

Macaroni Becoming the Great American Food Product



Section of sealing room



Drying Room
Second Floor
MACARONI
AND
SPAGHETTI
Ready for
Packing



PACKING
DEPARTMENT
CORNER
VIEW



CORNER OF
FLOUR ROOM
AT
SKINNER
PLANT

P PEOPLE are realizing more and more that the great duty they owe to themselves is to keep well; and, while the matter of keeping well is dependent upon our general mode of life, we know that our habitual eating of a pure food product has a great deal to do with our health and strength as a nation.

All older nations, to a certain extent, have some special national food. This, for instance, is particularly true of the Japanese—their national dish is rice. The Englishman eats beef; the Swiss, one of the hardest of nations, eats cheese and drinks buttermilk; the Italian, who is the greatest human working machine on earth, eats macaroni.

America is a new country, and it is, we think, the greatest. It has been said that one of the things that has been for the making of this country is the fact that we have been able and wise enough to profit by the experience of nations older than us. For instance, we have taken our law from militant Rome, our art from classic Greece, our science, industries and literature from modern Europe, and have made a composite of all these, which we find in the cultured and energetic American. However, it seems that we are just now in the process of choosing our great national food product, and it is macaroni.

Originally Italian Food

Macaroni, in its various forms, was originally an Italian product. It was the great staple food of the Italians long before Italy, through Rome, ruled all other nations of the globe, and its continued use among Italians remains with us today as proof of its great and genuine worth.

The fact that the Italians still regard macaroni as the best food they can eat—considering all sides of the food problem—is proof that this product must be a very excellent dish for any nation. So the people of America are coming to accept this food as the best individual dish that can be set before them. They consider its taste, its health qualities and its strength-building virtues—and they agree that it is the food they should use. So today we have physicians and pure food experts recommending macaroni for use in all homes; and so, too, we find it being served in a greater number of homes every month. It is really becoming the great American food product, and so it is expected that the demand for it will soon be so great that the factories of this country will be forced to increase their output capacity in order to supply the great demand.

All Formerly Imported

The use of macaroni in this country was originally confined to our Italian population and to Americans who formed the habit by extensive traveling in Italy. Until a comparatively few years ago the product that was consumed by Americans was either imported or manufactured by Italians in this country. However, in the last few years enterprising Americans have foreseen the great possibilities in the development of macaroni as a staple American product, and have gone into its manufacture extensively. Several conditions make the manufacture of macaroni desirable from a business point of view. First, we find that we have in this country a special macaroni wheat, known as durum wheat, raised in the northwest, which is the greatest and most nutritious wheat in the world, containing a large percentage of gluten; second, we find a great demand by Americans for a product which they know is manufactured under absolutely sanitary conditions. They are not assured of this in the imported French or Italian article; in fact, it has been demonstrated that under American management a much better grade of goods is produced than under the best foreign conditions.

Not many years ago there was in this country a large class of people who "lived to eat." But we find under the education which we are receiving from the pure food commissioners, and the medical profession in general, our health depends on the food that we take into our bodies more than any other one thing. We are, therefore, rapidly becoming a nation that "eats to live." In other words, it is better to maintain the original healthy body, with which practically all of us have been blessed, than try to make it over again in our later years. Every man, woman and child should eat, as a basis for nutrition, a good pure food, a food that will produce health, and this essential is found in the highest degree and in the most digestible form in macaroni products. It is a very interesting fact that two very simple and economical foods contain all the necessary ingredients to sustain life—these are milk and gluten. Macaroni is largely composed of gluten.

Sales Increased Immensely

People who have never stopped to think about the consumption of macaroni would be surprised at the figures on the sale of this food all over the United States. How it has grown from small sales of a few years ago to the giant sales of today is a very interesting story, and one that would make the foundation for an interesting little book. People, until a few years ago, thought macaroni was a food that was to be eaten only infrequently; they did not then regard it as one of the most nourishing and most strength-building of the foods and were wont to let it be served only at very irregular

occasions; they looked upon it as a food for the workman. Today, however, the entire American nation has come to regard it as one of the finest and the most sustaining of foods.

In all the leading cafes of the country it is placed on the menu daily. One of Omaha's cafes, Courtney's, serves this food regularly. The Courtney chef is an expert in macaroni cooking, and the dish that he sets before the Courtney guests is just as delicious as one as Omaha people have ever tasted. It is cooked so well and flavored so appetizingly that one is tempted to repeat his order. Courtney uses Skinner's macaroni, too, and the chef of this popular cafe says he prefers this brand to any foreign makes and always insists on using it.

In Kansas City, St. Louis, St. Paul, Minneapolis and many other western cities the cafe and restaurant proprietors have given their chefs instructions to have macaroni served in some form every day. It is one of the "regulars" of the menu, and a patron of these places does not have to give a special order when he wants macaroni.

Omaha restaurant keepers, when interviewed recently, said that the quantity of macaroni eaten at their places during the past years was four times larger than in any previous twelve months; they also stated that the daily orders for this food are increasing every week.

Kinds of Macaroni

The various preparations are met with in the form of fine, thin threads which constitute vermicelli, so-called from its threadlike appearance, thin sticks and pipes (macaroni). These various forms are prepared in a uniform manner from a granular meal of hard wheat, which itself, under the name of Semolina or Semola, is a commercial article. The semolina is thoroughly mixed and incorporated into a stiff paste or dough with boiling water, and in the hot condition it is placed in a strong metallic cylinder—constructed to stand a pressure of 5,000 pounds per square inch—the end of which is closed with a thick disk pierced

with openings which correspond with the diameter or section of the article to be made. Into this cylinder an accurately fitting plunger or piston is introduced, and by very powerful pressure it causes the stiff dough to squeeze out through the openings in the disk in continuous threads, sticks or pipes, as the case may be. When pipe or tube macaroni is being made the openings in the disk are widened internally and mandrels the gauge of the tubes to be made are centered in them. In making pastes the cylinder is laid horizontally, the end is closed with a disk pierced with holes having the sectional form of the pastes, and a set of knives revolves close against the external surface of the disk, cutting off the paste in thin sections as it extrudes from each opening.

Product Dried Gradually

Macaroni is dried gradually by hanging it in long sticks or tubes over wooden rods in heated apartments through which currents of air are driven. It is only genuine macaroni, rich in gluten, which can be dried in this manner; spurious fabrications made with common flour and colored to imitate the true material will not bear their own weight. Imitations must, therefore, be laid out flat and dried slowly, during which they very readily split and break up, while in other cases they become mouldy on the inside of the tubes. True macaroni can be distinguished by observing its soft, yellowish color, its rough texture and hardness; it breaks with a smooth, glassy fracture. In boiling it swells up to double its original size without becoming pasty or adhesive, maintaining always its original tubular form without either rupture or collapse. It can be kept any length of time without alteration or deterioration, and it is on this account, in many instances, a most convenient, as well as highly nutritious and healthful, article of food.

Modern Factory Here

Omaha and the central west are fortunate in that they have one of the most modern, sanitary

and up-to-date macaroni factories in this country. It is manufacturing right at home a macaroni which cannot be surpassed by the imported product and which is made under absolutely cleanly conditions; it is also furnishing this nutritious food at a price which makes it a boon to the housekeeper of moderate means. The Skinner Manufacturing company, which, though it has been in existence only about a year, has been experiencing such large demand for its products that it finds it necessary to vacate the present building now occupied and erect a new factory.

Plans are being drawn up for the erection of one of the most modern macaroni factories in the country. The Skinner company has purchased a valuable site at Fourteenth and Jackson streets for the home of the new factory. Fisher & Lawrie are engaged in making plans for the big building that will rise on this site.

Employing Many People

The Skinner company now employs more than forty people. All of these employees, with the exception of three or four traveling salesmen, make their homes in Omaha. With the erection of the new factory the Skinner company will have a capacity that will be three times greater than that of the present establishment. This new home will call for the services of many more employees, so that this company will furnish work for many more Omaha people.

In the beginning this company declared that its product should be the best. To this end it decided that only the best durum wheat would be bought and that the best macaroni manufacturing machinery would be installed. This plan was carried out, so the Skinner macaroni is now recognized as one of the purest products on the market in this country. The sales force was organized immediately after the plans for the manufacture of macaroni were completed. This force has placed the Skinner product in nearly all the grocer stores of Iowa and Nebraska and is now enlarging the sales

territory, so that it is only a question of a short time before the Skinner product will be on sale all over the west.

Expert in Charge

When the Skinner plant was opened Mr. Dominic Lumetto was placed in charge of the manufacturing end. Mr. Lumetto is an expert in this business; he is a native of Italy and there for years was engaged in making macaroni. He has studied the business and knows every detail thoroughly; he is interested in the company as one of the stockholders. All other departments are in charge of experts who are interested in turning out the best macaroni products that can be made in the entire west.

The cost of macaroni is so small as compared with that of other products which contain less health-building qualities that none can deny its superiority over hundreds of foods that have long been used on the tables of Americans. The young boy who romps about out-of-doors every hour of the day finds a joy in eating macaroni, and he gets a strength from it that makes him grow strong. The man who labors hard all day in factory, shop or street relishes macaroni and gets nourishment that makes him feel like working hard the next day—that gives him the power and strength to continue his labor day after day.

With the building of the new Skinner factory Omaha will have one of the best equipped establishments of its kind in the country, and Omaha will become one of the macaroni manufacturing centers of the west. Omaha people have been interested in watching the growth of this firm and they will continue to watch its progress. The important part about getting a good dish from macaroni is in the cooking. Macaroni should always be placed in boiling water and left there for fifteen or twenty minutes, and then blanched in cold water. The Skinner company is one of the two factories in Omaha; Mangiameli & Bro. operate a second plant for the production of this food. The Skinner company, however, is one of the largest in the west and is growing more rapidly than any other similar factory in this section.

Views in Factory

The illustrations on this page, the photographs of which were made at the Skinner factory through the courtesy of the owners of that plant, show various phases in the process of the manufacture of macaroni. One of the views gives an idea of the manner in which macaroni and spaghetti are dried. It will be seen that this product is hung over long poles and placed in such a position that the strings hang vertically. The air currents passing through the rooms cool the strings evenly.

The largest of the illustrations gives a partial view of the macaroni-making machinery, showing the presses and part of the mixing battery. In another of the illustrations a glimpse at the flour used in making Skinner's macaroni is given. Hundreds of these sacks are used every week, and when the new Skinner plant is done the flour orders for this factory will have to be increased many fold.

The whole Skinner factory is one of the cleanest of its kind in the whole country. Every precaution is taken to get a product that is thoroughly clean and pure. The rooms of the factory are kept free from dirt and employees are directed to take special pains at all times to have every room clean. Frequent washings and sweepings secure a clean plant and the Skinner management insists on these operations every day.

In many ways the Skinner plant is a model one. With the coming of the new factory this company will have an ideal home for making its famous product, and will be a source of greater pride to Omaha and Nebraska.

Showing some of massive macaroni presses and other machines