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Around the Table
Chef's Apron

Contact Susan Nye at
susannye@tds.net
or 603/526 7319

More information the web at
www.susannye.com

They're counting down to the Oscars. Soon the red carpet will be rolled out and glamorous stars will strut their stuff in gorgeous gowns and dapper tuxedos. How will you spend Oscar night? Snuggled up in your jammies and fuzzy slippers in front of the television munching a bowl of popcorn? Or maybe not. With all the gloom and doom on the news, the cold and snow outside, it may be just the time to throw an Oscar party.

Chase away the winter doldrums with a little glamour. Invite your friends and family to a Red Carpet spectacular. Ask your guests to dress to the nines in their most elegant duds. Your party will be the talk of the town for weeks to come.

Afraid some of your friends will rebel if you ask them to go glam? Try a different, maybe more comical route with a Night at the Movies costume party. Encourage everyone to dress up as their favorite Oscar winning actress, actor or movie. Even the most reluctant participant can join the fun. A pair of jeans and a t-shirt will transform the costume-phobic into Marlon Brando or James Dean. Or throw on some khakis and you are "Out of Africa."

Hopefully your guests will let their imaginations run wild. With hundreds of movies and characters to choose from they can be anything from smooth and sophisticated to silly and slapstick. A friend of mine once dressed up as Cool Hand Luke. A bit shy when it came to costumes, he chose cleverness over flamboyance. Throughout most of the night he kept his hand in a bag of ice in his pocket. He wandered around, doing the meet and greet and offering a very cool handshake. Now, I'm fine with flamboyant. I've gone to Oscar parties as a Hollywood pin-up girl, the witch from the "Wizard of Oz" and a devil in a Prada knock-off.

To start the evening in style, line your front walk with luminaries or tiki torches. Take it a step further and throw down some inexpensive fabric for a red carpet effect. (Don't forget to remove it after the party or you'll find it tangled up in your snow blower after the next storm!) And finally, get a few friends to pose as paparazzi. Your guests will enjoy a spectacular, Hollywood entrance.

Once inside a few flowers and lots of candles in glass, silver and brass candlesticks will make the evening sparkle. You can probably find a few Oscar statuettes at a party store if you have the time or inclination.

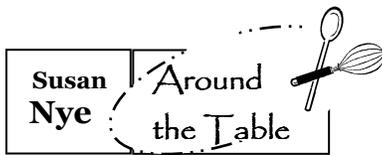
Let this year's Oscar nominees inspire your menu. A New Orleans jambalaya for "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button". A wonderful curry for "Slumdog Millionaire". A delicious German kuchen with apples or plums for "The Reader". If all this sounds too complicated, skip dinner in favor of a dessert party. Set out patters with a nice mix of cheeses, nuts and fresh fruit. Satisfy everyone's sweet tooth with heavenly fudge brownies and your favorite cookies. And don't hesitate to declare 2009 the year of the pot luck. Let everyone pitch in with their favorite dish or a bottle of wine.

To complete your party, print score cards to keep track of the action. You can find an Oscar ballot on my website: www.susannye.com.

But wait a minute, Monday's a work day. What if you prefer a quiet Sunday night? Easy, celebrate on Saturday! Instead of watching the awards, play your favorite movie sound tracks and dance the night away. (You'll still get to spend Sunday night comfy and cozy watching the Oscars in your tatty old robe and fuzzy slippers!)

At least for one night forget the cold, ignore the dreary news and escape with the movies. Have a wonderful evening and,

Bon appétit! - Susan



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Triple Threat Brownies

These brownies are incredibly decadent, just perfect for a Hollywood party. Cut them into small, one or two bite, squares. Enjoy!

Makes 48 or more brownies

12 ounces semi-sweet chocolate
1/2 cup chocolate syrup
2 sticks butter, cut in pieces
2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 teaspoon instant espresso coffee powder
4 eggs, slightly beaten
1 1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup flour
1 cup milk or white chocolate chips

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter and flour a 9x13 pan.
2. Melt the chocolate on top of a double boiler. Remove from heat and add the butter. Whisk until the mixture is smooth. Add the syrup and whisk to combine.
3. Transfer the chocolate mixture to a large mixing bowl. Stir in the vanilla, espresso and eggs. Mix thoroughly.
4. Whisk sugar, salt and flour together into a medium bowl. Add the dry ingredients to the chocolate mixture. Blend thoroughly. Add the chocolate chips and stir to combine.
5. Spread the batter evenly in the prepared pan. Bake at 350 degrees until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out with a few moist crumbs attached, about 30 minutes. Allow the brownies to cool completely in the pan; cut and serve.