

Lamb Made Easy

New lamb and mutton products may boost lamb consumption, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Research Service. The newly developed products are lamb curry and rice, sausage, lamb loaf, shanks and rice, rolled stuffed breast and riblets. All of these are either frozen or refrigerated items.

In two preliminary consumer taste tests, curry and rice, sausage and loaf were the most popular foods. All products were rated excellent by a large wholesaler of prepared foods.

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Fishy-tasting Fish?

If your fishermen bring home fish fillets that smell or taste "fishy"--don't blame the fish. Blame the fishermen.

Beverly Lundgren, home economist at the University of Minnesota, says good fresh fish never smell or taste fishy if they're cleaned promptly.

The sooner you clean and refrigerate or freeze a freshly caught fish, the better. But never freeze a summer-caught fish without removing the gills and entrails, since these give fish that "fishy" quality.

Remember that the putrefying bacteria present on every fish multiply rapidly on a dead fish held in warm surface water. A dead fish held an hour in water 70 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit will taste fishy. An ice chest one-quarter full of crushed ice is ideal for storing or transporting your catch. Freeze your fillets if you have to travel a long distance home.

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Cleaning Cast Iron Skillets

If you use cast iron skillets and have trouble with rust forming on the inside, check your dishwashing procedure.

Wanda Olson, extension specialist in household equipment at the University of Minnesota, says iron utensils should be washed in hot suds, rinsed promptly and dried thoroughly to avoid rusting.

Scouring the interior with either cleansers or steel wool soap pads will remove the seasoning. Iron utensils shouldn't be washed in a dishwasher because detergent will also remove the seasoning. When the seasoning is removed, food sticks to the pan and it will rust easily.

Pans may be reseasoned by brushing on a little vegetable oil and heating the pans in a 250 to 300 degree Fahrenheit oven for 2 to 3 hours.

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The Versatile Almond

It's amazing how few American women realize the value of raw almonds in cooking. They can add a crunchiness and goodness to almost any crisp vegetable salad and a very interesting flavor to many desserts, including cakes. Raw blanched almonds also perk up chow mein and similar Chinese dishes. And if you add a few almonds to chicken salad, there's a delectable new taste.

Beverly Lundgren, home economist at the University of Minnesota, says almonds are very easy to blanch and it's better to blanch your own than to buy the blanched variety. Simply drop the almonds in boiling water for a few minutes and the skins will slip right off.

Finally, never make the mistake of substituting peach pits or apricot kernels for almonds. These pits are very poisonous and can cause severe illness, even death.