



Join Me in the Kitchen &
Around the Table for Friday
Night Cooking Classes!

Enjoy delicious food & fun!

October 3rd

Italian Country Kitchen

November 7th

Tapas & Finger Food

December 5th

French Bistro Cooking

January 9th

French Country Cooking

February 6th

Moroccan Feast

March 6th

Latinas Night Out!

April 3rd

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May 1st

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Contact Susan Nye at

susannye@tds.net

or 603/526 7319

More information the web at

www.susannye.com

The days are getting shorter, as well as a heck of a lot grayer and colder. Daylight Savings Time is over. Suddenly it's dark at 4:30 in the afternoon. In theory mornings dawn a little earlier, but only in theory. Most days start with a thick blanket of fog so while it may not be pitch dark at 7:00 it sure is gray and misty. Unless of course it's raining. I don't know what it is about November but it seems to rain all the time. When it's not raining there is rain in the forecast, or snow.

With chilly days and even colder nights, November is the perfect time to get out your soup kettle and cook up some magic. Soup, particularly chicken soup, is good for whatever ails you. It's been known to cure anything from a case of the sniffles to a broken heart. In spite of a few naysayers, mothers have counted on it for centuries. Early Egyptians were convinced it could cure the common cold and last year research at the University of Nebraska confirmed it.

While a bowl of chicken soup may fall just short of a miracle, it will get you on the mend. The steam will relieve a stuffy nose. If you are feeling run down, all those good vegetables and chicken will build up your strength. More important during the grey days of November, this homey, comfort food might just cheer you up when you're feeling blue.

I make lots of different soups throughout the fall and winter. They don't all have the mystical and medicinal status of chicken soup but they are warm and hearty on a cold night. I generally make soup without a recipe. I measure by eye and with the palm of my hand. I add herbs and spices according to mood and fancy. Every batch is slightly different but still delicious. Later when friends ask for the recipe I can only hope I remember everything when I put it all down on paper.

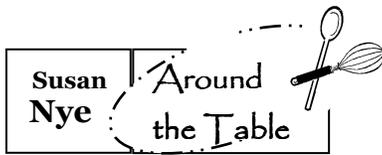
Since New England winters more or less start in November and go on forever, we need an almost endless supply of soup recipes. As much as we love our tried and true favorites, once in awhile we all need to wake up our taste buds with something new.

A good place to start is to re-invent an old favorite. Try different herbs or add a few exotic spices. With a few changes, you'll have a new favorite with a lively a Moroccan twist or a bit of Asian flair. Then again it's always fun to try something completely new. Inspiration can come from anywhere. A delectable discovery in a new restaurant. Reading cookbooks on a rainy afternoon. Even a movie. I was inspired to make Mexican chicken soup after seeing the movie *Tortilla Soup*. The thought of soggy tortillas didn't excite me but I loved the idea of a spicy, south of the border concoction. Before long chicken, a few vegetables and some fragrant spices were simmering on the stove in a tomato-y broth. With very little fuss and bother, I had a simply delicious supper simmering on the stove for a dozen friends.

Why not plan your next party or casual get-together around a big pot of soup? Welcome your guests with the warm and wonderful aroma of a big bubbling caldron. Add a salad, some country bread and dinner is done. It is a great way to warm both the body and the soul during these cold, drizzly days and nights of November. Everyone will enjoy cozying up in front of the fire with a steaming mug.

Bon appétit!

Susan



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Mexican Chicken Soup

This delicious soup will clear your head, warm your body and your soul. Enjoy!

Makes about 5 quarts

1 pound boneless chicken breast
1 large onion, finely chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 red bell pepper, finely chopped
3 stalks celery, finely chopped
2 carrots, finely chopped
1 tablespoon minced jalapeño pepper or to taste
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon ground cumin
Pinch dried chipotle chili pepper flakes or to taste
1/2 cup dry white wine
1 can, 28 ounces, crushed tomatoes
2 1/2 quarts chicken stock
4 cups fresh or frozen corn kernels
2 medium zucchini, chopped
1 tablespoon fresh sage, chopped (or 1 teaspoon dry)
1/2 tablespoon fresh thyme (or 1/2 teaspoon dry)
1 bay leaf
Olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
Garnish: chopped cilantro

1. Heat a little olive oil in a large soup kettle over medium high heat. Sear the chicken, 1-2 minutes per side. Remove from the pot and reserve.
2. If necessary, add a little more olive oil to the pot. Add the onion, garlic, bell pepper, jalapeño pepper, celery, carrot, cumin, pepper flakes and balsamic vinegar; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring frequently, over medium-high heat for 5 minutes or until the vegetables begin to soften.
3. Add the white wine, tomatoes, chicken stock, sage, thyme and bay leaf; bring to a boil. Return the chicken to the pot. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 30-45 minutes.
4. Remove the chicken from the pot; when the chicken is cool enough to handle, cut or tear it into bite size pieces. Return the chicken to the pot; add the corn kernels and zucchini. Bring the soup to a simmer and cook on low for 10 minutes. Heat the soup until steaming, garnish with chopped cilantro and serve.

This soup is best when made a day or two in advance. Let it cool to room temperature, cover and store in the refrigerator.