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& Around the Table for
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*Cook like a chef or
just look like one!*

Treat Yourself to an
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

With the start of the Christmas season, I am full of good cheer. I frequently find myself singing or humming as I go about my business. *The Twelve Days of Christmas* is one of those hypnotic songs that gets caught in my brain. So I began to think (usually a dangerous thing) about all the crazy gifts in the song. Imagine the chaos! Honking geese. Trumpeting swans. Quacking ducks. And if that's not enough, add a bunch of lords and ladies who can't sit still. And where the heck would I put the milkmaids and their cows? My garage is already packed to the rafters with the lawn mower, snow blower and too much flotsam and jetsam.

Instead of a creating list of sometimes silly, sometimes too-soon-forgotten presents, I have decided to see if I can come up with a list of blessings to celebrate throughout the Christmas season.

Day one ... one happy, healthy me.

Day two ... two parents who are in their eighties, alive, kicking and full of fun. I also have two siblings, one of each, a sister and a brother. And their two wonderful spouses. I am blessed!

Day three ... my three favorite sports: walking (used to be running), skiing and kayaking!

Day four ... the joy of knowing all four grandparents and spending time with them not just as a little kid but well into my twenties.

Day five ... okay, maybe a gift of five golden rings wouldn't be so bad!

Day six ... six glorious years near Pleasant Lake living a re-invented life as a writer and cook.

Day seven ... I'm a gadget fan. My favorite kitchen gadgets make life easier and more delicious. In no particular order:

1. Mini food processor
2. Kitchen tongs
3. Flat whisk
4. Silicon spatulas
5. Handheld citrus juicers
6. Italian espresso makers
7. Stand mixer

Day eight ... nieces, nephews and grand-nephews. From my oldest niece who lives too far away (yeah, I'm one to talk) with two little boys of her own, to the twenty-something nephews and the twirling girlies. I love them all.

Day nine ... yippee, the first big snowstorm of the winter roars in on December 9th. We won't have to dream of a white Christmas.

Day ten ... at least ten, it could be more but who's counting, great editors and publishers who have helped me make a go at becoming a real live, professional, published writer. Thank you for your support.

Day eleven ... I don't actually know the number but I've had many good and a few great teachers. I can't help but think that life would be pretty dull and drab if it weren't for the skills and knowledge they taught me.

Day twelve ... a bunch of wonderful friends and kind supporters, there are too many to count on a single day. I am blessed with people who love (or at least like) me and what I do. Thanks for your kindness and cheers of encouragement on the fun, fascinating and challenging journey that is my life.

Enjoy the season & bon appétit!



Cook like a chef or just look like one!

Treat Yourself to an Around the Table Chef's Apron

Do you have too much to do and too little time? Too busy to cook? Let me do it for you. Like to entertain? No time to prepare the perfect cocktail or dinner party? Let me do it for you.

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Watch me cook on

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White Chocolate & Cranberry Christmas Trifle

This festive dessert is a delicious finish to any holiday meal. Enjoy!

Serves 8

2 cups cold heavy cream
4 large egg yolks
2 tablespoons sugar
Pinch salt
6 ounces white chocolate, chopped
2 tablespoons Grand Marnier
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
Grated peel of 1 orange
8 ounces cream cheese at room temperature
8 crisp ladyfinger cookies, cut in thirds
Whole Berry Cranberry Sauce & Cranberry Coulis (recipe follows)
Garnish: Sliced, toasted almonds and grated white chocolate

1. Prepare an ice bath in a large, shallow bowl and set aside. Put the chocolate in a small bowl and set aside.
2. Whisk 1/2 cup of cream, yolks, sugar and salt together in a heavy 1-quart saucepan. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly until it registers 170 degrees on a thermometer. Pour custard through a fine-mesh sieve into the bowl with the chocolate. Let sit for a few minutes; whisk to combine. Stir in the Grand Marnier, vanilla and grated orange peel. Set the bowl in the ice bath, stir frequently to cool. Chill completely in the refrigerator.
3. Using an electric mixer beat cream cheese in large bowl until fluffy. Gradually add the custard and beat until well combined and smooth. In a separate bowl, with clean beaters, whip the cream until stiff peaks form. Whisk one quarter of the whipped cream into cream cheese-custard mixture. Gently fold in the remaining whipped cream.
4. Put a dollop of the custard cream in the bottom of a dessert or wine glass. Arrange 3 cookie pieces on top of the custard. Drizzle with cranberry coulis. Top with another dollop of custard. Repeat with remaining glasses.
5. Cover each pudding with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 6 hours. Garnish with a little whole berry cranberry sauce, sprinkle with white chocolate and almonds and serve.

Whole Berry Cranberry Sauce & Cranberry Coulis

Makes about 2 cups cranberry sauce and 1 1/2 cup of coulis

8-ounces fresh cranberries
3/4 cup sugar
1 3/4 cups orange juice
Grated peel of 1 orange
1/2 teaspoon each of cinnamon and ginger
Pinch salt
2 tablespoons Grand Marnier

1. To make the sauce: Combine cranberries with sugar, 3/4 cup orange juice, grated peel and spices in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Transfer to a small bowl and let cool. Cover and refrigerate.
2. To make the coulis: When the sauce has cooled, combine 1 cup of cranberry sauce with remaining orange juice and Grand Marnier in a blender or small food processor. Process until smooth. Strain the coulis through a sieve.

Store extra sauce and coulis in the refrigerator.