

Welcome in a New Year

Holiday 2006/volume 16



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the Winter-Spring
Thursday Night
Cooking Party
Schedule

Learn & Laugh

Paris Bistro
French Country Cooking
Tuscan Feast
Moroccan Holiday
... And More ...
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Kooking with Kids
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visit the web at

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Contact Susan Nye at
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603/526 7319

Yikes, where did the time go? The days and weeks from mid November through the end of December were a marathon of decorating, shopping, wrapping, cooking and entertaining. And now up pops the question, "What are your New Year's Resolutions?" January 1st is not a day to make a list of resolutions; it is a day to flop down in a comfy chair and let out a big phееewww.

The tradition of New Year's Resolutions goes back to the Romans in about 150 BC. The Romans named the first month of the year after Janus, the god of new beginnings and the guardian of doors and entrances. This god has 2 faces; one is old and represents the past and the other is young and represents the future. Like the Romans, we can imagine Janus at the stroke of midnight on December 31st looking back at the past and forward into the bright, new year. Janus became the Romans' symbol for resolutions. To honor him, the Romans forgave their enemies and sought forgiveness at the start of each year.

Statisticians tell us that resolutions are hard to keep and mostly broken. In February or March or April the realization comes that New Year's promises have been broken and old habits have returned. But why the big failure rates? Resolution; the word itself sounds full of determination and the will to solve any problem. It really should come as no surprise; after all most New Year's resolutions are made on the fly. Too often we take a haphazard approach and decide to change what ever bad habit pops into our head on New Year's Day. Most New Year's Resolutions are geared towards lifestyle changes; losing weight, quitting smoking or exercising more. But big changes require big commitment and a plan for success. In addition, it seems to me that most resolutions are linked to deprivation. Operative words include lose, give up, stop and quit. Instead of resolutions, I periodically like to set goals. My operative words include build, grow, design and discover. With a resolution, you are resolving a problem, fixing something that is broken. With a goal you are going towards something new or better or just different.

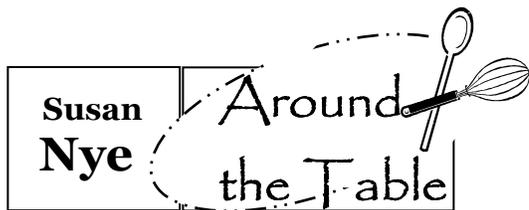
So I don't make resolutions, I set goals. And I know that my commitment is firm when I am willing to tell people about my goal and create a plan to achieve it. Some people hesitate to share their goals, fearing that talking about them will somehow jinx their success. And if they fail everyone will know. When I was much younger, I sometimes fell into this trap. I don't worry about failure anymore. Now my key tests of my tenacity to achieve a goal are my willingness to share it with people close to me, get their feedback and map out a plan. If I am not willing to take these steps, I know the goal is wishful thinking, a pipe dream and will only succeed with pure, dumb luck.

If you have not determined your New Year's goals you still have lots of time. New Year's Day is the world's oldest holiday but it is celebrated on different dates in accordance with the multitude of different calendars around the globe. It was first observed about 4,000 years ago on March 23rd in ancient Babylon. The New Year falls on January 14th if you follow the eastern orthodox calendar. The Chinese New Year is in February. Or wait until September and celebrate the Hebrew head of the year or Rosh Hashanah. Although the date for New Year's Day is not the same in every culture, it is always a time to celebrate a new beginning.

My goals for 2007 are coming into focus. I began Around the Table about 6 months ago and it has been great fun starting a business that revolves around cooking and entertaining. My goal at Around the Table is to share good fun, good food and maybe a laugh with you. In the coming year I look forward to delighting you with cooking classes, parties, articles and recipes. I wish you great happiness and success in the New Year and,

Bon appétit! - Susan

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Grilled Swordfish with Warm Tomato-Cilantro Salsa

Rather than resolve to lose weight, set a goal to become fit and healthy. Go light, lean and delicious with fish and a flavorful salsa.

Serves 4

1½ - 2 pounds Swordfish steaks
Olive oil
Juice from ½ - 1 lemon or lime
Salt and pepper

1. Lightly brush the fish with olive oil and lemon or lime juice, sprinkle with salt and pepper
2. Preheat grill.
3. Grill fish over medium-heat 3 inches from the flame for 5 minutes per side or until the fish reaches desired doneness. Do not overcook.
4. Serve with Warm Tomato-Cilantro Salsa

Warm Tomato-Cilantro Salsa

1 tablespoon Virgin Olive Oil
1 clove garlic minced
1 shallot finely chopped
Pinch of dried pepper flakes
1 pint red and yellow grape tomatoes, cut in half
Juice of one lemon or lime
¼ cup dry white wine
¼ teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons butter (optional)
2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
1 avocado, diced for garnish (optional)

1. Sauté shallot, garlic and pepper flakes in olive oil until vegetables are soft
2. Add lemon juice, cook for 1 minute
3. Add white wine and reduce by half
4. Add tomatoes, salt and pepper and cook for 1-2 minutes – until just warmed through
5. Add butter and toss/swirl/stir to blend and thicken the sauce
6. Remove from heat and sprinkle with cilantro