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Circular: Headquarters, U.S. Troops, Department of the Gulf, October 26, 1864

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HEAD-QUARTERS, U. S. COLORED TROOPS,

Department of the Gulf;

PORT HUDSON, LA., October 26th, 1864.

CIRCULAR:

It is the duty of every officer having men under his command to know what will best promote their health, and as far as the circumstances admit, to give them the benefit of such knowledge. The health of troops depends, not more upon the kind and quantity of food furnished, than upon the manner of its cooking. In order that a spirit of inquiry may be awakened among the officers of this command, concerning this very important subject, and that the best interests of the troops may not be neglected, a few plain directions, derived from standard authorities, for preparing and cooking the ordinary articles comprising the ration, are herewith published.

Pork and Salt Beef.—To each pound of meat allow about a pint of water. Do not have the pieces above 3 or 4 lbs. in weight. Let it soak in cold water all night. Wash each piece well with the hand, in order to extract as much salt as possible. It is then ready for cooking. If less time be allowed, cut the pieces smaller, and proceed the same, or parboil the meat for 20 minutes in the above quantity of water, which throw off, and add fresh. Boil gently four hours and serve. Skim off the fat, which when cold is an excellent substitute for butter. If beef and pork be boiled together the beef should be in smaller pieces requiring a little longer time in doing.

Pork Soup for Twenty-five Men.—In 6 gallons of cold water put 12 pounds of pork, (the salt having been first extracted as indicated in the preceding paragraph), 5 pounds of beans, 2 pounds of rice, season to suit, let boil until the beans are soft and fully done. Soak the beans over night.

Pea or Bean Soup for Twenty-five Men.—Take 14 pounds of pork, 5 pounds of beans or split peas, 5 gallons of water, 20 teaspoonfuls of sugar, 2 of pepper and several onions, (if to be had); boil gently till the vegetables are soft, from four to five hours.

Fresh Beef.—It ought not to be cooked until it has time to bleed and cool. It will generally be boiled; sometimes roasted or baked. Fresh meat may be kept in hot weather by half boiling it, or by exposing it for a few minutes to a thick smoke.

To make Soup.—Put into the vessel at the rate of 5 pints of water to a pound of fresh meat; apply a quick heat to make it boil promptly; skim off the foam, and then moderate the fire. Salt according to palate. Vegetables to be added one or two hours, and sliced bread some minutes, before the simmering is ended. Hard or dry vegetables such as beans,

peas, desiccated potatoes, or mixed vegetables should be soaked in cold water several hours, and will be put in the camp kettle much earlier than fresh vegetables. When the broth is sensibly reduced in quantity, that is after 5 or 6 hours cooking, the process will be complete. If a part of the meat is withdrawn before the soup is fully made, the quantity of water must be proportionately less.

Soup for fifty Men.—1st, Put in the boiler $7\frac{1}{2}$ gallons of water. 2d, Add to it 50 pounds of fresh beef. 3rd, Four squares from a cake of mixed vegetables, (or $1\frac{1}{2}$ times the quantity of desiccated potatoes by weight). 4th, Ten small tablespoonsfuls of salt. 5th, Simmer three hours skim off the fat and serve. When boiling three pounds of rice may be put in. For a less number the quantities should be proportionately less.

To make 12 pints of Beef Tea—Cut 6 pounds of beef into pieces the size of walnuts, and chop up the bones, if any; put it into a kettle with 4 ounces of mixed vegetables, or 6 ounces desiccated potatoes, 2 ounces of salt, a little pepper, 2 teaspoonfuls of sugar, 3 ounces of fat from pork, and a pint of water; set it on a sharp fire for 20 minutes, stirring now and then until it forms rather a thick gravy at the bottom, but not brown; then add 14 pints of hot water; let it simmer gently for an hour and a quarter, skim off the fat, strain it, and serve.

To make Beef Soup—"Camp fashion."—Put in a saucepan, 6 pounds of beef cut in two or three pieces, bones included, 3 ounces of mixed vegetables, or $4\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of desiccated potatoes, 3 teaspoonfuls of salt, 1 teaspoonful of pepper, 1 teaspoonful of sugar, 8 pints of water; let it boil gently three hours, remove some of the fat, and serve. The addition of $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of soft bread cut in slices, or 1 pound of hard bread broken, will make a very nutritious soup. Skimming not required.

Desiccated potatoes, and mixed vegetables are furnished to troops by government as a preventive or cure for scurvy, and existing orders make it the duty of commissaries to issue certain proportions of these articles. It is also required of Company Commanders to see that these articles are properly cooked. By following the above recipes, the sanitary benefits, so wisely intended may be derived from palatable and nutritious food.

Officers can readily ascertain other proper methods of cooking the vegetables by investigation, and by reference to Scott's Military Dictionary, and Viele's Hand Book for Active Service.

Special attention is called to Paragraphs 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, and 121 Revised Army Regulations.

By Command of Brig. Gen. GEO. L. ANDREWS:

J. LOVELL,

Capt. and Asst. Adjt. Gen.

OFFICIAL:

Lieut. and A. D. C.