I've been wanting to make this zine for years, but was always too busy/lazy/poor. Then I figured I'm always going to be busy/lazy/poor, so may as well just get on with it.

The cooking was an extremely steep learning curve, as most recipes involved following the vaguest of instructions to prepare ingredients I'd never even tasted before.

I definitely feel a lot less stressed out about cooking these days — if I can cook a sheep's head, then not much else is going to faze me!

HUGE THANKS to all participants, and especially to Lucha, Strumpet and my Mum for providing cooking advice and preventing several freakouts.

I'm now looking forward to deploying my ceramic mould for good instead of evil.

Contact me: blinkykilla8832@gmail.com

by Blinky Kill
Browsing through vintage Australian Women’s Weekly magazines on Trove (https://trove.nla.gov.au), I thought to myself “what better way to win friends and influence people than to pick the weirdest and grossest-sounding old recipes, cook them, and feed them to my friends and family?”

Surprisingly, a large number of people were totally into it and super-keen to volunteer as guinea pigs (although my partner’s response was an emphatic “HELL NO!”)

All recipes were sourced from the Australian Women’s Weekly (AWW), from issues published 1930s-50s. This period encompasses the Great Depression, WWII, and post-WWII life, when economy was the order of the day (hence the frequent use of offal), and before authentic international cuisines were truly embraced by Australians still clinging to the English tradition of stodge.

That said, with the recent resurgence of interest in top-to-tail cooking and eating, I was curious to see if any of the recipes were forgotten taste sensations.

One thing I was worried about with this challenge was food wastage. Problem solved – most leftovers were donated to friends’ dogs or chickens.

Warning: this zine contains some disturbing images and is not suitable for the squeamish.

This recipe really just consists of tongue set in the sheep’s head broth. I went a bit rogue and added meat from the lamb’s cheek to reduce waste, and I also added a couple of teaspoons of gelatin to help it set. Even with the extra help from the gelatin, it did not set super-firmly, so it did not de-mould cleanly, and the jelly wobbled incredibly lewdly at us all evening!

The jelly was disgusting (way too much vinegar), but the meat ended up being cooked fairly well, so Strumpet and Prood went back for more, picking out most of the meat to eat separately. Still not as bad as the Tripe Mould!
Jeremy disagreed, stating that “discovering a skinned sheep head in the fridge one day is probably the most genuine horror show moment I’ve had since moving in with you!”

Unwrapping the head was definitely gross. Bared to the world, the eyes bulge, the grey tongue is sticking out the side of the mouth, and the sharp little blackened teeth are bared. I freaked out a bit at this point, repeatedly squawking “OH MY GLOB, THAT’S DISGUSTING, I DON’T WANT TO TOUCH IT!” until I just went for it, plonking it into the stock pot.

That wasn’t even the grossest bit.

The grossest bit was pulling the cooked head out of the pot (the boiled flesh had turned grey, and the eyes were bulging more than ever), cutting the tongue out and skinning it (that part was oddly satisfying), pulling the bones apart and putting the bones back into the pot.

I used a combination of spam and roast chicken for this festive recipe that may as well be called “Jellied Mystery Meat.” I was a bit frazzled at serving time and forgot the garnish, but I think we can all agree that garnish would only have taken away from Holiday Meat Mould’s unnatural and unadorned magnificence.

It looked like cat food, smelled like cat food, and tasted (I’m guessing) like cat food. But Hell’s dog Schnitzel (who loves cat food) was not super-keen, so it must have tasted like BAD cat food!
It's all subjective though - Frood's comment was “salty,” and being a delightfully salty person herself who enjoys the salty things in life, she took leftovers home for her lunch the next day.

I very nearly wussed out of cooking this one. For starters, I knew it was going to be the freakiest thing so far to handle, and I was also pretty sure that my stock pot would be too small, and I couldn't afford to upgrade.

When I rang the butcher to pre-order the sheep's head, I asked how big it would be. The lady on the phone said “about the same size as a human head, but with a snout”

**Pineapple Swiss Liver**

_AWW, 29 June 1946, page 46:

Even after cooking this, I still don't know where “Swiss” comes into it. Does the spaghetti make it Swiss??

Fortunately Bee was able to help, lending me a huge pot that well and truly fits a human head + snout!

When I picked the sheep's head up, it was wrapped in glad wrap, so didn't look all that bad in my opinion.
The brains smelled bloody awful when they cooked, but weren't that bad to eat, although again, I'm pretty sure that I overcooked them by following the recipe. Bee took leftovers home to the delight of her family, I'm sure.

Bee didn't mind this dish as liver is her “favourite offal,” but everyone else was hating on it, even more than Holiday Meat Mould!

This dish had 3 components, and there was a problem with each one; following the recipe's directions, the liver ended up way overcooked (to be fair, my oven is probably more powerful than ovens in the 1940s, so I really should have made adjustments), the tinned pineapple with sugar was too sweet and the spaghetti managed to be boring and weird all at the same time.

Sheep's Head Jelly

AWW 20 October 1934, page 43:

SHEEP’S HEAD JELLY
Wash a sheep's head into a large vessel with a bay leaf, allspice, water, cloves, and salt. Boil until the bones can be removed. Skin the tongue. Put into a mould. Boil the bones in the broth with one small cup vinegar, 1 onion (sliced), one teaspoon turmeric. Strain it into the mould. Leave till next day. Turn out and garnish with lettuce and slices tomato.

Bell's dog Maggie agreed with Bee though, and got SUPER-intense about the liver - Maggie gives this dish a big two paws-up.
Prune Surprise
AWW, 20 March 1937, page 42:

Food should never have the word ‘surprise’ in it. Unless the surprise is chocolate or bacon.
In this case, the surprise is a mayonnaise-dipped devilled almond stuffed into a red wine-soaked prune, all wrapped in lettuce.
I found that there’s a lot of assumed knowledge and super-vague instructions in these recipes. One of the instructions is to “cook [the prunes] in the usual way.” Very helpful for those of us who have never cooked prunes.
Ta, Mrs A. Biggs.

I veganised Prune Surprise (using vegan wine and vegan mayo), and took it along to a Surly Griffin team picnic...

Delicious Brain Pie
AWW, 8 June 1935, pg 55:

Call me crazy, but my immediate reaction on opening the box of brains was “awwww, they’re so cute and little!”

Peeling the membrane from the brain proved to be too fiddly for my complete lack of skills, so I gave up on this step after successfully peeling a third of one brain, but mangling most of the others.
Cabbage Supreme was definitely the cruiciest recipe to make - proper steps, no guesswork needed. I was easily able to veganise this one by using vegan-friendly stock, using Nuttelex instead of butter, and by not adding the hard boiled egg garnish (that last one is kind of a pity, as I'm sure the combo of cabbage and egg would have been interesting).

This recipe was divisive - some people didn't mind it, whilst others hated it with a fiery passion. I personally rated this as moderately bad, but definitely not the worst thing I cooked for this zine.

My new teamies got lucky - Cabbage Supreme was not actually that bad. Do I ever want to eat it again? No. But did anyone spit it out? No.

It tasted like something my Granny would have legitimately enjoyed - there was a sense of nostalgia with this dish, as if Granny had attempted to feed this or something similar to me as a child.

Tripe Mould

AWW, 4 July 1936, page 51

One pound tripe, 1 pint milk, onion, salt, cayenne, 1 oz. gelatine, lettuce.

Cook tripe and whole onion till tender, drain well. Cut tripe into small pieces, and mince onion. Dissolve gelatine in a little boiling water, pour on the warm milk, add salt and cayenne. Stir well. Put tripe and onion into wetted mould. Pour over the milk. Leave on ice till quite firm. Turn out and serve with lettuce or salad vegetables.
My parents volunteered to be part of the fun. They specifically volunteered to try Prune Surprise, so I thought it would be hilarious to feed them Tripe Mould instead.

This was on my Dad’s 71st birthday, and after they drove from Melbourne to Canberra to visit me.

I am an awesome daughter.

I stuck a “1” candle in it (the local shop was out of 7s) and brought it in singing Happy Birthday, then set it down on the table, where it gave a very sexy wobble.

Dad thought I’d made panna cotta. Lol.

For those who don’t know, tripe is stomach lining (typically cow or sheep), and tastes nothing like panna cotta.

Tripe Mould was definitely the grossest thing I’d made so far – it stunk-out my apartment for the whole weekend. We barely made a dent, so Skid’s chickens got an excellent dinner out of it!

Cabbage Supreme

AWW, 15 September 1934, page 33:

CABBAGE SUPREME

Two cups strained tomato juice,
2 tablespoons flour, 1 cup butter, 1 cup stock, 5 peppercorns, 1 bay leaf, 2 cloves, 1 tablespoon sugar, 1 tablespoon minced onion, 3 cups finely-minced cabbage, 2 tablespoons finely-minced green peppers.

Melt the butter in a saucepan. Add the flour, and cook until lightly browned. Add tomato juice, stock, peppercorns, bay leaf, cloves, sugar and minced onion. Stir until it boils. Simmer 20 minutes. Put the ingredients through a strainer, combine with the finely-minced cabbage and green peppers, and cook without a lid until the cabbage is tender (20 minutes). Turn on to a dish, serve with hard-boiled eggs, cut in quarters.

Earlier this year, I got transferred to a new roller derby home team. What better way to bond with my new buds that to make them eat gross food, then take pics?
Jellied Herring Ring

AWW, 20 May 1953, page 50:

JELLED HERRING RING

One 4oz. tin herrings, 1 finely chopped onion, 1 tablespoon chopped parsley, 11 cups tomato juice, 1 teaspoon anchovy sauce, 1 tablespoon vinegar, 3 peppercorns, 3 cloves, 2 bay leaves, salt and pepper, 2 dessertspoons gelatine, 1 tablespoon water.

Arrange herrings around base of wetted ring mould. Sprinkle with onion and parsley. Bring tomato juice, peppercorns, cloves, vinegar, bay leaves, anchovy sauce, salt and pepper to boiling point, simmer 10 minutes. Strain, add gelatine softened in cold water, stir until dissolved. Pour over herrings, chill until firm. Unmould. Serve with crisp salad.

First Prize of £5 to Miss L. Montfort, Richmond Park, Gordon East, N.S.W.

Canberra is tiny – not so much 6 degrees of separation, more like two. In a typically Canberran bit of serendipity, one of my skater friends told me that Lish Fejer was doing a segment on ABC Radio Canberra called ‘Cooking the Books’ about cooking old recipes, and that she was keen to hear about my project, and maybe get me on the show! We arranged a time, and I arrived sporting a magnificent Jellied Herring Ring (is it just me, or does it sound vaguely sexual, in a venereal diseasey kind of way?)
The radio hosts Lish Fejer and Paula Kruger were absolutely lovely – we chatted and laughed, and we ate the Jellied Herring Ring right there in the studio, live on air.

Months later, the memory of the smell and the taste still lingers – the combination of herring and raw brown onion is extremely pungent, and I do not recommend it. I was Paula and Lish’s last guest for their segment. As we walked out (passing around the breath mints), the next presenter came into the studio “what on EARTH is that smell???”

It was hard to find a weird dessert. Most of the old-school recipes for dessert sound delish (I clearly picked the wrong thing to focus on in this zine!)

When I converted ounces to grams, I was disappointed to discover that the recipe only calls for one potato. Can you call it a ‘chocolate POTATO cake’ if it has more of pretty much every other ingredient? What is even the point of the potato? I guess the potato acts as filler, to bulk the more expensive ingredients out?

Something that royally pissed me off with this recipe is the oh-so-casual step “Fill with mock cream.” WHAT THE HELL IS MOCK CREAM AND WHY WERE THE INGREDIENTS NOT LISTED???
The radio hosts Lish Fejer and Paula Kruger were absolutely lovely — we chatted and laughed, and we ate the Jellied Herring Ring right there in the studio, live on air!

It was hard to find a weird dessert. Most of the old-school recipes for dessert sound delish (I clearly picked the wrong thing to focus on in this zine!)

When I converted ounces to grams, I was disappointed to discover that the recipe only calls for one potato. Can you call it a ‘chocolate POTATO cake’ if it has more of pretty much every other ingredient? What is even the point of the potato? I guess the potato acts as filler, to bulk the more expensive ingredients out?

Something that royally pissed me off with this recipe is the oh-so-casual step “Fill with mock cream.” WHAT THE HELL IS MOCK CREAM AND WHY WERE THE INGREDIENTS NOT LISTED???
Thank gawd for the internet. Turns out mock cream is basically a sugary custard mixed with butter and vanilla essence, & it’s quite easy to make.

Chocolate Potato Cake ended up tasting pretty much just like normal chocolate cake. Only better, because I can’t remember the last time I ate fresh chocolate cake baked from scratch.

People trying the cake were initially suss, probs because it turned out hella ugly (food presentation is not my strong suit, as you may have noticed), plus they thought that the mock cream was mashed potato :D

Canberra is tiny – not so much 6 degrees of separation, more like two. In a typically Canberran bit of serendipity, one of my skater friends told me that Lish Fejer was doing a segment on ABC Radio Canberra called ‘Cooking the Books’ about cooking old recipes, and that she was keen to hear about my project, and maybe get me on the show :D

We arranged a time, and I arrived sporting a magnificent Jellied Herring Ring (is it just me, or does it sound vaguely sexual, in a venereal diseasey kind of way?)
My parents volunteered to be part of the fun. They specifically volunteered to try Prune Surprise, so I thought it would be hilarious to feed them Tripe Mould instead.

This was on my Dad’s 71st birthday, and after they drove from Melbourne to Canberra to visit me.

I am an awesome daughter.

I stuck a “1” candle in it (the local shop was out of 7s) and brought it in singing Happy Birthday, then set it down on the table, where it gave a very sexy wobble.

Dad thought I’d made panna cotta. Lol.

For those who don’t know, tripe is stomach lining (typically cow or sheep), and tastes nothing like panna cotta.

Tripe Mould was definitely the grossest thing I’d made so far – it stunk-out my apartment for the whole weekend. We barely made a dent, so Skid’s chickens got an excellent dinner out of it!

Earlier this year, I got transferred to a new roller derby home team. What better way to bond with my new buds that to make them eat gross food, then take pics?
Cabbage Supreme was definitely the cruiciest recipe to make—proper steps, no guesswork needed. I was easily able to veganise this one by using vegan-friendly stock, using Nuttelex instead of butter, and by not adding the hard boiled egg garnish (that last one is kind of a pity, as I’m sure the combo of cabbage and egg would have been... interesting)

This recipe was divisive—some people didn’t mind it, whilst others hated it with a fiery passion. I personally rated this as moderately bad, but definitely not the worst thing I cooked for this zine.

My new teamies got lucky—Cabbage Supreme was not actually that bad.
Do I ever want to eat it again? No.
But did anyone spit it out? No.

It tasted like something my Granny would have legitimately enjoyed—there was a sense of nostalgia with this dish, as if Granny had attempted to feed this or something similar to me as a child.

Tripe Mould

AWW, 4 July 1936, page 51:

One pound tripe, 1 pint milk, onion, salt, cayenne, 1 oz. gelatine, lettuce.

Cook tripe and whole onion till tender, drain well. Cut tripe into small pieces, and mince onion. Dissolve gelatine in a little boiling water, pour on the warm milk, add salt and cayenne. Stir well. Put tripe and onion into wetted mould. Pour over the milk. Leave on ice till quite firm. Turn out and serve with lettuce or salad vegetables.
Food should never have the word ‘surprise’ in it. Unless the surprise is chocolate or bacon.

In this case, the surprise is a mayonnaise-dipped devilled almond stuffed into a red wine-soaked prune, all wrapped in lettuce.

I found that there’s a lot of assumed knowledge and super-vague instructions in these recipes. One of the instructions is to “cook [the prunes] in the usual way.” Very helpful for those of us who have never cooked prunes.

Ta, Mrs A. Biggs.

---

I veganised Prune Surprise (using vegan wine and vegan mayo), and took it along to a Surly Griffin team picnic...

---

Peeling the membrane from the brain proved to be too fiddly for my complete lack of skills, so I gave up on this step after successfully peeling a third of one brain, but mangling most of the others.
The brains smelled bloody awful when they cooked, but weren't that bad to eat, although again, I'm pretty sure that I overcooked them by following the recipe. Bee took leftovers home to the delight of her family, I'm sure.

Bee didn't mind this dish as liver is her “favourite offal,” but everyone else was hating on it, even more than Holiday Meat Mould!

This dish had 3 components, and there was a problem with each one; following the recipe’s directions, the liver ended up way overcooked (to be fair, my oven is probably more powerful than ovens in the 1940s, so I really should have made adjustments), the tinned pineapple with sugar was too sweet and the spaghetti managed to be boring and weird all at the same time.

Sheep's Head Jelly
AWW 20 October 1934, page 43;

SHEEP’S HEAD JELLY
Wash a sheep’s head into a large vessel with a bay leaf, allspice, water cloves, and salt. Boil until the bones can be removed. Skin the tongue. Put into a mouled. Boll the bones in the broth with one small cup vinegar, 1 onion (sliced), one teaspoon turmeric. Strain it into the moule. Leave till next day. Turn out and garnish with lettuce and slices tomato.

Hell's dog Maggie agreed with Bee though, and got SUPER-intense about the liver - Maggie gives this dish a big two paws-up.
I very nearly wussed out of cooking this one. For starters, I knew it was going to be the freakiest thing so far to handle, and I was also pretty sure that my stock pot would be too small, and I couldn't afford to upgrade.

When I rang the butcher to pre-order the sheep's head, I asked how big it would be. The lady on the phone said "about the same size as a human head, but with a snout."

Fortunately Bee was able to help, lending me a huge pot that well and truly fits a human head + snout!

When I picked the sheep's head up, it was wrapped in glad wrap, so didn't look all that bad in my opinion.

Even after cooking this, I still don't know where "Swiss" comes into it. Does the spaghetti makes it Swiss??

Pineapple Swiss Liver

AWW, 29 June 1946, page 46:

Jeremy disagreed, stating that “discovering a skinned sheep head in the fridge one day is probably the most genuine horror show moment I’ve had since moving in with you!”

Unwrapping the head was definitely gross. Bared to the world, the eyes bulge, the grey tongue is sticking out the side of the mouth, and the sharp little blackened teeth are bared. I freaked out a bit at this point, repeatedly squawking “OH MY GLOB, THAT’S DISGUSTING, I DON’T WANT TO TOUCH IT!” until I just went for it, plonking it into the stock pot.

That wasn’t even the grossest bit.

The grossest bit was pulling the cooked head out of the pot (the boiled flesh had turned grey, and the eyes were bulging more than ever), cutting the tongue out and skinning it (that part was oddly satisfying), pulling the bones apart and putting the bones back into the pot.

Holiday Meat Mould

AWW, 25 November 1959, page 71:

I used a combination of spam and roast chicken for this festive recipe that may as well be called “Jellied Mystery Meat.” I was a bit frazzled at serving time and forgot the garnish, but I think we can all agree that garnish would only have taken away from Holiday Meat Mould’s unnatural and unadorned magnificence.

It looked like cat food, smelled like cat food, and tasted (I’m guessing) like cat food. But Hell’s dog Schnitzel (who loves cat food) was not super-keen, so it must have tasted like BAD cat food!
Browsing through vintage Australian Women's Weekly magazines on Trove (https://trove.nla.gov.au), I thought to myself “what better way to win friends and influence people than to pick the weirddest and grossest-sounding old recipes, cook them, and feed them to my friends and family?”

Surprisingly, a large number of people were totally into it and super-keen to volunteer as guinea pigs (although my partner's response was an emphatic “HELL NO!”)

All recipes were sourced from the Australian Women's Weekly (AWW), from issues published 1930s-50s. This period encompasses the Great Depression, WWII, and post-WWII life, when economy was the order of the day (hence the frequent use of offal), and before authentic international cuisines were truly embraced by Australians still clinging to the English tradition of stodge.

That said, with the recent resurgence of interest in top-to-tail cooking and eating, I was curious to see if any of the recipes were forgotten taste sensations.

One thing I was worried about with this challenge was food wastage. Problem solved - most leftovers were donated to friends’ dogs or chickens.

Warning: this zine contains some disturbing images and is not suitable for the squeamish.

This recipe really just consists of tongue set in the sheep's head broth. I went a bit rogue and added meat from the lamb’s cheek to reduce waste, and I also added a couple of teaspoons of gelatin to help it set. Even with the extra help from the gelatin, it did not set super-firmly, so it did not de-mould cleanly, and the jelly wobbled incredibly lewdly at us all evening!

The jelly was disgusting (way too much vinegar), but the meat ended up being cooked fairly well, so Strumpet and Frood went back for more, picking out most of the meat to eat separately. Still not as bad as the Tripe Mould!
I've been wanting to make this zine for years, but was always too busy/lazy/poor. Then I figured I'm always going to be busy/lazy/poor, so may as well just get on with it.

The cooking was an extremely steep learning curve, as most recipes involved following the vaguest of instructions to prepare ingredients I'd never even tasted before.

I definitely feel a lot less stressed out about cooking these days — if I can cook a sheep's head, then not much else is going to faze me!

HUGE THANKS to all participants, and especially to Lucha, Strumpet and my Mum for providing cooking advice and preventing several freakouts.

I'm now looking forward to deploying my ceramic mould for good instead of evil.

Contact me: blinkykilla8838@gmail.com

by Blinky Kill