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Contact Susan Nye at
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Calling all contrarians! Lovers of the unthinkable, preposterous and absurd, October 6th is Mad Hatter Day. You remember the Mad Hatter from Alice and Wonderland. He always seemed to be in trouble with the Queen of Hearts. Although I guess he was only one of many who raised her ire and cries, "Off with his head." Alice met him at afternoon tea which he shared with the March Hare. The tea totaling twosome drove her to distraction by talking in riddles. Truth be told, we can't really blame the poor Mad Hatter for his foolish stuff and nonsense. Assuming he really was a hatter, he was most likely crazed by mercury poisoning.



Mad Hatter Day was started by a bunch of computer geeks in Boulder, Colorado in the mid-eighties. Not as a grand gesture or political statement but because they had nothing better to do. Mad Hatter Day is autumn's answer to April Fools' Day, but without the pranks. It is a day when everything is turned topsy-turvy. When in is out and out is in; up is down and down is up.

Throughout the year we are all smile, accept and even openly champion all sorts of crazy, cockeyed or ridiculous ideas and activities. Why? Because that's the way we do things! It doesn't matter if deep down inside it seems ridiculous, it's the status quo.

So we:

1. Drive to the gym to exercise,
2. Wear a necktie to work on a sweltering day,
3. Work when we are on vacation,
4. Clip coupons to save money on something we don't need or really even want but have to buy because of all the money we save!
5. And spend billions and billions on our hair to make it look natural.

Then again, we:

6. Drink our morning coffee or tea from a bunch of ugly, mixed-and-unmatched freebie mugs that we've collected at conferences, gas station openings and various and sundry events and occasions.
7. And hang onto an old jacket (or skirt or pants or whatever) in case it comes back in style, even though it hasn't fit in a decade or two.

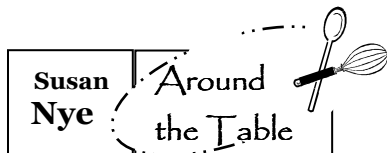
Finally, in our hustling and bustling world, we never have time to relax, sit and chat over a cup of coffee or glass of wine because we are too busy:

8. Multitasking and simultaneously communicating with dozens of people or more with instant messages, Tweets, voicemails and emails,
9. Not to mention the cell phone which is permanently glued to our ear,
10. Or our addiction to reality television even though there is nothing real about it.

This Mad Hatter Day, take a deep breath, throw caution to the wind and denounce at least one or two of the absurdities you endure the other 364 days of the year. Take a long walk. Leave your necktie at home. Let your hair go natural. Invite someone to tea, use the good china, turn off your cell phone and enjoy a real conversation. Smile and celebrate a day free of some of the ridiculous habits of modern life. Have a wonderful Mad Hatter Day,

Bon appétit!

Susan



Mad Hatter Day Break Free from the Habit and Convention

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susannye@tds.net

603/526 7319

PO Box 1875 - New London
New Hampshire 03257

Ginger Scones

The perfect autumn teatime treat. Call your best pals or that interesting new acquaintance, get out your teapot, the good cups and enjoy!

Makes 12-24 scones

2 1/4 cups of all purpose flour
1/3 cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
Grated peel of 1/2 orange
2/3 cup crystallized ginger, diced
10 tablespoons chilled butter, cut into small pieces
3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons heavy cream
Spiced Cream Cheese Icing (optional) recipe follows

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Lightly butter a large baking sheet.

Put the flour, sugar, salt, baking powder, spices and orange peel in the food processor and pulse to combine. Add the crystallized ginger and pulse to combine.

Add the butter and pulse until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add 3/4 cup heavy cream; pulse until the dough starts to come together in a ball. Transfer the dough to a lightly floured surface, pat together into a ball and knead gently until smooth, 8-12 turns.

Divide the dough into thirds. Pat each portion into a 3/4-inch thick round. Cut each round into wedges; 4 for large scones and 8 for small. Place the scones about 1-inch apart on the prepared baking sheet. Brush the tops with cream.

Bake the scones until light brown, 15-18 minutes. Drizzle with Spiced Cream Cheese Icing and serve warm or at room temperature.

Spiced Cream Cheese Icing

3/4 cup powdered sugar
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
3 tablespoons cream cheese at room temperature
1 tablespoon sour cream

Whisk together the powdered sugar and ginger in a medium bowl. Add the cream cheese and sour cream and stir with a fork until smooth and creamy.