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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

A light snow is falling, I wish it was more but I'll take what I can get. It has come just in time for the flatlanders' annual trek north for February vacation. For many years, my family was a part of the mid-February mass exodus from Massachusetts to points north. The best thing my parents ever did was build a small vacation house in the woods near Pleasant Lake. When vacation time rolled around we couldn't get out of town fast enough. On departure day, our duffels were packed and sitting by the backdoor before we left for school. We struggled through the seemingly endless school day until the last bell finally rang and we were free for the week. We quickly piled everything into the back of the station wagon and headed north.

Big snow guns had not yet found their way to King Ridge so we were completely dependent on natural snow. If Mother Nature didn't cooperate we were out of luck. I'm sure that some years were better than others. There must have been years with lots of rocks and ice and little snow. I don't remember those times; I only remember the vacations when there was plenty of snow and lots of sunshine. I have particularly vivid memories of one long and snowy February vacation.

It started out as an ordinary weekend. Vacation was still another week away. It began snowing late Saturday afternoon. It was still snowing when we got up the next morning. Since we skied in blizzards and on ice, in the cold and in the rain, we were back on our skis on Sunday. By mid afternoon we were wet and cold and visibility was close to zero. We called it a day.

Luckily my parents decided that driving back to Boston in a blizzard was not only crazy but possibly dangerous. It was a pretty sure bet that school would be cancelled the next day. We would spend a relaxing Sunday night by the fire, ski on Monday morning and then head south in the afternoon.

On Monday morning the sun came out and we watched the newscasts from Boston while we waited for the snowplow. The city and surrounding suburbs were at a standstill. Cars were stuck and abandoned on highways, city streets and suburban roadways. Offices and schools throughout the Commonwealth were closed. No one was going anywhere fast. Massachusetts was at a standstill.

In sharp contrast, New Hampshire roads were free and clear by midmorning. Delighted by our foresight, we were out on the slopes by 10:00, enjoying two feet of beautiful new powder. For the rest of the week we continued to check the newscasts but Massachusetts schools remained closed. It was an epic battle of Snow versus the Flatlanders and Snow was winning. We were all too happy to cheer from afar. We skied every day. It was heaven on earth.

The next week was vacation week. It was beyond a doubt one of the best ever. The snow was fantastic. Every day was clear and sunny and not too cold. As we were packing up to head home, another epic nor'easter blew in. Was it a miracle or had the patron saint of middle schoolers decided that two weeks was not enough? Could we hope for a third week of skiing? As flakes began to fall, my parents debated the pros and cons of staying or leaving. My mom never really liked to ski but had absolutely no desire to spend a day or two or three snowbound and housebound in suburbia. We stayed. If the storm turned out to be more bluff than bluster, we could leave early Monday morning.

It was the right decision. The storm dumped another two or three feet of snow and Massachusetts closed down for another week. We were in seventh heaven.

Have a wonderful February vacation and bon appetit!



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or just look like one!

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Around the Table Chef's Apron**

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too little time? Too busy to cook?*

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**PO Box 1875 - New London
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Greek Pizza

After a day on the slopes, let everyone hang out in the kitchen and make pizzas. Add a salad and dinner is done. Have a great vacation and enjoy!

Serves 4

Olive oil

1 medium onion, chopped

1 teaspoon Italian herbs

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 pound frozen spinach

16-20 ounces pizza dough (your favorite recipe, store-bought or from your favorite pizzeria)

4 ounces feta crumbled

8 ounces mozzarella cheese, shredded

12 or more kalamata or oil cured black olives, pitted and quartered

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees.

Heat a little olive oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the chopped red onion and herbs and sauté for 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook 2-3 minutes more. Turn up the heat and add the spinach, sauté until the spinach defrosts and most of the liquid is cooked off. Set aside.

Cut the pizza dough into 4 pieces. Stretch each piece into a round or roll out with a rolling pin. Top each pizza with spinach, sprinkle with shredded mozzarella, crumbled feta and olives.

Transfer the pizzas to a lightly oiled baking sheet or a preheated pizza stone. Bake the pizza for 12-15 minutes if you use a baking sheet and 8-12 minutes if you use a pizza stone or until the cheese is bubbly and crust is crisp.