



## There's No Place Like Home for the Holidays

(Definitely) Winter 2009/Volume 169

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Dorothy whispered it three times as she clicked her ruby red slippers. College kids mumble it as they struggle out of bed on their first morning of vacation. Business travelers utter it with a sigh of relief as they drive into the driveway after a long trip. There's no place like home, there's no place like home, there's no place like home. Especially during the holidays.

When I was twenty-something I packed a couple of small carry-on bags and flew to Europe. The plan was to complete an eight week internship and then spend a month or so bumming around Italy. Half way into the internship I received an offer for a one year post doing research at a business school. I finished the internship, postponed bumming around Italy, flew home, packed a large suitcase and my old Girl Scout camp trunk and moved to Switzerland.

One thing led to another and before I knew it I had taken up permanent residence in Geneva. Not just for a few years, I stayed for almost two decades. But I always came home for Christmas. Many of my friends rented chalets in the Alps but I could not imagine spending the holidays anywhere but New England. I still can't.

Christmas in New England is really quite special. Sparkling lights decorate businesses up and down Main Street. As soon as the snow falls, our little town starts to look like a Currier and Ives print. The Christmas lights tour was an annual event when we were kids. We would all bundle into the station wagon and my dad would drive us all over town to see the decorations. He then took us out for a special family dinner.

In the coming days and weeks there will be lots of festive activities to keep us busy. There will be office parties, open houses, cookie swaps and fundraisers. Santa will come to town to have a chat with the kids. We'll stay fit with a Jingle Bells or Reindeer fun run, maybe both. We'll shop at craft shows and holiday bazaars and the stores will stay open for an evening or two of late shopping. While it may sometimes seem impossible, we will somehow or other make it through the whirlwind of activities.

December is also packed with special memories. Along with all the hoopla, it's nice to find a few quiet moments to reflect on the season, special memories and family traditions. This weekend, I'll put up my tree and deck the house with sentimental chotskies, dust-catchers and boughs of holly and evergreen. I'll hang the stocking that my dad's Aunt Bertha knit for me when I was an infant. My sister, brother and cousins, all have one of her hand-knit Christmas stockings. She found the pattern in Woman's Home Companion sometime in the 1930's and made stocking for family and friends for decades. When my oldest niece was born, my mother tracked down the pattern. The next generation of Nye children hangs that very same stocking on the chimney with care. My sister Brenda has now taken up the needles for the newest generation and the tradition continues.

Like every family, we share a few holiday rituals and traditions. Some come and go; others hang around for decades, passing from one generation to the next. The night before Christmas is just not the night before Christmas without a reading of Mr. Moore's famous poem. We can't go to bed before cookies and milk are set out for Santa and a carrot is left for Rudolf. We are an excitable bunch and so Christmas morning starts well before the sun comes up. Christmas mornings at the Nye's have always been and probably always will be best described as a riotous frenzy but I cannot imagine spending Christmas anywhere else.

Have a wonderful holiday season surrounded by family and friends!

Bon appétit!



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[susannye@tds.net](mailto:susannye@tds.net)  
603/526 7319

PO Box 1875 - New London  
New Hampshire 03257

### Roasted Green Beans & Tomatoes

*This colorful side dish is perfect for the holidays! Roasting brings out the full flavor of the beans and sweetness of the tomatoes. Enjoy!*

Serves 6

1 1/2 pounds fresh green beans, washed and trimmed  
1 pint cherry tomatoes  
2 tablespoon olive oil  
2 tablespoon balsamic vinegar  
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper  
1 small red onion, chopped  
1/4 cup chopped walnuts, toasted

Preheat oven to 375 degrees

Put the beans and tomatoes on a rimmed baking sheet, drizzle with olive oil and balsamic vinegar, sprinkle with salt and pepper and toss to coat. Distribute in an even layer. Roast for 10-15 minutes at 375 degrees.

Remove the baking sheet from the oven, add the chopped onion, toss to combine and redistribute the vegetables. Return to the oven and roast for 10-15 minutes more. When they are done, the beans will be slightly shriveled and have dark golden brown spots. Sprinkle with chopped walnuts and serve.

