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Recommended Citation

Wilder, Susan Z., "Dishwashing: Kitchen Aids" (1926). *Cooperative Extension Circulars: 1917-1950*. Paper 255.
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Dishwashing

(Kitchen Aids)

SUSAN Z. WILDER, Extension Specialist

THINKING women study their jobs to determine the quickest and best methods to use. As a result they have more time for things they want to do.

Dishwashing is a task that women dislike more than any other. It is monotonous and is a routine job that must be cared for three times a day. A study of it will cut the time in half and eliminate its most disagreeable features if the results are put in practice.

Handling the Dishes in Serving

Where the mother does her own work, the meals are generally served in one course. With the right planning, it should not be necessary to make more than one or two trips to the dining room to set the table and place the food. Everything is collected in the kitchen on a wheel tray. A list of things needed will help to make this complete. All food is on the table when the meal is announced.

The following plan is satisfactory if the housewife wishes to serve more elaborately and still use a short-cut method. The fruit or soup and the meat course is placed on the table. The wheel tray with the dessert is placed at the left of the hostess. An extra supply of food (bread with knife and butter) is also on the wheel tray. After each course, the serving dishes, individual dishes and left-over foods are passed to the mother who stacks them on the lower shelf of the wheel tray. Only the individual dishes may be removed in this way. One of the family seated at the left of the wheel tray assists. A fresh white cloth is thrown over the dishes if unsightly. The serving of the next course may be going on while the dishes are being removed. To carry out this plan noiselessly and neatly requires the cooperation of the family.

It is wasted effort to carry dishes after a meal to the kitchen to scrape them. It means many trips and practically doubles the time spent on the task. It is a different question if one has sufficient help. Scrape the dishes at the table and stack them on a wheel tray. Generally the dishes and food can be handled without going around the table by working to the right and left of the tray. The wheel tray is taken to the kitchen, the dishes placed on the right drain board or the wheel tray left standing to the right of the sink.

Extension Service

South Dakota State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts
Brookings, South Dakota

Published and distributed under Act of Congress, May 8, 1914, by the Agricultural Extension Service of the South Dakota State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, Brookings, A. E. Anderson, director, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture cooperating.

Care of Preparation Dishes

Use few dishes in food preparation and wash them before the meal is served. If a pan of soap suds is kept at hand, these dishes may be washed, rinsed and put away while waiting for the meal to cook. The only dishes left to do will be those from which the food is served.

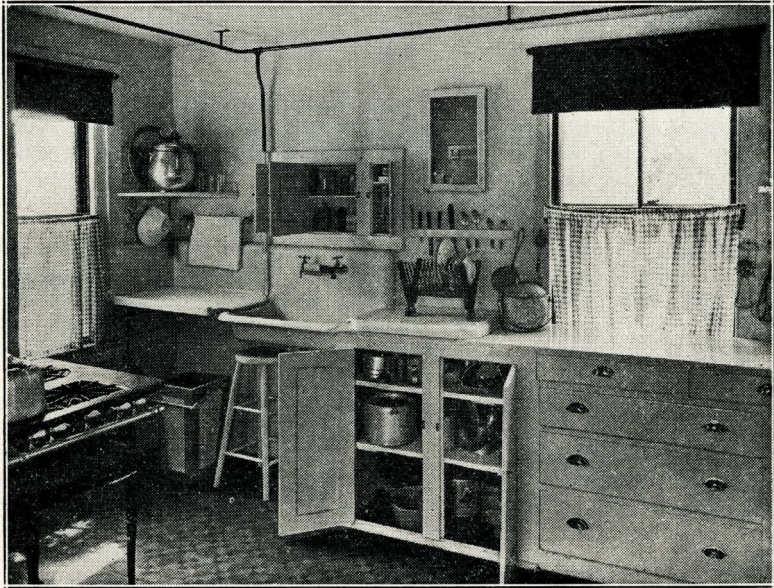


Fig. 1.—A fine sink cabinet and cupboard for storing kettles. China carried by wheel tray. (Courtesy U. S. Dept. of Agriculture)

Soak the sugar and fat-coated dishes in hot water and the starch and milk dishes in cold water if they cannot be washed immediately. Add one-half teaspoon powdered lye to a quart jar used for canned meat. It may be necessary to allow the jar to soak over night. It will come clean easily. When the meal is served, the preparation dishes are washed or ready to wash.

The Water Center

Dishwashing is one of the tasks to be handled at the water center. The sink is the largest piece of equipment. There are a number of factors which will determine the placing of the sink. It may be placed to the right or left of the dining room door. In either case, one drain board can be used for the dishes from the dining room. Probably it will be more convenient for the right-handed woman if the sink is placed to the left of the door from the kitchen to the dining room, the stove in the corner very near the drain board and the cabinet on the wall at right angles to the stove.

The ideal arrangement is to have a china cabinet opening into the dining room above the sink and left drain board. The skillets and pans are stored on hooks above and at the side of the stove, under the sink and in the cabinet. The sink utensils are hung on hooks or in a cabinet above the sink.

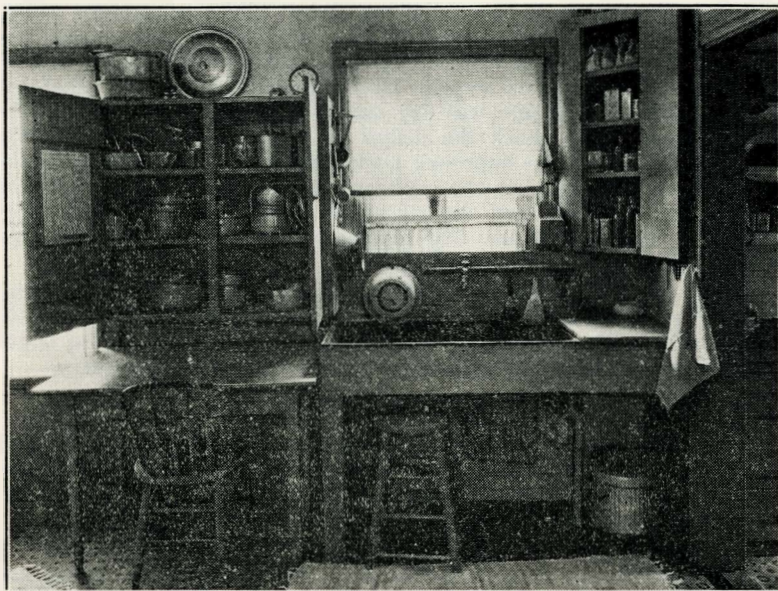


Fig. 2.—Kettles stored above place of drainage. (Courtesy U. S. Dept. of Agriculture)

Select the sink carefully. A two-drain board sink with a high back is to be preferred to the one-drain board sink because the dishes can be stacked at the right and washed at the left. Select a one-drain board sink with the board to the left. Use a wheel tray, small table or shelf for the other drain board. The sink should be cast in one piece so that there are no joints or cracks in which moisture, dirt and insects can collect. The bowl of the sink should be deep, otherwise water can be easily splashed out of it. It should be of good size so that the dishpan will fit in it. The sink should be suspended from the wall because it is easier to clean under it. The height should be suited to the user. Open plumbing is to be preferred because repairs are more readily made. The lower part of the sink should not be enclosed. A shelf may be placed under the sink for pots and pans. A movable double faucet is most convenient. A short rubber hose may be used on the faucet for rinsing dishes.

Dishwashing

The dish pan is filled with hot soapy water and placed in the sink. A rubber cap may be placed over the drain and the sink used in place of the pan. If the sink is too low, place a small pan under the dish pan to

raise it. Stack the dishes in the pan. Take one dish in left hand and wash with right. Place the dish in drain to the left. If the dishes are stacked to the left and drained to the right, it will require three extra motions for every dish. The dish cloth will have to be dropped, the dish taken in the right hand and placed in the drainer and the mop picked up again.

Wash the dishes in the following order: silver, glassware, china, kettles. Drain the dishes so that boiling water can be poured over the entire surface quickly. Place the cups open side up until rinsed and invert to dry. Stand knives on end. Use boiling water to scald all dishes but glassware. The dishes will dry immediately without streaks if the work is done right. Stack the dishes as they are removed from the drainer and store in the cupboard above the sink or stack them on the wheel tray to be carried to the cupboard. Rinse the glasses unless they were washed in clean, very slightly soapy water or borax water. They polish best from this water. The glasses will need to be wiped because they are likely to break if rinsed in too hot water.

Wash the kettles last. Give them as careful attention as the other dishes. Plenty of soapy water, a hot rinse and drying over the hot stove will keep the kettles sanitary. The idea that an iron kettle may be wiped with a dish cloth from the dish water and not rinsed is unsanitary.

Time to Wash Dishes

Dishwashing time can be cut one-half if the dishes are scraped at the table as they are stacked, carried to the kitchen on a wheel tray, arranged in the right order to wash, washed in hot soapy water, rinsed in boiling water and stored conveniently.

It is not necessary to wash dishes three times a day unless there is a large family. It may be economy to buy a dish washer. The dinner and supper dishes may be stacked and washed after breakfast the next morning. The silver will have to be cared for to keep it from rusting. Every homemaker should examine her methods of doing dishes and try to cut the time it takes. Practice only will make it possible to do it.

Dish Cloths

Cotton knit underwear or a half yard of white cheese cloth make good dish cloths. If they are hemmed, they will wear longer. Loosely knit cotton dish cloths can be purchased in dozen lots or at 5 cents each. They wear well and are satisfactory. A dish mop has the advantage that very hot water can be used without injury to the hands. There are different styles of dish mops on the market. There are those with loose and tight twisted cord of different length fiber. The medium, strong fiber that is twisted in a wire handle is best. It is more easily cleaned and kept clean. An eight-inch circle brush with handle is fine to use in place of a cloth or mop.

A soiled dish cloth or towel is a breeding place for disease. Dish cloths must be clean. Every housekeeper needs a number of dish cloths so that they can have frequent washing. A dish cloth should be clean when the work is done. A grimy cloth is probably an indication that not enough soap and clean water were used.

Dish Drainers

There are both round and long dish drainers. Select a drainer of strong wires well soldered and of close mesh. A poorly woven dish drainer will go to pieces. It should be possible to place the dishes in the rack so that they stand separate and at an angle. A drainer may be fitted in a dripping pan and used without a sink. A wooden rack may be built for a dish drainer. It is convenient to have two dish drainers. Where two people are working together, the dishes can be put away from one while the other is used for dishes not scalded.

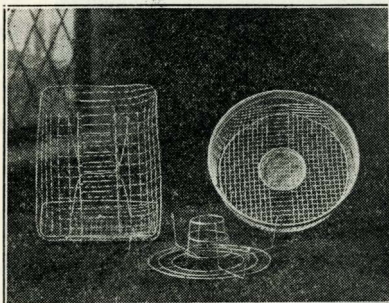


Fig. 3.—Well constructed dish drainers. The silver rack on oblong drainer is hinged.

Soap

Eleven pounds (22 bars) of white laundry soap sell for \$1.00. One bar, a half pound sells for five cents. It is a saving of ten cents to purchase soap in the larger quantity. A two-pound box of soap chips sells for twenty-five cents. The cost per half pound is six and one-fourth cents. The purchase of a bar of soap means a savings of one and one-fourth cents.

It is more wasteful to use soap chips or powder than bar soap because it is rather difficult to estimate the right amount. One is very likely to use too much. It is a good plan to try out different brands of soap or washing powder until a satisfactory one is found and then continue to buy it. Small pieces of soap or even whole cakes of soap may be put in a wire soap shaker. Use washing soda or lye to break the water before using soap.

Grease will stop up the sink drain. It is a good plan to wipe the sink with newspapers to remove any grease that may have collected. A hot, soapy water should be poured down the drain pipe at least once a day to cut the grease. Use washing soda dissolved in hot water once a week. One pound of washing soda to three gallons of water makes an effective solution. It is very strong. It must be poured into the drain and not on the enamel. Rinse the pipes with hot water.

Dish Washers

There are family size dish washers on the market. They are expensive. They require too much time unless they are connected directly with a plumbing system for filling and draining.

Wheel Tray

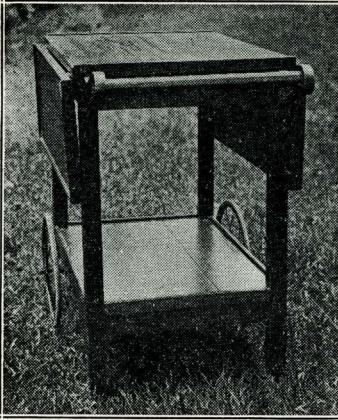


Fig. 4.—Plans for wheel tray with leaves can be obtained from the Agricultural Engineering Department, State College, Brookings.

The wheel tray is one of the greatest labor savers. There are plain steel, wicker and wooden wheel trays. A home-made wheel tray will serve the purpose nicely. A small rectangular shaped table with a lower shelf, ball-bearing castors and pull will prove quite satisfactory. A silver drawer and drop shelves may be added. A large serving tray may be used. A good one can be purchased for \$1.00. It should be strong so that it will not bend when loaded. Use the wheel tray between kitchen and dining room and for serving lunches.

Kettle and Plate Scrapers

It is a waste of time to have to clean burned food from cooking utensils. Moreover the dish may be ruined. There are very serviceable simple aids that can be used. A mason jar cover has a sharp edge and therefore makes an effective scraper. The work can be finished with fine sand, scouring powder, sandpaper or steel wool. There are flat pieces of steel, woven rings, tiny steel brushes, steel wool, metal cloth and metal string scrapers. All work on the same principle, that of friction. Scouring powders contain a gritty material and soap. Tiny pebbles can be used to clean bottles if there is no bottle brush.

Rubber plate scrapers with wooden handles are a real help. The rubber must be pliable, cut to a rather thin edge and four to five inches wide to do the best work. A scraper of this kind will clean a plate quickly. Less dishwashing is required. Pieces of newspaper or tissue paper can be used to wipe off the dishes before washing. A spatula is also excellent for this purpose.

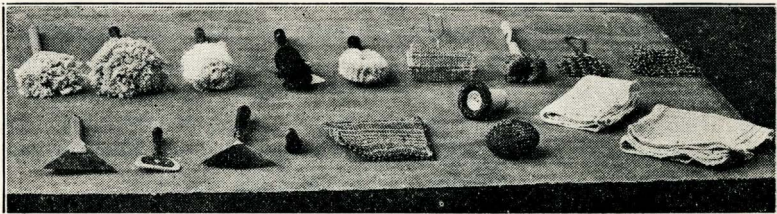


Fig. 5.—Types of dishwashing equipment.

Garbage Pail

The garbage pail is an unsightly unsanitary piece of kitchen equipment in many a home. Very few homes can afford one of the most up-to-

date garbage pails which has a tight cover that is opened by a foot lever. Every home can have a clean garbage pail if it is washed in hot soap suds or lye water every day and scalded. A galvanized or granite pail will serve the purpose. The latter is the easiest to keep clean because there are no seams. A wooden pail will absorb the grease and odors and is the least desirable. It is possible to buy a small container which can be fastened on the end of the work table. A hole with fitted cover six inches in diameter can be cut in the work table through which to drop garbage to a pail below. If the garbage is fairly dry, it can be collected in paper sacks. A sink strainer helps to keep the small amounts of garbage out of the sink.

Cleaning Methods for Kitchen Utensils

Silver—Electrolysis is the easiest method of cleaning silver. Place a teaspoon of salt and washing or baking soda in a quart of water in a bright aluminum pan with the silver. The solution must cover the silver. Boil three minutes to hasten the process. Remove the silver, rinse in hot water and dry. An old aluminum pan, if made bright, may be kept for this purpose. Do not use it for cooking.

A bright piece of aluminum may be used with the soda and salt in an enamelware pan providing each piece of silver touches the metal direct or through another piece. This method may be used on solid or plate silver. It cannot be used on German silver, silver with oxidized finish or metal alloys. The result is a dull finish. Use the silver cloth to give a polish.

Silver Polishing Cloth—Sprinkle one-third of a teaspoon of ferris oxide over a fifteen inch square of outing flannel. Rub the cloth together until the powder is well distributed. Use this cloth to polish the silver after it is cleansed and to brighten it up between cleaning days.

Silver Cream—Silver creams can be purchased but they are expensive. A good cream is made as follows: Add three tablespoons of any washing powder dissolved in one

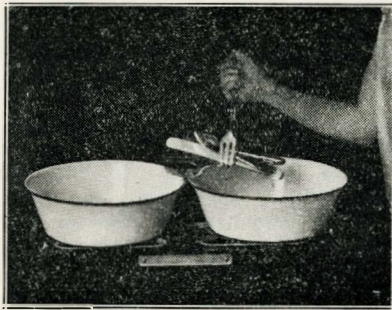


Fig. 6.—Cleaning silver by electrolysis.

cup of boiling water to one tablespoon of olive oil or castor oil and one pound of whiting. Mix thoroughly and store in tight glass jars.

Cast Iron—Cast iron cooking utensils retain the heat longer than some other materials and therefore are in favor for cooking certain foods. They are being replaced by cast aluminum because they are heavy. New iron utensils must go through a seasoning process to remove the loose graphite. Scrub the surface with steel wool and soap. Fill the kettle with water and add three level tablespoons of sal soda. Boil slowly for four hours. Empty the kettle and scour again with soap and steel wool. Grease the kettle with unsalted fat and bake it for two hours. Suet may be tried out in an iron kettle to prepare it for use. Place small iron utensils in a kettle to give it this treatment.

Rub iron utensils that are to be stored with unsalted fat to prevent rust. Wash them before use because the fat may have become rancid. Remove rust from iron by rubbing it with steel wool and soap. Kerosene will help to remove rust. Wash in strong soapsuds, rinse and rub with fat.

Iron utensils may be cleaned by boiling them in a solution of one pound of washing soda dissolved in one and a half gallons of water. Scour with steel wool and rinse in hot water a number of times.

After long use, iron skillets are in very bad condition. Only severe treatment will clean them. If the skillets are of cast iron (no wooden handles) place them in the furnace for a few minutes. Do not allow them to get red hot. Decide how the skillets are to be removed before they are put into the furnace, otherwise they may remain too long.

The cogs of egg beaters are greased and wiped. Do not wash. Use steel wool at the end of a cork to scour steel knives.

Enamel—Clean enamel with a very fine scouring powder because a coarse powder will scratch the surface. Avoid its use if possible. Kerosene on a cloth will remove all grease. Wash with soap and water. Boil in soda water to remove material that is baked on. Enamel ware utensils are improved by rubbing with fat. Do not bake fat in. To protect enamel sink drain boards, use asbestos mats under kettles.

Tin—Prepare new tin ware by rubbing with fat and baking it in. Wash in soap and water. The discoloration on tin utensils that results from use should not be removed. Old tin absorbs heat more rapidly than new. Do not scour tin except to clean it.

Aluminum—Use fine steel wool to scour aluminum. If it becomes discolored, cook acid foods in it. If food is badly burned on, heat the kettle until the material will chip off. Finish cleaning with steel wool.

Wood—Scrubbing wood with soap darkens the wood. Use fine sand instead. Use warm water and neutral soap to wash wooden bread boards if the bright color of the wood is to be retained. Treat wooden drain boards of sinks with boiled linseed oil every night as long as the wood will take it up. Use wooden skewers to clean cracks.

Zinc—Wash zinc table tops and pails with hot soap suds. Use a paste of baking soda moistened with kerosene or kerosene alone to clean zinc. Use vinegar to remove stains from zinc. Rinse with water.

Nickel—Wash nickel with soap and water. Rinse. It may be brightened with whiting or the silver polishing cloth. Scouring powders are very likely to injure the surface.

Glassware—Remove water stains by rubbing with steel wool and soap.