

Fall and Holiday Cooking Parties

Girls' Night Out Take a break from the same-old/same-old!

Easy & Elegant Entertaining The holidays are right around the corner - are you ready?

Cooking for 1 or 2 Don't settle for peanut butter and jelly, cornflakes or frozen food every night.

Cooking with Kids Have your kids cook for you!

For more information visit the web at www.susannye.com

or contact Susan Nye at 603/526 7319 or aroundthetable@tds.net

I moved to Switzerland in the mid-eighties and lived for a short time in Bienne. The Swiss believe that Bienne is famous for its watches. Its true significance has little to do with time pieces; it is the birth site an annual tradition - Thanksgiving Dinner at Susan's.

I love Thanksgiving because it is all about family and friends around the table. There are no presents, no chocolate eggs, and no fireworks to distract. I grew up in Massachusetts and have a special affinity for Thanksgiving. We studied the Pilgrims in school every year. We made construction paper Pilgrim hats and Native American headdresses, had lessons on corn and 17th century agriculture and read the famous Longfellow poem about Priscilla Mullins' romantic triangle with Miles Standish and John Alden. My family spent summers on Cape Cod until I was 10 and my Nana Nye took my sister and me to Plymouth to see the Rock and the Pilgrim Village. My Pop Nye even worked in the bogs harvesting cranberries.

Even if I was half a world away from Plymouth Plantation, the idea of ignoring Thanksgiving was just beyond the realm of possibility. I invited a dozen friends and colleagues for dinner and promised them an authentic, New England Thanksgiving.

About a week before the party, I sat down with paper, pencil and the Joy of Cooking. Figuring out my menu was easy; it was the same dinner my Mom and Grandmothers had been making for years. I created my shopping list; and then it hit me. It was my first big Swiss party and I was going to serve a brown dinner. Brown turkey, brown gravy, brown stuffing, squash - sort of orange, but more or less brown. Even the desert was brown, apple pie. OK, the turkey, once sliced was beige, as were the mashed potatoes and creamed onions. The only colorful, saving grace was the cranberry sauce.

I was horrified, an American fresh from the land of Golden Arches, I was going to serve my new friends a brown dinner. Yikes. My homeland's reputation for less-than-gourmet dining already put my culinary capabilities into question. I was about to prove them true. What to do?

I had promised authentic so I plunged forward. Young, still inexperienced in the kitchen, I had never cooked a turkey. Pepperidge Farm did not deliver stuffing mix to Switzerland. The nearest butternut squash was thousands of miles away. The good news, a poultry farm in Arkansas shipped frozen turkeys to Switzerland. There was a bakery with fabulous bread on every corner, I could make stuffing. And there were plenty of apples and pumpkins in the market. I chopped and stirred. I peeled and mashed. I stuffed, trussed and basted.

I greeted my guests nervously, explaining that my authentic, seasonal dinner was in a word monochromatic. My curious friends were open to the experience - they looked upon the dinner as an anthropological adventure. And as it happens every year at tables across the United States, the magic kicked in and the dinner was less about brown food and more about good conversation, laughter, friends and family.

I wish you all a wonderful Thanksgiving -

Bon appétit! - Susan





September 7th

Cooking for 1 or 2

Chicken 3-Ways

September 14th

Cooking for 1 or 2

Pasta with Panache

October 9th

Cooking with Kids

Pasta Party

October 12th

Girls' Night Out

Soup's On

October 26th

Girls' Night Out

French Country Cooking

November 4th

Easy & Elegant Entertaining

Hors d'Oeuvre Party

November 11th

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Thanksgiving 202

December 9th

Cooking with Kids

Christmas Cookies

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Roasted Butternut Squash Soup

Roasting the vegetables gives this soup a rich, deep flavor. Not just for Thanksgiving, I make this soup throughout the fall and winter.

2 1/2 pounds butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into chunks
1 large potato, about 8 ounces, cut into chunks

3 carrots, chopped

4 celery stalks, chopped

2 medium onions, chopped

3 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

1-2 bay leaves

8 cups chicken stock

1 cup dry white wine

1 tablespoon fresh sage, chopped, or 1 teaspoon dried and crumbled

1 tablespoon fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried

1 teaspoon coarse salt

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1 cup half and half (optional)

Fresh chopped chives, for garnish

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Put the vegetables, herbs, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, salt and pepper in a large roasting pan— toss to coat. Add bay leaves. Roast for 45 minutes.
2. Add the white wine to the pan. Return to the oven and cook for 15 minutes.
3. Let the soup cool for about 30 minutes. Remove bay leaves from soup. Working in batches, puree the squash mixture with a little chicken stock in a blender or food processor until smooth.
4. Put the squash puree in a large soup pot. Add the remaining chicken stock. Reheat slowly on the stove top and simmer for on low for 15 minutes. Add the half and half, reheat to below a boil. Adjust the seasoning.
5. Garnish with chives, and serve immediately.

Serves 8 to 12