

*You are offered a glimpse into distinctive playgrounds
for eating, a favorite indoor sport*

Dining Midst Drama

by Daisy Mary Kimberley

"EAT, drink and be merry" was the custom of many a jolly gourmet back in the good old days. That principle has almost been forgotten in this day of streamlined figures, but eating is still a popular indoor sport.

From the owner of a tiny hamburger "joint" to the manager of the smartest hotel dining room, most of the successful operators of eating places realize that people like to "be merry" while they eat. These successful managers do their best to increase the enjoyment of eating for their patrons. And many times their success can be measured by their ability to dramatize eating to their customers.

The first and most important requisite for eating pleasure is good food, and its twin—simple, gracious service. These are absolute "musts" for those who aspire to please a discriminating public. The little points which are used to bring enjoyment to the "diner-outers" are almost as innumerable as are the wide-awake managers of eating places.

On Florida train diners, fruit juices are served to the passengers without extra charge. In the New England states it is clam broth. On some railroad lines coffee is always served to the guests in the morning before they order. There is a famous restaurant where the waiters always bring a glass of chilled tomato juice to their patrons before they order. Think what that does for that hungry feeling which so often makes the guest critical even before the first course is served.

If you aspire to be a prosperous tea room operator you may well try to be famous for some one thing. It may be a special dish which no one can duplicate, or it may be the crispy tenderness of your fried chicken which brings your patrons back again and again.

Or you may be famous for some unusual service—like the place which serves delicious steaks and then puts the bones in a paper sack for you to take home to Fido. They have made remembering Fido the smart thing to do.

In Massachusetts an eating house makes your Thanksgiving dinner something really meriting thanks. If you have a party of eight or more they will serve you a whole turkey for the host

to carve. When the dinner is over they wrap the remains of the noble bird for you to take home.

In Madison, Wisconsin, people enjoy the fun of eating on a back lawn which has been transformed into a real garden. In winter this tea shop serves by candle light before the fire.

In Minneapolis the tea room of a large department store has solved the problem of price by dividing the dining room into three sections, separated by a low rail. Each section serves foods of a specific price range. The sections are decorated in different color schemes.

Lives there a person with appetite so jaded that he could resist the thrill of choosing his own lobster from a big assortment and then watching it dropped into a caldron of boiling sea water to be cooked? You may do this at a lobster pound near Bar Harbor. Bring your own bread and butter and dessert if you like.

Now that you're in the East, why not go to an oyster house in Boston which has been operating since 1826 with the same furnishings. It's near the scene of the Boston Tea Party. Sit in stalls with sawdust on the floor, or go to the oyster bar and order oysters prepared any way you wish.

Still in Boston, go out on a historic fishing pier to a tea room and sit by the window and watch the boats in the harbor.

In Cambridge you may travel down the street past the "spreading chestnut tree" to the house where Longfellow's village blacksmith lived. This house is now an eating place which is noted for good food.

On Cape Cod Bay, southeast of Boston, a pleasant drive down a shore road at sunset culminates in a shore dinner. The "old oaken bucket" is in a house nearby. The sea will be splendid with moonlight as you drive back.

When you go to historic Faneuil Hall, celebrate the Declaration of Independence by crossing the street to a place where the special Indian pudding with ice cream is indeed "something to write home about." Indian pudding is made of corn meal and molasses and milk cooked slowly for a long, long time.

In Chicago, of course, you'll go to the



place which seems to be transported from Sweden. The interior is like an eighteenth century inn and the waitresses, all from Sweden, are dressed in native costume, with full skirts, tight bodices and tiny aprons. Go to the smorgasbord and heap your plate with assorted fish, pickled herring, Swedish potato salad, meat balls, potato pudding and other Swedish delicacies.

Consider what a well chosen name and distinctive, though simple, furnishings can do for your tea room. Who can resist such charming names as The Whistling Oyster, The Jolly Gingersnap, Turkey Inn, Cheshire Cheese, Cock Horse Inn or A Bit of Sweden.

Each year there is more patronage for places which specialize in Sunday dinners. And there is a need for eating places which cater to children, preparing the kind of food they should have, and serving them suitably.

Some eating places have a side line, such as selling native pottery, antiques or souvenirs, which helps take care of overhead expenses. Others use their equipment to cater for parties. Something new in this line is preparing smart, crisp salad trays for parties.

New electrical equipment provides another method to bring fun to dining out. Specialize in waffles. Have outlets in each booth to plug in the waffle bakers and allow the guests to cook their own. Just to make them more "custom made" supply the guests with pecans, bacon, dates or fruit to add as they desire.

Here's one thing to be emphatic about—serve GOOD coffee. There is no other one thing which your guests will appreciate more.