



## Join Me in the Kitchen & Around the Table for a Cooking Class!

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Around the Table  
Chef's Apron**

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More information the web at  
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Is it possible in that we New Englanders have developed a cozy gene? Mine certainly comes out as soon as the weather turns cool and blustery. I like sleeping under a big down comforter. So much so that I sometimes don't want to get up in the morning! I could never live in a house without a fireplace. Even for the many years I rented, I almost always managed to find an apartment with a fireplace. Or I just kept looking. It is ever so comforting to spend an evening or a lazy Sunday in front of the fire.

My cozy gene goes underground in the summer but has resurfaced in the past week or two. New England is famous, even revered for its big, bold approach to the seasons. I swear it was a just day or two ago that we were reveling in the soft, warm Indian summer sun. And then boom, suddenly it's fall. The temperatures plummeted and the trees are sporting their spectacular plumage of brilliant red and gold. I somehow convinced myself, if no one else, that the warm dry air would last, if not forever, well at least until Thanksgiving. It was a rude awakening when the seasons abruptly changed. Forget the shorts and t-shirts, it's time to pull out the flannel sheets, bundle up in wooly sweaters and find the soup kettle.

Cool weather brings to mind all of those warm and wonderful dishes that I haven't made or even thought about making since that last pile of dirty snow disappeared from my yard last April. I'm getting hungry again for dishes made with hardy, cool weather vegetables. I'm ready to enjoy some of New Hampshire's beautiful winter squashes with their funny warts and bumps, flowery broccoli and kale and humble onions and leeks. It may be cool and gray but it is the perfect weather to cook up a big pot of soup.

When I lived in Europe I did a lot of walking and hiking in the fall. Whether it's for a few hours, a whole day or even a weekend, hiking is a great way to spend time with friends and enjoy the countryside. Like New England, fall weather in Western Europe can be hit or miss and change suddenly. After wandering over hill and dale, a hearty bowl of vegetable soup was more than welcome. Especially when a bright and brilliant morning turned into a cold and drizzly afternoon. Arriving at trail's end, worn-out and shivering, we sought out a homey café to warm up and recharge.

Influenced by country bistros in small villages in Switzerland, France and Italy, I started to develop my own repertoire of homey soups. I discovered new ingredients and adopted a few favorites, found new gadgets and learned some great techniques. One of the good things about being a foreigner, you aren't tied by time-honored tradition. I began mixing and matching New England traditions with new found ingredients and techniques. Unable to find familiar favorites, like butternut squash, I played around with French pumpkins and turnips, discovered lentils, an assortment of dried beans and all sorts of wonderful bitter greens.

Experimenting in the kitchen will lift your spirits, especially on a cold, damp day. It might be dark and dismal outside but your kitchen will become a warm and cozy oasis. So what if a few of your brilliant ideas turn out to be not so brilliant? I know I've had my share of flops. You're bound to have a few misses but there will be lots of sometime surprising, often wonderful hits along the way. Plus your cozy gene will be very happy.

There is nothing more warm and welcoming than the hearty aroma of roasting vegetables and a bubbling soup kettle. Invite your friends and family for a hearty bowl of vegetable soup and celebrate autumn around the table! Enjoy!

Bon appétit!



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## Autumn Soupe au Pistou

*Roasting the vegetables first gives wonderful, robust flavor to this traditional Provençal soup. Enjoy!*

Serves 10-12

12 ounces green beans, trimmed and cut in 1/2-inch pieces  
1 large onion, peeled and diced  
2 leeks, chopped  
3 carrots, peeled and trimmed and diced  
3 stalks celery, trimmed and diced  
3 red potatoes, diced  
1 pound butternut squash, peeled, seeded and diced  
1-2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar  
Olive oil  
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper  
1/2 cup dry white wine  
3-4 quarts chicken or vegetable stock  
2 cups crushed canned tomatoes  
2 cups cooked small white beans (optional)  
1 bay leaf  
4 ounces angel hair pasta, broken into 1 to 2-inch pieces  
1 pound Swiss chard, cleaned, stemmed and chopped or baby spinach  
Freshly ground black pepper  
Pistou (recipe follows)  
Garnish: grated Parmesan cheese

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Put the green beans, onion, leeks, carrot, celery, potatoes and squash in a large roasting pan. Toss with a little olive oil and balsamic vinegar; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast the vegetables for 40 minutes at 375 degrees. Add the wine to the pan and roast for 5 minutes more.
3. Transfer the vegetables to a soup kettle. Add chicken stock, tomatoes, white beans and bay leaf and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat, cool to room temperature, cover and refrigerate for a couple of hours or overnight.
4. While finishing the soup, make the pistou. To finish the soup: bring to a boil over high heat. Add the Swiss chard and cook for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the angel hair pasta and cook until the pasta is al dente, 2 to 3 minutes. Check for seasoning and add salt and pepper to taste. Serve the soup topped with a spoonful of pistou and pass the cheese.

## Pistou

3 cloves garlic  
1 cup fresh basil leaves  
1 1/2 cups fresh flat leaf parsley leaves  
About 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil  
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper

1. Put the garlic cloves, basil and parsley in the bowl of a small food processor. Pulse to chop and combine; slowly add olive oil until you have a thick, deep green sauce. Season with salt and pepper to taste.