

**“THE KITCHEN FRONT”** by Bruce Blunt Friday 20 September 1940

Transcript of ACTUAL SCRIPT of radio broadcast

## **CARROTS AND ROOT VEGETABLES**

There is something comic about a carrot. It is always associated with donkeys, and huge imitation carrots are flung across the stage in pantomimes. There is a well known comic song about boiled beef and carrots.

But it survives all the joking. In fact, I think it gains in reputation by being made the subject of a song, because all the songs which mention food are about pleasant sorts of food. No one has ever set anything so depressing as sago pudding to music.

A lot of cooks, whenever they see a carrot or some of the other better known root vegetables, such as turnips and Swedes, are seized with one desire – that is to boil and mash them. They can think of nothing else to do.

Now I am very fond of these vegetables mashed myself, but I do think that they might sometimes be allowed to show themselves without being reduced to pulp. Also mashing properly done needs butter, and we all know that there is not too much of that about nowadays. The process, too, is apt to take some of the colour out of the vegetables.

I am really raising all these objections to console myself for the fact that I can no longer have mashed Swedes with a great lump of butter in them. If you have the butter to spare, don't forget the black pepper with mashed swedes.

Many people have never had them any other way, and are rather scared at the thought of chunks of swede served in a dish, but I can assure you that there is nothing to be afraid at all. You get the fullest possible flavour from the vegetable cooked and served in that way.

And have you ever tried hot beetroot? Small ones are very good served whole, and larger ones can be done in the casserole. You boil them, take off their skins and cut them in slices. You then put the slices into a casserole with some dripping and some finely chopped onion, fry them for a few minutes, add a little brown stock, pepper and salt to taste, and simmer for five minutes more.

Perhaps a little unexpectedly, carrots make a very good curry. You boil them first, cut them into fairly thick rounds, and simmer them gently in a well-made curry sauce for half an hour. Or, if you've the firing to spare, you can cut them up raw and simmer them in the curry from the beginning.

Boiled turnips make a very good pie, but before you try to do anything with a boiled turnip, please drain it thoroughly, for it's a rather watery thing. Turnip pie is very simple. You boil the turnips until they are nearly done. cut them in slices, arrange these in a pie dish with seasoning of pepper and salt, add a little milk or white stock, cover with breadcrumbs, and a sprinkling of grated cheese, and bake to a nice brown in the oven.

Some people when they see a parsnip, have only one idea, that is to give it away as quickly as possible. They dislike the strong flavour. If you find that a parsnip is a little too emphatic, try mixing it with mashed potato. You will probably become gradually converted, and end up by calling for your parsnips neat.

This reminds me of parsnip wine, and, in spite of sugar rationing, a good many people still seem interested in wine-making, so I want to implore them not to be in a hurry to make parsnip and other wines from root vegetables just now. These roots make much better wine after they have been in store all the winter.

Dorcas always make such wines in February or March. Many people fail to make good wine because they will use the vegetables while they are still watery and immature. This includes parsnip, mangold and beetroot wine.

Everyone know about beetroot salad (in fact this is the only thing that lots of people know about a beetroot) but we are apt to forget that other vegetables make very good salads when diced up and mixed with other vegetables such a peas and onions. This is useful to remember when green stuff for salads is not too plentiful.

And by the way, when you are getting beetroot ready for salad, don't skin it before you actually want to make the salad. It loses colour quickly once it is skinned.

Goodbye till tomorrow, I shall try answer some of your letters then.

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World Carrot Museum