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Chef's Apron

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More information the web at
www.susannye.com

I've moved eleven times in my adult life. I've lived in five states and three cantons. A canton is kind of like a state except it's in Switzerland. The bad thing about moving is the packing and unpacking. The good thing about moving is you get to learn all sorts of neat, new stuff.

When I lived in Vermont I learned that if you own an old car and don't have a garage, it's best to park it in a sunny place. It's also smart to start it at least once a day, whether you need to go somewhere or not. I earned an MBA when I lived in Massachusetts and learned a lot of business stuff like number crunching and competitive strategies.

Next I moved to Switzerland where I learned to speak lots of French and German albeit badly. Within a short time I had most of the basics down. I could buy a croissant, rent an apartment and get a hair cut. When my job took me far and wide, I learned to say hello, goodbye, cheers!, thank you and please take me to the airport in at least eight languages, maybe ten.

After almost two decades abroad California was my re-entry point to the US. I bought a house which was an education in itself. I had a crash course in the joys and traumas of home ownership. California also taught me how discombobulating it can be to live in a place without seasons. A few years later I moved to Washington where I learned I had had enough of corporate life. And so it was back to New England.

If you live in New Hampshire, many of life's most important lessons involve blizzards, ice storms and power outages. When we were kids losing power was a great adventure. Maybe it still is, at least for an hour or two. It starts to get old after a day and real old after several days. Knowing how to do a breakeven analysis, say thank you in Russian or assemble bookcases doesn't help much when the power goes out. But I grew up in New England and most of what I needed to know came back to me. My sister filled in the blanks. With more snow and ice looming in the forecast, here are some helpful hints for surviving a power outage.

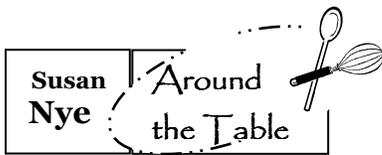
Before it happens,

1. Buy a generator. Test the generator to make sure it works before the power goes out.
2. Make sure you have a battery operated radio, lots of candles, flashlights and batteries on hand.
3. If you have an electric stove, switch to gas or buy a camp stove.
4. Fill empty soda bottles and large containers, including the bath tub, with water.

Once it happens,

5. Call the neighbors to see if they have electricity.
6. Keep your cell phone charged with your car charger. (If you don't have a car charger add "buy a cell phone charger for the car" to the list of things to do before it happens.)
7. Don't open the refrigerator or freezer unless it's absolutely necessary. Boredom does not qualify as absolutely necessary.
8. Light a fire in the fireplace and camp out in the living room.
9. Talk to your kids
10. Toast marshmallows.
11. Be patient
12. Play board games.
13. Wear gloves.
14. Snuggle a lot!
15. Make some great soup.
16. Call the neighbors to see if they have electricity. Commiserate. Invite them over for soup.
17. Sleep in front of the fire.
18. Be patient
19. Smile, laugh if you can. You'll feel better. (No kidding, there is scientific research to prove it!)
20. If all else fails, jump in the car, head south and keep driving! Enjoy!

Bon appétit! -- Susan



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just look like one!

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Curried Chicken and Lentil Soup

In the wake of the December ice storm I received some nice messages from readers who enjoyed my Winter Soup during the power outage. Just in case, God forbid, ice or snow strikes again, here is another hearty soup. Enjoy!

Makes about 6 quarts.

1 large onion, chopped
2 leeks, white and light green parts only, chopped
5 stalks celery, chopped
5 carrots, chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
1-2 tablespoons curry powder or to taste
1 teaspoon cumin
Pinch chili pepper
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 cup dry white wine
1 1/2 - 2 pounds chicken breasts
3 - 4 quarts chicken stock
28 to 32 ounce can crushed tomatoes
1 pound dried lentils
12-16 ounces baby spinach
Olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
1/4 cup finely chopped fresh cilantro

1. Heat a little olive oil in a large heavy soup pot, add the onion, leek, celery and carrots and cook over low heat for 10-15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the garlic, curry, cumin, chili pepper, thyme, salt and pepper and cook 3 minutes more.
2. Add the white wine, chicken and enough chicken stock to cover. Raise the heat and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until the chicken is cooked through, about 20 minutes. Remove the chicken and reserve.
3. Add the remaining chicken stock, tomatoes and lentils to the pot; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 30 minutes or until lentils are tender.
4. Remove the chicken from the bones, discard the skin and cut or shred the chicken into bite-sized pieces. Add the chicken to the soup and simmer for 10 minutes. Add the spinach and simmer for 5 minutes more. Garnish with cilantro and serve.