

# WHY PSYCHOLOGISTS SAY: DON'T FORCE CHILDREN TO EAT THINGS THEY DON'T LIKE

Variety Is Keynote of Cure—Dress Up Food, Teach Them How to Cook. A Famous Home Economist Shows You The Way.

By Betty Crocker

WHEN LITTLE JESSIE, aged five, arrives at the "won't eat—I don't like it" stage, what does the average mother do? She either applies the hairbrush to Jessie, or wheedles her into taking each mouthful. According to recent discussions of the subject by the most competent authorities on child psychology, either of these methods is almost certain to lead to distressing complications in the development of the child.

Diana Holzheimer, eminent Chicago authority on child care and training, says: "Of course, children need substantial food and plenty of it, but they also need to enjoy that food and to relax while eating it. The pleasure of eating can be utterly destroyed for a child who knows that, regardless of taste or preference, he must eat what is served him—because it is 'good' for him. He immediately becomes tense and resistant, a lump seems to come into his throat, it is hard to swallow. How can he look forward to mealtimes? How can he properly digest the food he manages to choke down?"

"The child cannot understand his mother's anxiety to protect his health," she says. "He only knows that she makes him eat food that he does not want. Since he is made to eat it, he transfers his dislike to the mother who forces it upon him.

"Ingenuity and imagination when applied to menu-making can work wonders. Variety will stimulate curiosity and interest. Once interest is aroused, there will be less difficulty in getting the child to eat the food his growing body needs."

### Don't Coax the Child

Various eminent psychologists have expressed virtually the same idea. "Coaxing or bribing a child to eat," says Dr. Lorine Pruette, consultant psychologist and noted child authority, "usually serves only to intensify the child's dislike for the food in dispute. The child wants to dominate the situation. If you do not give in, he or she builds up what may become a real dislike for the food."

Dr. Samuel N. Stevens, noted Chicago psychologist, agreed. "To be 100% effective, food must be properly digested. But few things upset a child's digestion



Joan Brodel, twelve-year-old red-headed actress who played Robert Taylor's little sister in "Camille", is learning to cook by making all the desserts for her family. Secretly, she confesses that cooking's more fun than acting in the movies.

faster than 'forceful feeding.' The emotional strain of an argument all too frequently results in a 'nervous' stomach."

Beulah France, R. N., noted New York child authority, states: "My experience as a registered nurse has proved to me the inadvisability of forcing a child to eat any particular food which is distinctly disliked, unless the doctor has definitely said that it must be included in the diet. The many pediatricians with whom I have discussed this problem have all agreed that, with the exception of milk, a satisfactory substitute can always be found."

### Meal Times Should Be Happy Times

"Meal time should be a happy time

for children," she says. "A cheerful attitude of mind makes them enjoy the food, and enjoyment of food is a great aid to digestion. Very often intestinal upsets, which occur in the twenties or thirties, or even perhaps in the forties, can be traced back to the childhood days during which the foundation is laid for health throughout a lifetime."

### Give Them Something Different

Variety is the keynote of cure, according to all these experts. And here is where every mother can exercise her own particular brand of ingenuity.

Next time little Jessie turns up her infinitesimal nose at her carrots, don't scold or coax—just put your wits to work and surprise Jessie into the kind of eating habits that will make her grow up to be a big strong girl. Or to make meals even more interesting, plan menus she can help prepare. Teach her to cook. If she has a hand in the preparation of her own food—no matter if she only stirs—she will eat eagerly.

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## Dramatizing Foods for Children

Children love dramatized foods. It is surprising how easily picturesque and interesting dishes may be arranged to tempt the most stubborn childish appetites.

**PORCUPINES:** A favorite "one-dish meal"! Add ½ cup uncooked rice to 1 lb. ground beef. Season with salt and a little chopped onion. Shape into balls, and drop into hot bacon drippings to brown on all sides. Then add 2½ cups water, and cook 30 minutes (or until rice is done). Then add 2 cups canned tomatoes and 5 potatoes (pared and cut in halves lengthwise). Season with more salt and pepper, and cook another 30 minutes. As the rice cooks, it puffs up and pops out of the meat balls . . . reminding one of bristling porcupines.

**TURTLES:** Peel 6 medium-sized potatoes, remove the center of each with apple corer, and draw a frankfurter or wiener through each hole. Place in baking pan with 4 tbsp. drippings and 1 cup milk. Bake 1 hour in a moderate oven, 350° F. They look just like turtles in their shells!

**THREE MEN IN A BOAT:** Hollow

out part of a baked potato so that it resembles a boat, and fill the hollow with creamed chipped beef and peas. (Be sure to frizzle the beef in butter before adding it to the cream sauce . . . to improve the flavor.) Cut a slice from a firm piece of cheese and make it stand upright in the boat with the aid of a wooden pick. Three mushrooms on edge of potato boat are "3 men."

**THREE-RING CIRCUS:** Creamed Chicken, Mashed Potato, Peas and Carrots . . . each in a Toast Ring!

**CARROT EGGS IN SPINACH NESTS:** Arrange small pieces of cooked buttered carrots to resemble "eggs" in "nests" formed of cooked spinach.

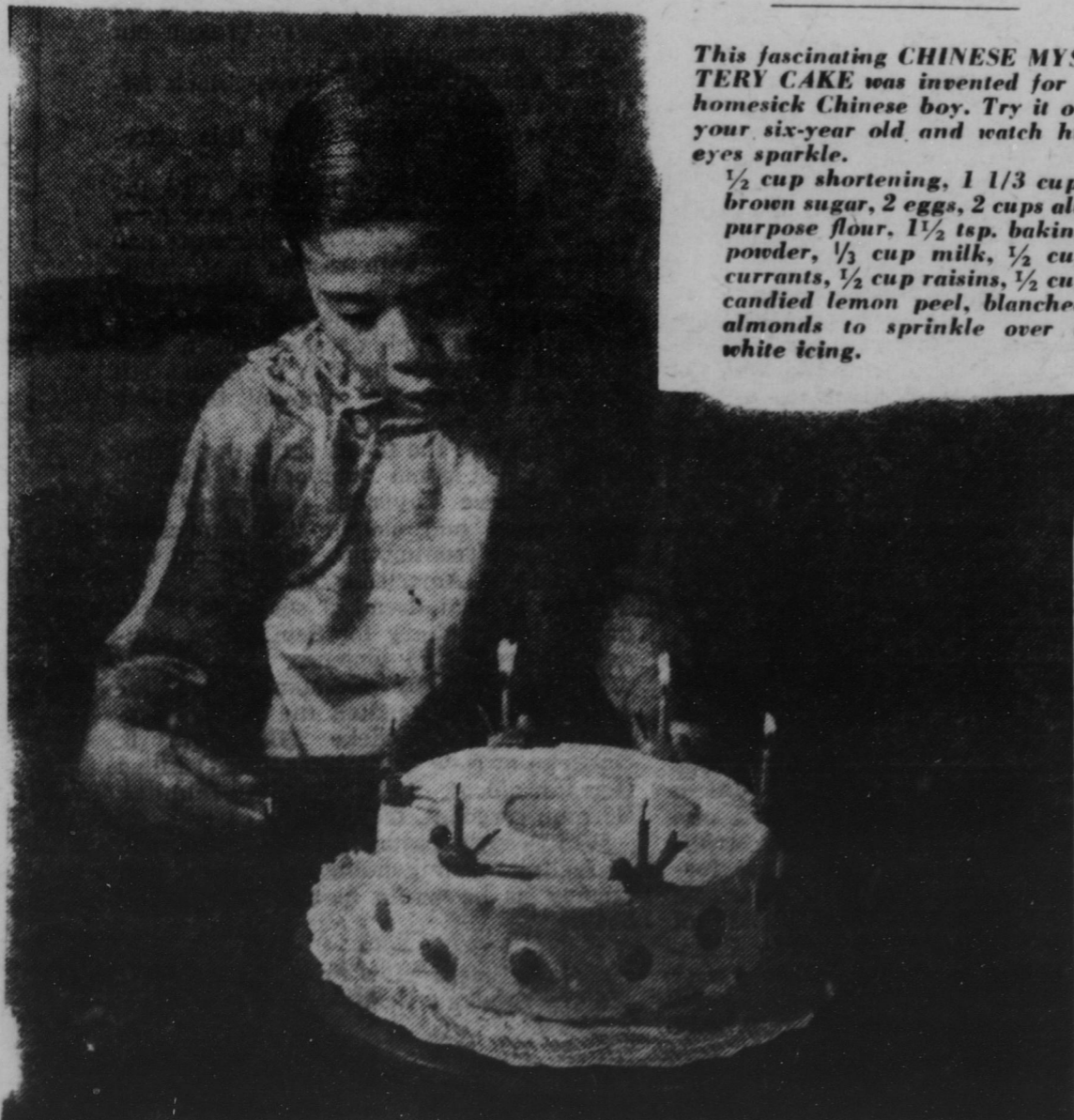
**EGGS AND CHEESE IN ASPARAGUS NESTS:** Place poached or shirred egg on a round of toast. Surround it with creamed asparagus to form a "nest."

**CASSEROLE SURPRISE:** Arrange alternate layers of cut-up cooked leftover vegetables and white sauce in a buttered baking dish. Cover with buttered crumbs or wheaties. Bake 20 minutes in a moderate oven, 350° F. The "mystery" of what the dish contains will fascinate the children!

**BIRD'S NEST PUDDING:** Apples and custard baked together . . . to look like a whole row of birds' nests in a field of yellow flowers! Place 8 cored apples in a shallow baking dish (8 by 12 inches), sprinkle them with sugar and cinnamon, and partially bake them for ½ hour. Make a custard by mixing together 3 beaten eggs, 1/3 cup sugar, 1 tsp. salt, ½ tsp. nutmeg, and 3 cups milk. Strain, and pour around the apples in the baking dish. Bake 1 hour in a slow oven, 325° F.

**CAKE LOLLYPOPS:** Put daintily colored cake squares on ends of lollypop sticks. Arrange them in a flower holder in center of a large plate or platter . . . with balls of ice cream around.

**BUNNY PEARS:** Half of a cooked pear will look just like a bunny if you press into it 2 long almonds for ears, a piece of pimento or cherry for a little pink nose, 2 cloves for the eyes, and a fluff of marshmallow for the cottontail. A little carrot made of yellow cheese for the bunny to nibble on always delights the children.



This fascinating CHINESE MYSTERY CAKE was invented for a homesick Chinese boy. Try it on your six-year old and watch his eyes sparkle.

½ cup shortening, 1 1/3 cups brown sugar, 2 eggs, 2 cups all-purpose flour, 1½ tsp. baking powder, ½ cup milk, ½ cup currants, ½ cup raisins, ½ cup candied lemon peel, blanched almonds to sprinkle over a white icing.