

An easy way for you to make yummy hominy

POLLY'S POINTERS



POLLY FISHER

DEAR POLLY — Do you know how to cook corn to make hominy? My mother used to buy it canned in the supermarket, but I haven't seen it for a long time. I used to love it hot with butter and salt! — M.E.

DEAR M.E. — Hominy is dried corn whose skin is removed by soaking in lime water. Here's the procedure, as detailed in "Whole Foods for the Whole Family" (1981, La Leche League International).

The ingredients are dry field corn (not sweet corn), cold water and hydrated lime. Be sure to use hydrated lime. NOT quick-lime or anhydrous lime — they are dangerous. Check health-food stores and feed stores for dry corn. I have seen a brand of hydrated lime sold with pickle-making supplies during canning season. Cover 9 cups (3 pounds) dry corn with 3 quarts of cold water in a large

enameled or stainless steel pot (don't use aluminum). Add ¼ cup hydrated lime (3 ounces) and bring to a boil. Boil, covered, for about 1 hour or until the skins peel off. Remove from heat and pour some cold water into the pot to hasten cooling. When cool enough to handle, swish the corn around and rub with fingers. The skins will come off in the water. Rinse the corn under cold water until the water runs almost clear. You now have hominy. This can be eaten as a vegetable as

you describe; ground to use as fresh masa (the corn flour used for making tortillas); or dried, then cracked, to use as grits. Fresh hominy can be frozen.

I remember a teacher making hominy in one of my grade-school classes, so the process can't be too difficult once you locate the right ingredients. Good luck! — POLLY

Brighten up family dinners with new and different vegetable side dishes

and main dishes with the easy recipes in Polly's newsletter "Vegetable Varieties."

DEAR POLLY — Can dishes that are designed for the microwave be used in a conventional oven? And how can a recipe for microwave cooking be converted to conventional cooking? — E.A.W.

DEAR E.A.W. — Some microwave cookware is indeed safe for conventional cooking. Obviously, tempered

glass cookware is fine to use in both types of ovens. Even some of the plastics can withstand conventional baking temperatures. However, the only way of really knowing if such a dish is safe in your regular oven is to check the manufacturer's labeling. If it is not labeled as safe for conventional ovens, don't attempt to use plastic microwave cookware in the regular oven. If you no longer have the packaging, and the dish itself is not labeled, you might try to find identical items in the stores so you can read the manufacturer's recommendations on the labels or boxes.

The easiest way to convert a microwave recipe to conventional cooking is to use a similar type of recipe designed for conventional cooking. — POLLY

RECIPE OF THE WEEK: Start off a holiday dinner with a really special soup. This deluxe cream of mushroom

soup is enriched by two types of cream. It's not for dieters (not every day, anyway), but it is the epitome of culinary luxury!

Saute ¼ pound fresh chopped mushrooms and ¼ cup chopped onion in 2 tablespoons unsalted butter until the onion is tender and most of the liquid given off by the mushrooms has evaporated. Puree the mushroom-and-onion mixture in a food processor, blender or food mill. Return to the cooking pot and add 2 cups beef broth. Cover, bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes. Add 1 cup heavy cream and 1 cup light cream or half-and-half, and heat until the soup is very hot. Don't let the soup boil. Season with white pepper to taste.

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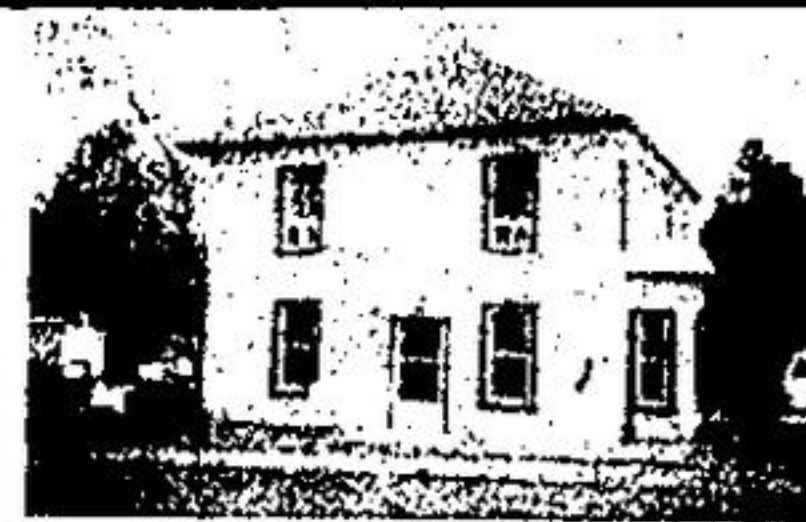
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