

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

Celebrate an Italian Easter

May 1st

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Customer Appreciation

and lots more....

Private Chef & Catering

Celebrations for Family & Friends.

...too busy or too tired to cook ...
let me do it for you!

Contact Susan Nye at

susannye@tds.net

or 603/526 7319

More information the web at

www.susannye.com

I lived in and near Geneva, Switzerland for many years. It is a beautiful city and I have many wonderful memories of my time there. In early December Geneva celebrates the Escalade, a cross between our Independence Day, Halloween and Thanksgiving.

While most of the ancient walls around Geneva have disappeared, they protected the city for centuries. In 1602 the evil Duke of Savoy laid siege on the town. The attack took place on the night of December 11th and 12th. Throughout the long night the Savoyards attempted to scale the city walls. There was much hand wringing, concern and worry.

All seemed lost until Mother Royaume, defending the lives and liberty of her fourteen children, threw a caldron of boiling soup over the wall and onto the invading soldiers. Burned and bruised by the steaming soup and heavy iron pot, the Savoyards realized they were no match for la Mère and the fearless Genevois patriots. They turned tail and headed back to Savoy. The unsuccessful attempt to scale the walls and take the city gave the battle and the holiday their name; Escalade.

Every year, Geneva takes a week to celebrate the Escalade. There is a parade, a proclamation is read and the Escalade song is sung. More important, Geneva's world famous chocolatiers make a special treat for the festivities. They fill their shops with chocolate marmites. Marmite is just a fancy French word for caldron. These luscious pots come in all sizes and are filled with marzipan and candies. The marzipan is shaped and decorated like vegetables.

Escalade celebrations include a sort of Trick or Treat. Children dressed in costume, ride the tram and go door-to-door singing the Escalade song. In appreciation, people hand out coins and candies. The Escalade song has a seemingly endless number of verses and the children of Geneva will continue to sing and sing until they get their treat.

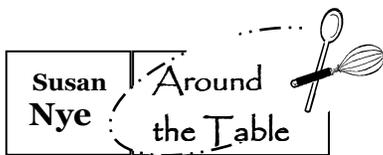
Celebrations and activities intensify over the weekend. People flock to Geneva's old town. There is a festive buzz in the air. The narrow streets are filled with holiday shoppers and tourists explore the cathedral, museums and what's left of the ancient walls. Late on Sunday afternoon, there is a parade. There are still a few families in and around Geneva who can date their ancestry back to the battle of 1602. Every year they dress in period costumes and march through the old town. They wind their way through the cobblestone streets to the beat of the drum and the trill of the fife. The parade ends in front of the cathedral. Canons are fired and a proclamation giving thanks for the "miraculous deliverance" is read in front of a roaring bonfire.

Since it is December it is freezing and the crowd scatters as soon as the proclamation is read. Everyone heads home to top off the celebrations with a big family dinner. A traditional Escalade meal starts with, what else, soup and is followed by a big turkey with all the trimmings. Unlike our Thanksgiving, there are no pumpkin pies or apple crisp; dessert is a giant chocolate marmite. At the end of the dinner, the oldest and youngest at the party take a rolling pin and smash the chocolate caldron. Chocolate and marzipan fly and a bit of chaos, lots of fun and a free-for-all follow.

December is a great time to make a big cauldron of soup. It is a handy supper when everyone is busy with holiday preparations, parties and shopping. And while you may not need it to ward off Savoyards, soup can be very comforting on a cold winter night. Enjoy!

Bon appétit!

Susan



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Private Chef & Catering Services

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

Too busy to cook?
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Around the Table
Friday Night Cooking Classes

A fun evening to learn, eat and laugh!

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Winter Soup with Pasta, Beans & Greens
Make about 5 quarts

1 pound Italian sausage, mild or spicy or a mix
2 carrots, finely chopped
2 stalks celery, finely chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
4 cloves of garlic, minced
1 teaspoon dried herbs de Provence
Pinch of red pepper flakes or to taste
1 pound cooked chicken meat, cut into bite size pieces
2 cups cooked white beans (Great Northern, Cannellini or Navy), rinsed and drained
1/2 cup dry white wine
3-4 quarts chicken stock
1 bay leaf
4 ounces small pasta (patina, stelle, orzo or acini de pepe)
1 small head escarole, cut in thin strips
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
Olive oil

1. Heat a heavy soup pot over medium-high heat. Add the sausage to the pot, breaking up the meat into bite-size pieces, cook until brown about 5 minutes. Remove the sausage from the pot and reserve.
2. Put a little olive oil in the pot; add the onions, carrot, celery, herbs, pepper flakes, salt and pepper. Sauté over medium heat until the onion is translucent, about 10 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté 2 minutes more.
3. Return the sausage to the pot. Add the chicken, beans, white wine and 3 quarts of chicken stock and the bay leaf. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 20-30 minutes.
4. Raise the heat to high and bring the soup to a boil, add the pasta and escarole. Stir to combine. When the soup returns to a boil, reduce heat and simmer until the pasta is al dente. Check the pasta package for timing. If the soup is too thick, add some more chicken stock and heat through. Check for seasoning and serve.