

CAROLINE FRENCH BENTON

GALA-DAY LUNCHEONS: A
LITTLE BOOK OF
SUGGESTIONS

Caroline Benton

**Gala-Day Luncheons: A
Little Book of Suggestions**

«Public Domain»

Benton C.

Gala-Day Luncheons: A Little Book of Suggestions / C. Benton —
«Public Domain»,

Содержание

Luncheon Giving	5
January	9
A MUSICAL LUNCHEON	12
A JAPANESE LUNCHEON FOR CHILDREN	14
February	16
WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON	19
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	21

Gala-Day Luncheons: A Little Book of Suggestions

Luncheon Giving

To give a luncheon is to indulge one's self in the most charming and satisfying form of entertaining. All the dignity of the stately dinner-party is lacking, it is true, but all the delight of informality is present; one has opportunity and leisure to chat, to laugh, and to discuss the dainty and unsubstantial dishes beloved of women. That hostess is to be congratulated who can and does give her friends luncheons all the year around; whatever day she chooses becomes at once a gala day.

But after one has entertained, and entertained no matter how delightfully to her friends and how satisfactorily to herself, there comes a time when for the moment she can think of nothing she has not had. All flowers seem ordinary, all food wearisome. It is for such a day as this that this little book has been prepared. Not that new dishes are offered in a long, fascinating series, for all startling novelties or elaborate concoctions have been purposely eschewed: this is not a cook-book; it makes no such ambitious claim; the possession of a good cook-book, a supply of cooking utensils, a few canned goods and flavouring extracts, and access to a market of ordinary capacities, have all been taken for granted. But the ideas are intended to be practical, the food given in season and within reasonable price, and the recipes, whether given, as is sometimes the case, or merely alluded to as easily to be found, are all sufficiently simple to be undertaken by a very ordinary and inexperienced cook.

It is assumed that all hostesses are in possession of that priceless commodity which our grandmothers called "faculty," that common-sense which more than anything else helps one over domestic boulders; this will suggest that if whitebait is not to be had, canned salmon is quite within reach, and from that useful fish a toothsome dish may easily be prepared. If pim-olas are an unheard-of relish, home-made pickles are by no means to be despised. If ice-cream in rose forms is entirely out of the question, raspberry ice made from one's own preserves or from the fresh fruit in the garden is fully as delicious. To assist one who is willing to take the second choice if she cannot have the first, a substitute has been offered for any course which it is suspected may prove difficult to procure in different parts of the country; an intelligent hostess will easily be able to think of one that is even better than the one named.

Rather elaborate menus are given that they may be adapted to one's need. It is easier to shorten a menu than to lengthen one, and two or three courses dropped from a company luncheon will transform it into one suitable for home use with very little trouble. If one menu is not quite what one wants, she can take another; if something more elaborate still is desired than what is given already, she can take a course from some luncheon farther on in the book; as much variety as possible has been sought on purpose, that there may be opportunity for just this choice of dishes.

The idea of observing holidays with luncheons is only a suggestion; any one of the luncheons may, with slightly altered decorations, be given at any time during the month. Doubtless every hostess can take the fancies given and work them out to her more complete satisfaction; it is intended that she should do so, for this is not meant to be a complete compendium on luncheon given; it is only a "Little Book of Suggestions," nothing more. And now to something practical.

The principal factor in a successful luncheon is a pretty table; that remains in one's memory after all the details of the luncheon proper have been forgotten.

No cloth is used nowadays, but pretty doilies are laid on the bare surface; where one has been so unfortunate as to have the appearance of her table ruined by the defacing marks of hot dishes, she

often refuses to dispense with the table-cloth, yet if she knew what a very simple and inexpensive thing it is to have a fresh polish put on, she would doubtless send for the furniture dealer at once; even without the aid of that individual she can improve matters by applying a purchased polish, rubbing it in well with a flannel cloth; indeed, rubbing is the secret of a handsome table top. Then, too, she probably does not consider that when her doilies are in place, very little of the wood is exposed to the critical eye, while in that little is reflected the flowers and lights which give a double brilliance to the decorations. But if one is incorrigible and insists on a cloth in spite of all persuasions, then the next-best thing is to have a pretty one, one with openwork or lace, or at least with a handsome fringe, which will give some effect of elaboration. But doilies are so pretty, so much prettier than any cloth, no matter how beautiful; they come in all sizes and at all prices, from the exquisite Honiton lace ones, which are almost too delicate to use, on to the combined linen and lace which are not expensive; from the cobwebs of drawn work from Mexico, which look as though they would fall to pieces if handled and which really wear a lifetime, to the plain squares of hemstitched linen, which are pretty enough for any table and can be made at home by the skilful needlewoman. One who can make even simple fancy work to-day can keep herself in lovely things for the luncheon table with small cost except in time. The same thing is to be said of the centrepiece: one can have anything almost, but it should be all in white. There are times when one wishes an embroidered square or circle, but ordinarily white lace is the best choice, for the effect of the flowers is always better if no colour is mingled with their own. As to the flowers themselves, they should not be over-elaborate. Of course a woman of unlimited means may expend a vast sum on a basket of orchids or some other fashionable flowers for her table, but while it is desirable to have a pretty effect, all undue gorgeousness is out of harmony with the presumably informal meal. A woman who plans her table decorations herself will probably evolve something more original and more pleasing than the hackneyed result a florist would attain, should she summon him to her aid. A quantity of roses lightly grouped in a bowl or arranged in a basket has a grace which is not found in a merely conventional arrangement. There are artistic bunches of wild flowers which give delight whenever the eye falls on them, and clusters of ferns which on a hot summer's day make one feel cool and comfortable. A pot of growing violets is a simple thing, but it is infinitely better than a "design" from a greenhouse. No one should despair if she cannot have a professional to help her arrange the flowers for her luncheon table; let her give thanks.

There are combinations of flowers which give prettier effect than does one flower alone, such as jonquils and violets, or white hyacinths, or mignonette and Roman hyacinths, or scarlet carnations and white roses. A little study will enable the hostess to plan something unique and attractive. Indeed, her personal touch is needed nowhere so much as here, since she can stamp her decorations with her individuality.

Besides the flowers, a decorative effect is given to the table by the small dishes of silver, or silver-gilt, and cut glass, which stand around the centrepiece and hold salted nuts, bonbons, almonds, candied ginger, crystallised fruits, and often peeled radishes, celery hearts, and jelly as well. These are seen in silver with a stem three inches high for the daintier things, but any pretty bonbon dishes are correct form, whatever they are.

After these things are in place, the silver is next to be considered: luckily the fashion of displaying all one happens to own is no longer considered in good taste; it was always rather vulgar and savoured of the shop, and no one can regret that the fancy has gone by. All that is needed now is the oyster fork, or, if fruit is to be the first course, a spoon or fork on the right, then the soup spoon, and either one or two knives as will be needed; on the left either two or three forks; the handsome dessert or ice cream spoon may lie across the top of the plate. There are always changes going on in table silver, yet good things are really never out of date. For instance, bouillon spoons have perfectly circular bowls at present, yet if one does not happen to own a set of these, teaspoons do quite as well to use with small cups or bowls. So with salad forks; the tines grow longer or shorter from season to season, yet any fork may be used for salad, whether intended for that particular course or not.

Ordinary ice-cream spoons or forks are modified also; sometimes one sees a combination of the two, or a spade-shaped spoon is pronounced the only proper thing. Since every year brings out something new, the only safe rule for the housekeeper to observe is to buy things which are not extreme, and then use them with an easy mind, whatever be the fancies of the day.

The custom of having a decorated service plate at each place is such a good one that it is likely to remain long in vogue. It is intended to hold the oyster plate, the plate with the bouillon bowl if the latter has no saucer, and the plate with the first hot course, after which it is removed with the one that has been used. When the guests come to the table this service plate holds a roll folded in a napkin.

Small bowls with two handles are used for the bouillon or soup at luncheon, but if one does not have them, an ordinary cup of rather good size is substituted. The plates used are ordinarily of rather smaller size than those seen at dinner, as the dishes are of a lighter character, and the handsomest are reserved for the fingerbowls, which are put on the table with the bonbons and coffee only, unless the meal begins with fruit, when they appear twice.

The question of lighting the table is one that often puzzles young housekeepers or novices at entertaining. "Shall we use candles at *luncheon*?" they ask, bewildered at the seeming absurdity of the idea. At first thought it may seem that is a foolish thing to do, yet there is good reason for having them at certain times. In the city, especially in winter, the dining-room is apt to be dark and therefore gloomy, and the cheerful glow of candles is both attractive and hospitable. Besides, they are extremely decorative: indeed, one sees them unlighted sometimes at formal luncheons when the day is sunny, used entirely for the colour they give the table. On the other hand, they should not be recklessly and indiscriminately used, for there are days when they would be ridiculously out of place, as in the summer, with open windows and a flood of brilliant light in the room. They are also out of place at a very simple meal to which only a few friends sit down, but they are in keeping with a rather elaborate company luncheon, and on a table set for such a meal they are both beautiful and appropriate.

There are other pretty ways of lighting the table besides using candles; there are devices to be used where electricity is available, such as lovely little electric candles with rose shades which give the effect of real flowers; then there are varieties of lamps, especially the so-called "fairy lamp," a pretty thing which is very practical as well as attractive; there are also combinations of the lamp and candle, which have in their favour the fact that they do not take fire and destroy their shades. But nothing is ever prettier than the old-fashioned wax candle in white or colour, in silver candlesticks, with or without shades. Nothing gives such reflections on the dishes, the silver and glass, and the mirror-like surface of polished wood as their flickering lights. If one owns several of these, she has the foundation for endless variety. She may group them in twos, or stand them singly about the table, or she may buy a branched top and convert one into a candelabrum, or she may arrange several candelabra in the same way.

As to shades, a clever woman can always keep herself supplied with prettier ones than the shops can afford, provided she is skilful with the needle and paint brush. She can have them of plain pasteboard with a border in colours and a pattern of painted flowers, or a conventional design. Or, she can buy dozens of silk or cotton rose petals and make really beautiful things with them. Or, if she has plenty of money and no time to spare, she can buy almost anything, from simple shades of paper roses or chrysanthemums to imported arrangements made by artistic fingers in silk and flowers together. Unless, however, she is prepared to buy a new set quite frequently, she will always invest in one or two more than she needs, lest some day she finds one burned and none to match it in the shops.

Guest cards are really necessary, – primarily, in order to avoid confusion in seating a number of persons in a short time, but with a secondary reason for their existence which is not to be overlooked: they enable the hostess to seat together those who have most in common and who will start the ball of conversation rolling, and keep it going. Many a meal has proved stupid and tiresome to some one because she sat by an uncongenial fellow-guest; a hostess shows her tact – or her lack of it – by the way she plans the seats of those who are to surround the table.

As to favours, they are in no way essential; they are suggested here merely because they afford some opportunity for originality, and serve to break the ice at the very beginning of a meal. They are not for the older woman, who will doubtless despise them, but for the girl-hostess who is gay enough still to care for whatever raises a laugh. They should depend for their worth not on any intrinsic value, for they should have none, but on their cleverness, their appropriateness; those mentioned are only "suggestions;" every hostess should from these go on to others which have more to them.

Just a word of warning as to the menu. Do not try and transform into a "function" what should be only a light and pleasant luncheon. The moment that is done, and a demand is made for extreme thought and preparation on the part of the hostess, and formality on the part of the guests, that moment the whole affair becomes a weariness to the flesh and spirit, and the charm is gone. There is no limit to the number of courses a hostess may offer if she really sets out to show what she can do if she tries; every year gastronomic possibilities increase, and an ambitious woman may pile patés on croquettes, and salads on sherbets, and creams on top of everything else *ad libitum*, if she so wishes. But a luncheon should be a luncheon, not a cooking-school display. It should be delightful to the eye, delicious to the palate, sufficiently elaborate to show respect to one's guests, and yet simple enough to be in good taste; restraint rather than ostentatious display should give the meal the refining touch which is needed to make it really complete.

January

By a happy omen our year begins with a gala day; time was when the very mention of New Year's Day brought to our minds the thought of confusion and fatigue, but all that is past; nowadays we observe the incoming of the year with quiet entertaining of our friends with small receptions, family dinner-parties, and luncheons, more or less elaborate. It is not necessary, however, that all New Year luncheons should come on the very day itself, for one can have all the essential features at a meal given during the first half of the month. But whenever it comes, it should be a scarlet luncheon as far as the decorations are concerned, for January days are sure to be gloomy. For a large company a beautiful table can be arranged with a central mass of poinsettias in a gilded basket, scarlet candles, and something scarlet in the menu, just enough to emphasize the idea of the luncheon. If the table is a small one and the poinsettias are too large to be effective, have a bowl of scarlet carnations with asparagus ferns, or put the flowers in a mound of moss. If you have silver candlesticks, – and they are the prettiest of all, – you can group them in twos, provided they are not too large, putting them at either end of an oblong table, or having three pairs if the table is round. It is always in keeping on a dark day to have the candles unshaded, the glow reflected on the polished surfaces giving a peculiarly brilliant and cosy effect; if shades are preferred, of course they should be scarlet, like the candles. Put a quantity of small dishes about, containing olives, salted almonds, candied ginger or fruits, and bonbons; they are not only useful, but help to decorate the table. Use doilies in preference to a cloth, and a centrepiece of lace, or embroidered linen and lace.

The obvious thing in the way of a guest card is a calendar, in some form; if you sketch you can make one that is prettier and more characteristic than one that is purchased. A tiny calendar may be mounted on a square of cardboard with a small snow scene in the background, or a picture of Father Time may be placed above a quotation; or there may be an outline of an hour-glass above the calendar and the guest's name and the date of the luncheon below.

MENU

Oyster Cocktail

Green Pea Bisque. Croutons

Creamed Fish in Cucumbers

Quail on Fried Mush. Currant Jelly

Potato Puff. French Peas. Hot Rolls

Tomato Jelly in Forms. Mayonnaise

Pim-olas. Cheese Straws

Snowball Ices. Snowball Cakes

Coffee. Bonbons

For the cocktail, select small oysters and pour over them a dressing made by mixing two teaspoonfuls of horse-radish with the juice of two lemons, two teaspoonfuls of tomato catsup and one of Tabasco sauce. This rule makes enough for five persons. Put eight oysters in a tall, shallow glass and cover with this dressing and put on the ice long enough to thoroughly chill them. The cocktail is also prettily served in ice-shells which are to be had of the caterer, or one can make them at home by piling up small, scalloped tins half filled with water and freezing; the tins will separate readily when they are slightly warmed.

If one lives where cucumbers are procurable in January, a delicious dish is made by cutting off a slice from each cucumber, scooping out the inside, heating them, filling with a thick creamed fish, replacing the slice and serving hot. The combination of the fish and cucumber flavours is delightful. If one is away from the city markets, however, have a course of lobster cutlets with sauce tartare in the place of this. The salad is one of the best and most attractive for a winter's day. It is made by heating, seasoning, and straining the thick part of canned tomatoes and setting them with gelatine in small individual moulds, – little rings are pretty, – and when they are firm turning them out on the inner leaves of lettuce; the inside of such a circle is to be filled with mayonnaise, or, if the jelly is in mounds, the mayonnaise is to be heaped around each and the whole sprinkled with chopped parsley.

The ice cream can be furnished by the caterer in the form of perfect snowballs, which are attractive on a winter's day, especially with the cakes, but if they are not to be had a white cream served with maraschino cherries is delicious. The cakes are made by scooping out rounded spoonfuls from a large angels' food and dipping them first in warm, boiled frosting and then rolling them in grated cocoanut. No sherbet is suggested for this luncheon, as one cold dish is enough for a January meal; still, if you wish to make it rather more elaborate you can introduce a course of orange ice or Roman punch after the quail; or you may make a formal luncheon of it by changing it in several ways.

MENU

Oysters on the Half-Shell

Green Pea Bisque. Croutons

Lobster Cutlets. Sauce Tartare

Slices of Turkey-Breast. Currant Jelly

French Peas

Pineapple Sherbet

Quail on Toast. French Dressed Lettuce

Snowball Ices. Snowball Cakes

Coffee. Bonbons

A MUSICAL LUNCHEON

The twenty-seventh of January is Mozart's birthday, and this anniversary gives opportunity for entertaining a group of friends who have musical tastes, or possibly a musical club. The guests might be asked to come at eleven o'clock, and a musicale might precede the luncheon.

Lay the table very much as for the New Year's day luncheon, with red flowers, candles, and other decoration, and if you wish to emphasise the national colours of Germany, Mozart's home, have red and chocolate bonbons on the table and give each guest a little knot of red and white carnations tied with black ribbons. For cards, go to the printer and have him strike off small cuts of Mozart's head on squares of cardboard; all printers have cuts of distinguished people, and they can be reproduced for about a dollar a dozen. Just under the cut draw in pen and ink a bar of music from one of the composer's works with his name attached in tiny letters.

At each plate may be one of the ingenious favours to be had at the confectioner's in the shape of a violin, a small piano, a banjo, a harp, or a mandolin. The ices may also be in these same shapes.

MENU

Grape Fruit

Clam Broth with Strips of Toast

Pigs in Blankets

Veal Cutlets, Breaded

Sweet Potato Croquettes. Asparagus Tips

Hot Rolls

Cream Cheese Salad. Nut Sandwiches

Ice Cream in Forms. Cakes

Coffee. Bonbons

The pigs in blankets are made by seasoning large oysters and folding each one in a very thin strip of bacon, pinning it with a small toothpick and browning in the frying-pan. The cutlets are to be cut in strips the size and shape of croquettes, breaded and fried. The asparagus served with this is, of course, canned. The salad is made by adding a little olive oil or cream to cream cheese, colouring it green with fruit colouring and moulding into balls the size of a hickory nut. These are to be laid on lettuce and a spoonful of mayonnaise added. A pretty change from the ordinary mayonnaise may be used with these green balls: a tablespoonful of unsweetened, condensed milk is used in place of the yolk of an egg; it is beaten, the oil and vinegar or lemon juice and seasoning added exactly in the same order and proportion as is usual; the result will be a stiff, foamy white mayonnaise. The sandwiches to serve with this salad are made of chopped English walnuts spread on bread and butter with just enough mayonnaise to moisten them.

A JAPANESE LUNCHEON FOR CHILDREN

Nothing could give children greater pleasure than a luncheon given for them, especially a Japanese luncheon, which affords opportunity for odd and pretty decorations. The dining-room should be darkened and wires drawn across from side to side, fastened to the picture moulding; from these may be hung a dozen or more very small paper lanterns, some over the table and others about the room. In the centre of the table may stand two good-sized Japanese dolls, back to back, with a Japanese umbrella over them. Instead of the usual doilies or table-cloth, the table may be spread with delicate white Japanese paper napkins with lace borders, and about it may be scattered small metal trays, purchased at a curio shop, filled with candied ginger, candied orange peel, Japanese nuts, and various oriental sweets. At each plate may be a little lacquer box filled with candy, and the ice cream may be either in the forms of Japanese children or else a plain cream served in small scarlet tea boxes to be had also at the Japanese stores. The china used for this luncheon might be Japanese, to keep everything in harmony.

The menu for a children's luncheon should be a very simple one if the children are young; in this one the salad may be omitted if it is thought best.

MENU

Cream of Celery Soup

Scalloped Fish in Shells

Stewed Chicken. Potatoes. Peas

Bread and Butter Sandwiches

Celery Salad. Crackers

Ice Cream. Cakes. Cocoa

Japanese Nuts

This Japanese luncheon is quite pretty enough for children of a larger growth. With a more elaborate menu, decorations of artificial camellias or peach blossoms, and if it is desired to have it really oriental, Japanese costumes for both hostess and guests, it might be easily carried out very attractively. A menu which would suggest Japanese cooking without actually following it might be something like this: —

MENU

Brown Soup with forcemeat balls

Fish, Baked in Shells with Chopped Pickle over it

Chicken and Rice Stewed with Curry

Devilled Eggs on Lettuce. Mayonnaise

Ice Cream in Japanese Boxes

Tea. Candied Ginger. Japanese Nuts

Another luncheon which small children would enjoy hugely would be one in which everything suggested their friend Alice of Wonderland. The table should be laid as for an ordinary luncheon, and in the centre should be a mass of green with the hero of the book, the White Rabbit himself, standing erect in the middle, dressed as in the familiar frontispiece, in a plaid coat and waistcoat, holding a watch. Each child should have a card with its name and a sketch of one of the familiar characters in the story, such as the Mock Turtle, the Dormouse, the March Hare, the White Queen or Humpty Dumpty, with one of their famous sayings written beneath. All the candies on the table should be in the shapes of animals; animal crackers should be served with the cocoa, and if possible the ice cream should be in the shape of white rabbits.

Children's luncheons depend for their success, not so much on an elaborate menu or handsome decoration of flowers, as on small, ingenious devices which appeal to them. Anything which seems to their unsophisticated souls novel or beautiful will give infinite pleasure and will never be forgotten. Such a decoration as was used for a dinner-party at the White House not many years ago might well be reproduced for a child's luncheon with the assurance that it would be a great success.

A long, narrow pan of water stood on an oblong table, the outside completely hidden by small, growing ferns, planted in moss. In the centre of the pan was a miniature rockery, a pile of stones the size of one's fist, with these same ferns planted in all the crevices. But the charming thing was a little flock of china ducks, geese, swans, and tiny yellow goslings which floated on the surface of this small lake, moving somewhat as the table was stirred more or less by the restless guests. This arrangement for a children's party would be irresistible.

February

This month brings the two most important gala days of the year, and gives therefore the best possible opportunity for entertaining at luncheon. Then, too, this is the time when every one is giving teas, dinners, and social affairs of all sorts and the sense of gaiety is inspiring to all hostesses. In cities the spring flowers, fruits, and vegetables begin to come in with this month, and there ample scope is given for a fresh and delicious menu. Of course, where one has no access to large markets she must content herself with the usual winter foods, yet with a little ingenuity she can give the impression of a spring-like meal, using the resources at her command.

A luncheon on Valentine's Day is one of the prettiest possible, for the profusion of flowers which might be excessive at another time is quite the proper thing now, and the accessories of the occasion, the ribbon bows, the cupids, the heart-shaped cakes and ices all make the table attractive. Lay it as daintily as possible with your most elaborate doilies, your prettiest candle-shades, and all your odd little dishes of silver. Of course, pink is the colour to choose, and the more pink roses you can have, the better. A very beautiful table which will suggest the day at first sight is set with five tall slender glass vases, one in the centre and four grouped around it at intervals filled with roses. This arrangement really takes no more flowers than is required for one large bunch, but the effect is of far more. The florist will sell or rent to you a large snow-white dove, the emblem of Venus, which can be suspended from the ceiling with an invisible wire; you can tie a number of narrow pink ribbons to his feet, or to his bill, and draw them down to the table, fastening two or three by each plate with a pink rose. If you have a large bisque Cupid it will do quite as well as the dove, and if you prefer to use vines instead of ribbon, these will form a sort of bower under which the meal is served. Put the central vase on a lace centrepiece laid over pink silk, and if your doilies are of lace they, too, may be lined with pink for this one occasion. There are candle-shades made of small paper roses which are very inexpensive and pretty, and these may be used with pink candles in silver sticks. If you fancy the idea, large pink satin bows laid on the corners of the table, if it is a square one, or at intervals if the table is round, add to the colour. Fill your bonbon dishes with small heart-shaped candies, pink-iced cakes of the same shape, and candied rose leaves, in addition to those filled with the usual olives and salted almonds.

Your guest cards will of course be valentines, and you can buy them in any variety and at any price, but the most appropriate are those painted with old-fashioned figures, or with Watteau-like groups. Of course, if these valentines are on heart-shaped cardboard they are still better; it is easy for one who paints in water-colour to decorate such pieces of board with figures and an appropriate rhyme or a quotation, adding the name of the guest and the date of the luncheon. Besides these cards, there are boxes in heart shapes of all prices, from the plain ones which need the addition of sketches, to those of satin which come from Paris and cost a small fortune. The plainer boxes may take the place of guest cards, and so serve a double duty; in any case, the boxes may be filled either with tiny candy hearts or with rose leaves such as are in the small dishes.

The sandwiches served with the meal are of course to be cut out with a heart-shaped cutter, as are the cakes, and the latter should have small silver arrows stuck through each of them.

MENU

Clams on the Half-Shell

Cream of Spinach Soup with Whipped Cream

Whitebait. Brown Bread and Butter

Chicken Mousse. Stoned Olives

Chops with Peas. Bermuda Potatoes

Grape Fruit Salad. Cheese Sandwiches

Ice Cream Hearts. Cakes

Coffee. Bonbons

The cream of spinach soup is made by cooking the vegetable until very tender, pressing it through a sieve and adding hot, thickened milk; a little whipped cream is to be put in the bouillon cups before the soup is poured in. The whitebait is one of the most delicious things in our winter markets; it is a very tiny fish of delicate flavour, and while it is rather expensive at first thought, it is not so in reality, for it is so light that a pound goes a long way. It is cooked after being dredged with flour, by frying for only a moment in a wire basket in hot fat, and served with a bit of lemon on rounds of lace paper; brown bread and butter in thin strips is passed with it. If it is not to be had, and of course outside a city it is difficult to obtain, lobster Newburgh, made from the canned fish, is an excellent substitute. About a pint of the meat is needed for eight persons; a half-pint of cream is put on the stove with the yolks of two well-beaten eggs; when it thickens the lobster is added, then the seasoning and last a dash of sherry, and it is served in ramekins or paper cases.

The chicken mousse is a cold dish, made by chopping and pounding the cooked white meat of chicken until it is a paste, seasoning, and adding enough chicken stock in which gelatine has been dissolved to thoroughly moisten it; it is then whipped with an egg-beater until light, pressed in a pan, and allowed to harden; sometimes in addition to the stock a half cup of whipped cream is mixed in, and this is an improvement to the ordinary rule for making it. When it is to be used it is sliced and cut out in heart-shaped pieces; two stoned olives are put on the plate with each piece, or, if you prefer it, a spoonful of sauce tartare.

The ices may be of strawberry cream or of raspberry ice or a mixture of both, they are to be heart-shaped, as has been said, and each one should have a sugar arrow stuck through it. If you prefer roses to hearts, these should be laid on lace papers. If this course must be prepared at home, the cream can easily be coloured a rose tint with fruit colour, and a spoonful served in a dainty little box made of pasteboard covered with rose crêpe paper, cut to resemble petals of the flower, tied with ribbons to match.

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON

The twenty-second of February suggests that an almost unlimited amount of ingenuity may be spent in preparing a meal in honour of the Father of our Country. There is opportunity for decoration such as few gala days offer, and this may easily be the prettiest luncheon of the year.

If the meal is an informal one a centrepiece may be arranged which will amuse the guests. Get at the florist's a small dead plant, such as an azalea, and pick off some of the twigs, making a symmetrical tree of diminutive size. At a Japanese shop you can buy the pretty artificial cherry blossoms used to set off the bric-à-brac in the windows, and these can be fastened to the twigs with invisible wire, the little tree may stand in a low pot filled with moss, and at its base may be a small hatchet. With this, your candle-shades should be a sort of rosy white. You might use in preference to this a bunch of the cherry branches in a vase in the centre.

Or, if you prefer to have the Colonial colours, choose a large dark-blue bowl and fill it with yellow tulips, and have all the dishes, or at least several sets of plates, of dark-blue ware; if one does not own Staffordshire of her grandmother's or the beautiful Chinese Canton china, still she need not despair, for the shops are full of a cheap and pretty imitation of the latter which gives an admirable effect. The candle-shades should be yellow, in tulip pattern preferably, and the candlesticks of old-fashioned silver.

At each plate lay a bonbon box in the form of a paper hatchet with the handle filled with red and white candies, and tie a bunch of artificial cherries to it with narrow ribbon. You can get at the printer's cards with the head of Washington which a line of gold paint and a bowknot will transform into a miniature. Fold your napkins into little cocked hats, and stand small silk flags in your dishes of almonds and olives. In addition to all this, you can send to Mount Vernon for small souvenirs in the shape of hatchets, supposably made of the actual historic cherry-tree, which may take the place of the paper hatchets at the plates.

Should your luncheon be given for the members of some patriotic association, you might add the name of some famous Revolutionary battle to your guest cards, or possibly a quotation from some well-known novel which has historic characters, such as "Richard Carvel" or "The Virginians."

MENU

Grape Fruit with Brandied Cherries

Cream of Chicken Soup

Smelts with Sauce Tartare

Fried Sweetbreads. Mushroom Sauce

Carrots in Cases. Bermuda Potatoes

Celery and Cabbage Salad in Peppers

Ice Cream Hatchets. Cakes

Coffee. Bonbons

Cut the grape fruit in half and remove the seeds and core, loosen the pulp around the sides and put in the cavity in the middle a couple of preserved or brandied cherries, with a little of their juice. The soup is a strong chicken stock to which cream has been added; a spoonful of whipped cream is put on top of each cup as it is served, and hot crackers are passed with it.

Put a little water-cress on the plate with the smelts as well as the sauce.

Sweetbreads are especially good with both mushrooms and carrots, though one does not often see the latter vegetable with them, but creamed, in small paper or paste cases, they are by no means to be despised, above all, if they are the new ones which have just come to market.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.