, loses its smooth surface.
Tinware	Where moisture is necessary.	Easily heated, fairly inexpensive, cleans easily, while coating is unworn.	Melts easily. If scratched underneath rusts. Warps badly when heated without liquids. Easily affected by acid foods. (should not be used for such foods).
Wire goods	Used in combination with solid pans and kettles.	Light in weight, quite inexpensive.	Not easily cleaned.
Wood	Where dry heat is used, as in planking meats.	Rather inexpensive, fairly light in weight, a poor conductor of heat, pleasing in appearance, less noisy and less hard than metals.	Absorbent, warps, cracks, hardens, often, stains badly.

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Selection and Care of Common Kitchen Utensils

Common Materials Used in Making Utensils

Before choosing one utensil over another the buyer should consider the materials of which they are made, and the temperature they will permit. Some materials can be heated to a very high temperature and not be affected, while others can not.

PURCHASING UTENSILS

Selection at random results in cluttering up equipment cupboards or racks with many almost useless articles. The housewife should carefully consider her purchases before making her decision. Keeping in mind the following points will assist her in placing relative merits properly:

1. Construction
Size, shape, material used, type, and balance.
2. Efficiency
Degree to which it is fitted to its task, results obtained, time and labor saved, convenience.
3. Utility
Wearing capacity, renewal frequency.
4. Economy
Purchasing, renewal, care and related costs.

Specific Points Relating to Construction

Construction of Handles—

- (1) are they desirable, or would a bail be preferable?
- (2) are they long enough?
- (3) are they riveted or soldered? If riveted, has it been well done?
- (4) if other means of fastening has been used is it a strong method?
- (5) if the handle is wooden, is there an opening at the base that would permit food to enter?
- (6) if a knife or similar small article, is the steel merely pushed up into the handle and fastened by adhesion?

Materials for Handles—

- (1) Birch wood or beech makes the best handles.
- (2) Rubber handles shrink, swell and burn; hence are unsatisfactory.

(3) Ivory, pearl and bone handles are quite durable, but blacken easily and are easily loosened by moisture.

(4) Heavy wire or small iron rods are sometimes used for handles and are also very durable and very sanitary, but hard on the hands, and conduct the heat quickly. They also add much weight when wire is made into a handle for the article by wrapping round and round until the handle is covered, as it is in some egg whisks; cleaning is made more difficult, and they are more tiring due to increased weight.

Cover—

Is it a good one for the purpose?

Has it a properly built handle, which is easily cleaned, and will stay cool?

Has it proper extension beyond the rim or edge of the utensil it covers?

Is the weight satisfactory?

Does it fit well?

Lips—

Are they on the proper side for use?

Are they so shaped that pouring may be easily done without spilling?

If attached to the body of utensil are they well fastened on to prevent leakage?

Cleaning Problem—

Is the utensil free from corners and seams?

Is it free from grooves, rough edges or rolled rims?

If wire goods, are any wires wound around on edge or frame wire permitting particles to lodge there? Or is it attached by soldering where this contact is made, adding strength as well as offering greater ease in cleaning?

Size and Shape—

Are the size and shape adapted to the amount and kind of cooking to be done?

Safety—

Does its construction make it a safe container?

CLEANING AND CARE OF UTENSILS

Iron and Steel

Care—Keep utensils free from rust. Keep utensils smooth. When food has burnt on them remove with wire dish cloth. Very often by more heating the burnt food will become very dry and will flake off. Do not permit steel knives to become hot. Cogs (as in eggbeaters) should not be washed with water, as they could not be dried very well, and should be oiled frequently to make operation easy. A solution of soda water (6 qt. water to 1 lb. soda) is an

effective cleaning solution when utensils are allowed to stand in it at boiling temperature for a short period.

Rust—Coating utensils which are put away for awhile will prevent rusting. Paraffin or unsalted fat may be used for this coating.

To Remove Rust—If rust is light scour with bath brick, fine emery, or kerosene, or if heavily rusted let remain in kerosene long enough to soften, then scour with bath brick, etc. If rust is extremely heavy, an application of dilute acid, followed by ammonia water to neutralize the acid. It should then be washed and oiled.

Aluminum

Only mild abrasives as whiting or bon ami should be used in scouring so soft a metal to avoid scratching. Steel wool is also satisfactory. Since aluminum is attacked very easily, only neutral soaps should be used in washing. Polish occasionally with whiting. When pounding is necessary use wooden mallets rather than steel hammers and likewise use wooden spoons for scraping, and not a metal one. To remove burnt foods, soak in hot water. Bad stains sometimes require coarse abrasives, yet it scratches the metal. When necessary, bad cases may be cleaned in an oxalic acid solution (4T oxalic acid crystals (poison) to 1 gallon cold water). Allow this to stand over night. Boil for five minutes (not more). Then wash the kettle with soap and water before using. Since the solution is a poisonous one, care must be observed in handling it.

Enamel and Agateware

Sapolio and Dutch cleanser will remove ordinary stains. If utensil has seams a very stiff fibre brush or toothpick may be used. When general cleaning will not remove stains from badly burnt food, and solution seems necessary, it may be used with care.

Tin and Tinned Wire Goods

General methods of cleaning may be used. When necessary a soda solution (1 lb. washing soda to 6 qts. of water) may be used for cleaning. Tarnish lengthens the life of tin, and should therefore not be removed.

Wood

Avoid using hot water on wood. Fine sand is superior to most soaps for scrubbing. Use only neutral soap when soap is necessary, for alkali darkens the wood. Scrub with circular motion. Rinse with the grain so fibers will lie flat. Steak planks should be rubbed thoroughly with food oil until it has absorbed all it will. Color of wood may be restored by using steel wool and weak hydrochloric acid. Rough places may be smoothed away by rubbing it with steel wool. Dents may be removed by placing a very wet cloth pad over dent and applying a hot iron over pad. This forms steam which will draw up the fibers of the wood.

Zinc

Suds from mild soap is best for cleaning. Kerosene dissolves films of grease and helps to remove inclosed dirt. Where food comes in contact with the zinc, bath brick may be used instead of kerosene. Zinc scouring paste may be made of kerosene and baking soda. Rinse surface thoroughly with hot water following the use of this paste. Acids will remove tarnish, but for a temporary period. A solution of one part vinegar to twelve parts water may be used for this purpose.

Common Cleaning Materials for Utensils

Kerosene—a useful cleaning oil, because it dissolves wax and rosin. It is used for cleaning machinery.

Steel Wool—sold in packages at hardware stores, paint shops, etc. It is steel shavings in different sizes. The coarser the more rapidly it works, and the more deeply it scratches. It should be followed by using the very fine grade to smooth down the surface. The finer is graded as "00" and the coarser up to number 3. The "00" grade is best for most kitchen uses.

Metal Polishes—may be bought as powders, pastes or liquids. Some contain no alkali (soda or potash). Polishes for brass, copper and nickel should contain some acid, while silver and gold polish should contain no acid. Only small quantities should be bought at one time, and covers should be kept tightly screwed to prevent drying or weakening.

Whiting—is a powder, but may be easily made into pastes for cleaning. Whiting with dilute acids (kerosene also may be added) makes good metal polish and may be used for aluminum, brass, copper, nickel. Whiting with warm water may be used for cleaning white enamel paint. Whiting with steel wool may be used for cleaning aluminum. Whiting with alcohol (wood or denatured) may be used for silver cleaning. Whiting with ammonia may be used for nickel cleaning.

Bath Brick—a powdered brick dust, used as a grit in cleaning heavy utensils. It is the best steel cleaner. (When cleaning steel knives it should be applied with a cork.)

Acids—dissolve dark oxides that are formed on exposed metals. Lemon juice and vinegar are safe acids to use in cleaning utensils. Oxalic acid, hydrochloric acids, salts of lemon and citric acid may be used for various cleaning purposes, but since they are poisonous, great care should be exercised in using them. Rinse well after using and store safely out of children's reach.

Ammonia—concentrated ammonia should be bought and then diluted with water, making one part ammonia to 5 parts water. Cloudy condition of ammonia is usually indicative of quality.

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