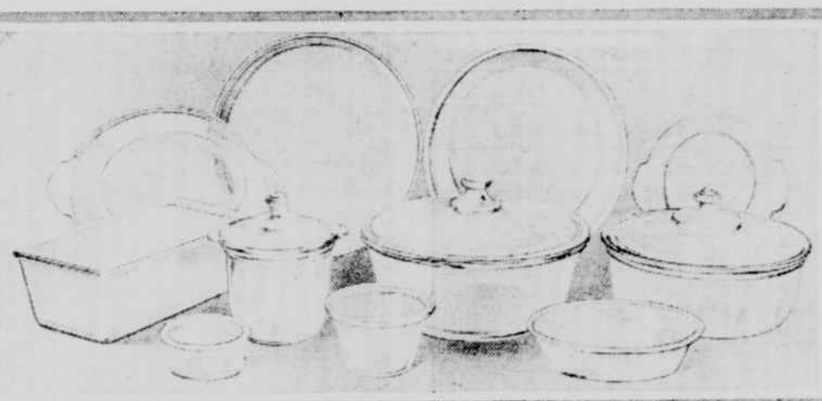
Housekeeping as a Profession

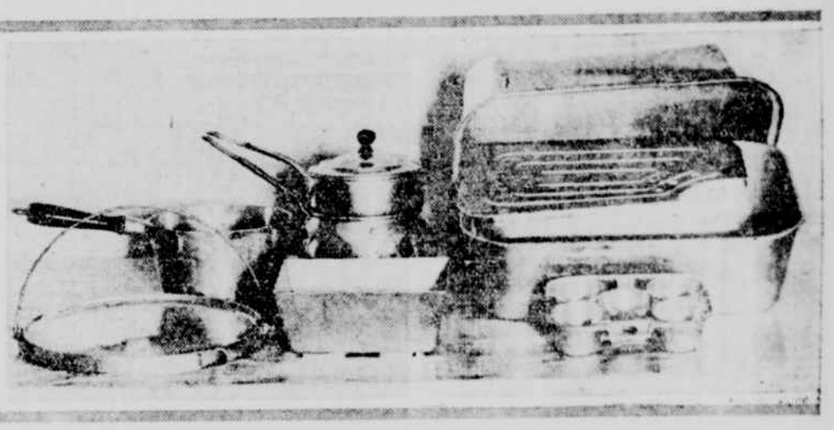
Brains versus Drudgery

POT NO LONGER CALLS KETTLE BLACK—BOTH ARE WHITE

Good Old Standbys of Iron, Tin, Earthenware and Agate Enamel.



The New Glass Cooking Ware That Is Both Tough and Transparent.



Aluminum Dishes de Luxe, Both Cast and Sheet Metal.

By JENOISE BROWN,

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THE temptations that beset St. Anthony were as nothing compared with the temptations of the modern housewife when she goes into a fully equipped hardware store. Her intentions may be never so prudent and economical; they all go to swell the collection of paving stones in that region where efficiency is so highly developed that every wave of reform is a signal for new state roads. If she means to buy some one little thing that is simple and cheap—like a strainer or an egg-beater—her case is hopeless. She will see anywhere from a dozen to fifty equally cheap, simple and absolutely indispensable aids to good housekeeping, and it is can-openers to washing machines that she will spend every cent she has with her and send home the rest C. O. D.

When the bill arrives, the titular head of the house will probably recall with a sigh sundry misty recollections that an old duffer named Homer, whose long life was misspent in writing college textbooks, said somewhere that in his day and generation the simple and law-abiding spit was sufficient for every culinary purpose. From king to helot, everybody was concerned principally in getting hold of enough food for the family; the little niceties of its preparation were minor details that did not for a moment distract the attention of Penelope from her loom or divert Nausicaa from the weekly wash.

Or, if the classics are not in his line, he may recall the good old days in this, his native land, when great-grandmother prided herself upon her ample chimney piece and her store of iron kettles and shining brass and copper pots—not to mention the same old spit, which provided savory roasts for the family even while it drew tears from the small boy whose "stent" was to turn it until the meat was done.

He remembers also that grandmother—and even mother—led the simple life, so far as cooking utensils were concerned. But just here his recollections and regrets are likely to receive an abrupt check with the crisp reminder that this is the twentieth century; that housekeeping is now a profession, and that efficiency requires proper tools in the kitchen as well as in the factory. In short, grandmother is a back number, and her good old cumbersome ways have gone into the discard.

THE CENTRE OF THE HOUSEHOLD.

In these days of apotheosized housewifery the kitchen receives more attention than any other room in the house. It may have a coal range to insure a steady supply of hot water and an even heat for all-day cookery—especially in winter, when the said heat is grateful and comforting—but also it must have a gas or electric range of the most approved pattern. Gas and electricity, also, mean many utensils that require heat or power and that greatly lessen the labor of housework. Washing machines, dish-washers, irons, coffee percolators, chafing dishes, broilers, toasters—their name is legion. Most of these appliances require electricity, but there are a goodly number that do very well with gas.

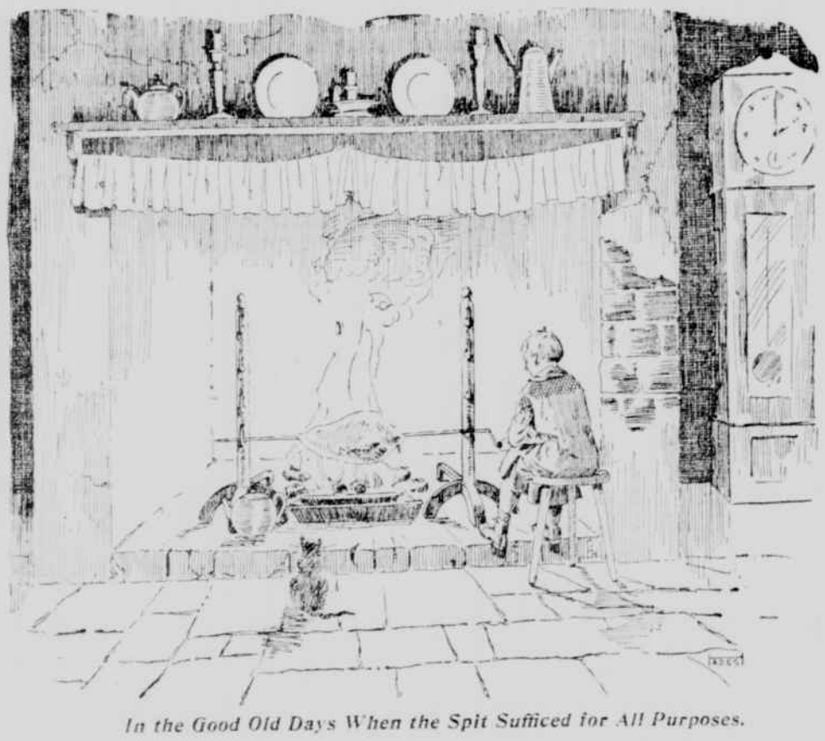
And aside from these specially constructed appliances, the cooking utensils designed for ordinary use are made in as many as six different materials and more nearly sixty shapes.

This may sound exaggerated, but it is not so. Each material and pattern is especially suited for the work it has to do. Moreover, a cooking utensil made of some one material may be exactly suited to the preparation of one kind of food and equally unfitted for another.

ALUMINUM THE BEAUTIFUL.

Take, for instance, aluminum. This light and good-looking metal is most popular for cooking utensils, yet a certain doubt attaches to it because of the stories told about what happens to acid foods if they are cooked in aluminum pots or pans. Therefore, the burning question as regards aluminum is: Do acids affect it to a dangerous degree?

It has been proved that they do not. At the instance of "Good Housekeeping Magazine" tests to define the action of various acids upon aluminum were made by experts in the Institute of Industrial Research, Washington, and they give us the comforting knowledge that we do not consume any appreciable amount of aluminum with tomatoes cooked in a saucepan made of this metal. It was established, however, that the presence of salt increases the action of the acid upon aluminum, so in boiling fresh tomatoes or other green vegetables it is best to add the salt when the cooking is nearly done.



In the Good Old Days When the Spit Sufficed for All Purposes.

The effect of alkalies upon aluminum has also been made the subject of experiment. It was shown that no effect was produced when cold distilled water, to which had been added a one-half per cent solution of cooking soda—either with or without a one-half per cent salt solution—was allowed to stand in an aluminum saucepan. But when the water containing these solutions was heated, there was a vigorous attack upon the metal.

It cannot be denied that the alkalinity of ordinary city water makes a dark stain upon an aluminum kettle. One way to prevent this difficulty is to neutralize with vinegar or acetic acid all water that is to be boiled in an aluminum vessel. The amount of acid required can be determined only by experiment. Another way to keep the kettle clean and bright is to wash it after using with soap and water, adding a vigorous final scrubbing with whiting. On account of its poisonous nature, oxalic acid—so strongly recommended by some manufacturers—should not be used for cleaning aluminum or for any purpose that means its presence in the kitchen. It is too dangerous to trust outside of the medicine closet.

CAST AND SHEET ALUMINUM.

Two kinds of aluminum cooking utensils are in general use, the sheet and the cast aluminum. The sheet aluminum is much lighter in weight than the cast, which contains about 5 per cent of copper.

A request received at The Tribune Institute a short time ago called for estimates upon the cost of both sheet and cast aluminum outfits. The cast ware is not suitable for all kinds of utensils, but in making the desired estimates we used as many as possible of this type, supplying the remainder from those made in sheet aluminum. A comparison of the cost of the two outfits shows that the substitution of nine pieces of cast ware for corresponding pieces made up in the sheet metal adds considerably to the expense of the outfit.

COST OF COMPLETE OUTFIT IN SHEET ALUMINUM.

Article.	*Capacity.*	*Retail Price.*
Lipped saucepan and cover	2 qts.	.90
Lipped saucepan	1 pt.	.35
Berlin saucepan	2 qts.	1.00
Shallow stew pan	1 qt.	.50
Preserving kettle	12 qts.	2.40
Sheet tea kettle	5 qts.	3.75
Double boiler	2 qts.	2.00
Steamer sauce pot	4 qts.	2.50
Heavy household frying pan		1.90
Cast round griddle	12 in.	2.50
4 seamless bread pans	60c. each	2.40
2 jelly cake pans	35c. each	.70
Tubed cake pan		.90
2 seamless shallow cake pans	70c. each	1.40
Muffin pan	9 cup	.85
2 pie plates	35c. each	.70
Seamless double roaster		5.25
Colander		1.50
Measure cup		.30
Measure	1 qt.	1.00
Funnel		.45
Soup strainer		.70
2 tablespoons	10c. each	.20
2 teaspoons	6c. each	.12
Measuring spoons		.25
Total		$34.52

COST OF THE NINE UTENSILS MADE IN CAST ALUMINUM.

Article.	*Capacity.*	*Retail Price.*
Double boiler	2 qts.	$3.25
Skillet	9 in.	2.45
Griddle	12 in.	2.50
Saucepan (double lipped)	2 qts.	2.20
Berlin saucepan and cover	3 pts.	2.85
Preserving kettle	10 qts.	5.20
Tea kettle	5 qts.	3.70
4 Bread pans	1.50 each	6.00
Muffin pan		1.50
Total		$29.65
Total cost of complete equipment of cast and sheet aluminum ware combined		$46.47

In spite of the increased cost, however, the cast ware has certain advantages which justify the higher price. Experiments made in The Tribune Institute laboratory to determine the difference between the two types of utensils in conductivity and retention of heat showed that the cast aluminum is more desirable for the long, slow processes of cooking, while utensils made of sheet aluminum, which heat more quickly but do not retain the heat so well, should be given the work which requires speed.

In general, though, it has been found that utensils made of aluminum, while sufficiently satisfactory for baking and roasting, are especially adapted to the kind of cooking which requires quick heating.

Utensils of this metal are comparatively expensive, but they are also exceedingly good to look at. As to practical advantages, they are light, easy to handle, durable if given intelligent care, and lend themselves to a wide variety of uses.

THE TEST THAT PROVES ENAMEL WARE.

Enamel ware, while possessing many and enthusiastic friends, also has its enemies. The latter, though, would probably be reduced to a minority if it was generally understood that the gray ware is more satisfactory than the other colors, and also that the three-minute heat test will search out the hidden weakness of the most plausible looking piece of enamel. To prove its wearing qualities, put an empty enamel vessel directly over the burner on a gas stove that consumes at least sixteen feet of gas per hour; let it stand three minutes, then throw in half a cupful of cold water. If the dish under test neither chips nor warps, it may safely be elected to a place in the kitchen with the comfortable assurance that it is a good investment to buy it and more of its kind. If it fails to stand the test, the ash heap is its natural resting place.

Good enamel ware should be able to withstand sudden changes of temperature without having its face cracked, but no self-respecting piece of this ware, however durable, will permit the scraping or digging of food from its smooth surface. Of course, it chips under such treatment. Enamel chips, regarded as seasoning for food, are not pleasant, but one comfort is that they are easily detected by a sensitive tongue.

When dealing with enamel ware it is well to avoid not only the fatal knife, but also such strenuous measures as the application of lye or cleaning powders which contain free alkalies. These may not actually remove the enamel bodily, but they are fatal to its beauty.

While some cases of lead poisoning have supposedly been traced to enamel ware, especially in Europe, the best grades of this kind of ware are free from lead. If there is any question of its presence it is wise to subject it to the following test: Beat an egg and allow it to stand in the suspected dish. If the enamel is discolored, this is sufficient proof that lead is present. The dish should be discarded at once.

The best grades of enamel ware are not affected by acids or salt, but even these suffer under the attacks of alkalies, such as baking soda. Therefore, they should not be used for heating or holding alkaline solutions.

Long experience with the best grades of enamel ware has proved it to be inexpensive and excellent for general use. It conducts heat a little more quickly than aluminum, but its power of retention is less.

A Country Kitchen of To-day, with All Modern Conveniences.

THE MANY VIRTUES OF IRON.

Iron endures intense heat and is almost everlasting. The longer it is used the better it is. The iron kettle and spider hold their own amid more modern utensils in every completely equipped kitchen because they are so particularly well suited to cooking processes like frying, boiling and simmering.

The great convenience of an iron vessel lies in the fact that it is not an especially good conductor of heat, although it retains it for a long time. It is so inexpensive, as well as durable, that its use makes for economy. It is affected by acids just as aluminum is by alkalies; therefore acid foods should not be allowed to stand in iron utensils. In fact, it may be laid down as a general principle that no food should be allowed to *stand* in any metal container.

Russian iron is an expensive sheet iron of good quality, especially suitable for roasting and breadpans. As to cleansing and putting away, the same rule applies to all iron utensils. Whether cheap or comparatively costly, they all rust easily. Therefore all iron cooking vessels should be cleaned as soon as possible after using. Scour vigorously and put away. This will keep them in the best condition.

Steel utensils have much the same characteristics as iron. Steel endures intense heat, is of medium weight, inexpensive and not hard to keep clean. It is affected by acids to such a degree that it discolors acid fruits. Steel cooking pots and pans have the same uses as iron, but steel has the additional advantage of being suitable for roasting and baking pans and for the smaller kettles.

COPPER OUR GRANDMOTHERS' PRIDE.

Of all the metals used for cooking utensils, copper has the greatest degree of heat conductivity. Copper vessels are extremely durable and in spite of their costliness are a good investment. Just a glance at a row of burnished copper vessels is sufficient assurance that the owner possesses two invaluable qualities—she is a lover of beauty and a careful housewife.

Nothing more beautiful than copper cooking vessels could ever adorn a kitchen. It is an ideal metal for pots and kettles, which is the reason our grandmothers so prided themselves upon an ample store of polished, mellow tinted copper. But of all metals it is the most dangerous. Perfectly safe if it is kept exquisitely clean, copper instantly evidences its displeasure if neglected. Even a little laxity in the constant burnishing required by this fastidious metal is resented at once by the appearance of the wicked looking green spots, which say: "It is dangerous to use me now. Take better care of me or you will be sorry."

In addition to the dreaded verdigris, the prohibitive cost of copper has helped to banish it from all but the most luxurious kitchens. Some households may boast of a few pieces of old copper, but these are seldom allowed to stay in the kitchen. When they are, ammonia or a cleaning powder, frequently and energetically applied, will keep them safe, but they are seldom used now as cooking vessels. Copper is not affected by either acids or alkalies, provided always it is kept in proper shape; but alas! it costs too much in both money and labor to be popular in this utilitarian and economic age.

OLD-TIME TIN IS STILL USEFUL.

Tin is not all tin. When we buy tin cooking utensils we are really getting thin sheet iron plated with tin. This is why tin pans show unpleasant streaks of rust. When you buy, get block tin if you can; it is far and away the best.

A good quality of tin is not really so cheap as is commonly supposed. It is best adapted for measuring cups, small saucepans and bread and cake pans. It is suited to the less rapid cooking processes, such as water heating and cake baking, for it conducts heat quickly and cools off soon. It will not, however, endure intense heat, and the plating scratches off with use.

Acids have a slight effect on tin, and its use discolors acid fruits. The most satisfactory way to clean it is to use with energy the good old-fashioned detergents—soap, water and elbow grease.

CROCKS AND CASSEROLES.

For cooking anything a long time at a low temperature nothing is better than a good grade of earthenware. The ancients understood this perfectly, for the earliest known cooking utensils were made of terra cotta. To this day we can get results with a casserole that are not to be obtained with anything else. The heat retaining qualities of earthenware make it most efficient for stewing, simmering or any kind of casserole cooking.

It pays, when buying earthenware, to get the best grade obtainable. Good earthenware dishes have a smooth, glassy inner surface that will stand heat and acids without a quiver. Cheap earthenware is poor economy, for it is soon covered with a network of fine cracks and begins to chip. When this happens the ware is both ugly and unsanitary.

Earthenware resents being scraped. If the food is burned to the bottom of the dish it is much better to fill the dish with water and let it alone for a while than to ruin the shining surface with a sharp knife. As this ware is comparatively inexpensive and is not—when kept in proper condition—affected by acids and is durable, it is well to have a goodly supply of it in the kitchen.

TRY BAKING IN GLASS PANS.

But glass is the last word in luxurious kitchen utensils. For years the chemists have been working with glass in the effort to adapt it to cooking purposes.

This has been done with a marked degree of success. Glass cooking dishes are now so tough, durable and able to resist heat that they can be used for everything except frying. The new toughened glass makes perfect baking dishes and most satisfactory casseroles. It may even be subjected to direct heat and may be used on any kind of stove.

Like earthenware, glass cooking ware has the power to preserve all the natural flavors of the food. This is partly due to the fact that it conducts heat slowly but retains it for a long time. Again, glassware is easy to clean. Just soaking it for a time will do the trick. Its clean transparency is not only a delight to the eye but makes the cooking processes easier to watch.

Neither acids nor alkalies have any noticeable effect upon glassware. It neither chips, flakes nor crazes, is easy to handle and is suitable for serving as well as cooking. It is by no means cheap, but the price is not so high as might be expected, and to the woman who takes pride in her kitchen this, like other modern luxuries in the way of housekeeping tools, is well worth the money.

TELL AT A GLANCE WHAT YOUR POTS AND KETTLES SAY TO YOU.

ALUMINUM. Excellent for quick processes, roasting and baking. Cost of equipment in relation to other wares is medium. Durable and easily cleaned with soap, water and whiting. Is relatively quick as a conductor of heat, medium as to retention. Affected by alkalies, but not seriously by dilute organic acids.

ENAMEL WARE. Same uses as aluminum. Durable if given good care. Best cleaned by soaking and scrubbing with soap and water. Practically same as aluminum in conductivity and retention of heat. Affected by alkalies, but good grades are unaffected by acids.

IRON. Best for pots, pans, kettles and spiders used in cooking which requires slow heating and long retention of heat. Durable enough to last a lifetime. Comparatively inexpensive. Cleansed by scouring. Affected by acids, but not by alkalies.

COPPER. Pots and kettles. Expensive but very durable. Very quick to conduct heat, medium as to retention. Cleansed most effectively with ammonia or one of the cleaning powders. When kept scrupulously clean it is not affected by either acids or alkalies. Verdigris, however, forms on copper that is not kept immaculate.

TIN. Inexpensive but not very durable as compared with other materials. Best use is in small pans, measuring cups, sifters and other minor utensils. Conducts heat quickly, but does not retain it long. Best cleansed by hot soap and water. Affected by acids, but not by alkalies.

EARTHENWARE. Medium as to cost and durable if properly cared for. Slow in conducting heat, but retains it a long time, giving even temperature for slow cooking processes. Cleansed by scrubbing with soap and water after preliminary soaking. If kept in proper condition it remains unaffected by acids.

GLASS. Comparatively expensive but very durable if given the proper care. It does not chip, flake or "craze" from heat and breaks only under careless handling. Suitable for long, slow processes of cooking. Cleansed by soaking and then washing with soap and water. Remains unaffected by either acids or alkalies.