



The First Friday of the Month

Throughout the fall and the holiday season

Join Me in the Kitchen & Around the Table for a Cooking Class!

Enjoy delicious food & fun!

More information will be available soon.

Private classes always available
Girls' Night Out
Cooking Couples
Customer Appreciation
and lots more....
at your house or mine.

Private Chef & Catering Services

Celebrations for Family & Friends.
...too busy or too tired to cook ...
let me do it for you!

Contact Susan Nye at
susannye@tds.net
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More information the web at
www.susannye.com

It is hurricane season again. Up and down the southern Atlantic seaboard and the Gulf Coast red flags give storm warnings, windows are boarded up with plywood, sand bags are filled, neighborhoods are evacuated and lots prayers are said. Although Gustav was not the storm of the century, it was hardly a gentle summer shower. Now Hanna, Ike and Josephine are coming fast on his heels.

New England has a long history of severe weather. Luckily, our brushes with hurricanes are few and far between. The first hurricane recorded in New England was the Great Colonial Hurricane. It brought death and destruction in August 1635. The Great Hurricane of 1938 blew through with 140 miles per hour wind gusts. Every state in New England was affected. Seven hundred people were lost, 2,000 were injured and damages totaled more than \$400 million. More recently, Carol, Diane and Donna hit us hard in the 1950's and 60's, Gloria unleashed her fury in 1985 and Bob struck in 1991.

While we can be thankful that most hurricanes blow themselves out by the time they reach us, we have our own weather trials and tribulations. We battle heavy snow in winter, flooding in spring and fall and powerful thunderstorms in summer. These mighty storms are generally followed by brilliant sunshine and bright blue skies. As Mark Twain once said "If you don't like the weather in New England wait a minute and it will change."

Maybe it is because they are so horrific, so newsworthy and, at least locally, so few and far between but hurricanes have long been a curiosity to me. My fascination started when I was five or six. We were on the Cape, spending the summer close to grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins and enjoying time in the ocean and on beach. Tropical storm Brenda came roaring up the coast.

I was green with envy. How could my sister be so important to have a hurricane named after her? It was just not fair. First, there was her birthday. My sister, Brenda, was born on October 12th. In those days we celebrated Columbus Day on the 12th not the second Monday in October. Brenda always claimed that her birthday was the reason for the holiday. In fact she bragged that the entire nation took a day off from school and work to celebrate her birth. Now suddenly a big massive storm was named for her. Forget that it was only a tropical storm, she declared it a hurricane.

By the time Hurricane Brenda reached our little beach front neighborhood, the wind and rain had subsided. Knowing that their two little girls would not be blown across the canal, we were allowed to go out and play in the rain. We donned our bathing suits and flip-flops, grabbed our umbrellas and headed out with our dad. He took us down to the beach to watch the dark water and crashing waves. Even if the storm had more or less blown itself out, our trip to the beach was a grand adventure and I was thrilled to be out and about in a hurricane. I remember gaily dancing down the rainy street, wondering when Hurricane Susan would come roaring up the coast.

Luckily, she never did.

At least for now New Orleans and the Gulf have been more or less spared. Let's hope for the best as hurricane season continues. I wish you a warm and wonderful September. May your days be filled with warm sunshine and your nights bright with clear moonlight,

Bon appétit!

Susan

Around the Table
Private Chef & Catering Services

Do you have too much to do and
too little time?

Too busy to cook?

Let me do it for you.

Like to entertain?

No time to prepare the perfect
cocktail or dinner party?

Let me do it for you.

Around the Table
Friday Night Cooking Classes

A fun evening to
learn, eat and laugh!

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Not-Really-Gumbo

Celebrate the courage of the people of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast with this flavorful stew. It may be a pretty far cry from traditional Louisiana gumbo, but it is great party fare and gets rave reviews.

Serves 8-10

1 yellow pepper, chopped
1 medium onion, chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon hot pepper sauce or to taste
1 tablespoon minced jalapeño pepper or to taste
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon dried sage
1 teaspoon cumin
1 pound mushrooms, sliced
1/2 - 1 pound hot Italian sausage
1 1/2 pounds skinless, boneless chicken breast
1-2 cups chicken stock
2 zucchinis, chopped
1 bay leaf
1 cup canned crushed tomatoes
1/2 cup dry white wine
1 1/2 pounds uncooked medium or large shrimp, shelled and de-veined
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
Olive oil
Garnish: fresh, flat leaf parsley, chopped

1. Heat a little olive oil in a large heavy flame-proof Dutch oven or casserole over medium high heat. Add the pepper, onion, garlic, pepper sauce, jalapeño pepper, thyme, sage, cumin, salt and pepper; sauté for 5-10 minutes, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are tender-crisp. Remove from the casserole and reserve.
2. With the heat still on medium high, add a little more olive oil to the casserole, add the mushrooms and sauté until lightly browned; remove and reserve with the other vegetables.
3. Remove the sausage casings. With the heat still on medium high, add the sausage to the casserole. Sauté the sausage until lightly browned, breaking the meat up into bite size pieces. Remove from the casserole and reserve.
4. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Add a little more olive oil to the casserole and keep the heat at medium high. Add the chicken and brown for 1-2 minutes per side. Add a cup of chicken stock and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer the chicken breasts until cooked through, about 7 minutes. Remove and reserve the chicken and the stock. Let the chicken cool; cut or shred the chicken into bite size pieces.
5. Return the vegetables, sausage, chicken and stock to the casserole; add the zucchini, bay leaf, tomatoes and white wine. If the stew seems dry add a little more chicken stock. Let the casserole sit overnight in the refrigerator.
6. Bring the casserole to a simmer over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to low and cook for 10 minutes. Bring the heat up to high; add the shrimp and return to a simmer. Lower the heat to medium and simmer until the shrimp are cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes. Serve immediately with a sprinkle of fresh chopped parsley and crusty bread, creamy polenta or rice.