

# Presentation is Everything

By Trail End State Historic Site Curator Sharie Mooney Prout; from *Trail End Notes*, November 2010

Have you ever wanted to give your special holiday dinners “just a little something extra” in the way you arrange the food? In today’s cooking and home decorating magazines, one can find articles and photos about doing this, and the same was true in Eula Kendrick’s time. People have always wanted to present fun, attractive meals to their guests!

In Mrs. Kendrick’s personal, hand-written cookbook, she devoted entire sections to giving details for the myriad of ways food could be creatively presented, complete with a sketch next to each entry. She doesn’t always say where the idea came from - it could have been from a luncheon she’d attended, a magazine, or her own imagination.



Advertisement detail from *Needlepoint Magazine*, 1926 (Georgen Collection, TESHHS)

## Tomato Salad with Crabmeat

- Scoop and peel tomatoes
- Stuff with boned crabmeat
- Serve around edge of platter with mayonnaise turned upside down in center
- Serve chilled

## Potato Candles

- Peel Potatoes (boiled and cold)
- Cut into round lengths like candles
- Peel with a fluted knife
- Stick carrot bit like flame in top
- Heat carefully in steamer and serve with butter sauce, or as garnish

## Dill Pickle Sandwich

- Round white or brown bread slices
- Spread with butter or cheese
- Arrange with tiny strips of pickle radiating from center, with pimento in center

## Stuffed Watermelon

- Cut in half lengthwise
- Scoop out and fill with cherry sherbet or ice cream with cherry sherbet on top
- Arrange chocolate (drops, tiny) for seeds, or almonds for seeds

## Cucumbers & Radishes

This dish was served at a 1930 White House dinner. It was part of the second course which also included “fried white fish planked with browned mashed potatoes put through pastry bag”):

- Peel cucumbers with scalloped knife and season with oil dressing
- Arrange around edge of flat silver dish
- Heap grated radish (with red skins) in center and serve
- Season at last minute with salt lightly shaken over radish
- May place cuks [cucumbers] closer and arrange radishes round outside edge, too

Mrs. Kendrick herself admitted that she did not like to cook and wasn't very good at it, but the entries into her cookbook show that the artistic side of her was definitely drawn to food presentation.

The saying is just as true today as it was then - it's all about the presentation! Maybe you'll keep some of these ideas in mind the next time you want to dress up your meal and impress your guests.



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