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At least for this year, school is finally (or almost) done. Kids all over the northeast are breathing a huge sigh of relief. And their parents? Well that may be a different story. Chances are pretty good that at least a few moms and dads are frantically phoning, pleading and writing checks for day camp, soccer clinics and art classes.

Meanwhile most teenagers would like nothing better than to sleep late and spend the rest of the day in leisurely sloth. Their little brothers and sisters are generally happy to get up with the birds as long as they can fritter away the morning in their jammies. They'll eat a little cereal, watch a few cartoons and play with their trains or Barbies. Regardless of their age, most kids just want to avoid the back-to-back-to-back schedules that plague them for most of the year. Little, big and in between, they only want to slow down and enjoy a carefree summer. Whether it's calculus or multiplication tables, Chaucer or spelling tests, they are ever so happy to toss it aside for a few months and concentrate on more important things.

What could be more important than classrooms, books and teacher's dirty looks? I'm sure anyone under the age of twenty-one (and lots over) could come up with an endless list. For starters, how about perfecting that tennis serve, making homemade ice cream or finding the perfect shade of nail polish to match that new bikini. Or maybe, it's time to fall happily, helplessly in love and share a first-ever (or not) kiss behind the boat house. Then again, summer is also the perfect time to catch fireflies or pollywogs (or both), bike on a rail trail and pick strawberries.

It's been a while since I worried about teacher's dirty looks but it's been a very soggy spring and I'm ready for lots of summer sunshine.

**In no particular order, here are a few of the many things I look forward to and love about summer:**

1. The longest day and lots of almost longest days.
2. Shorts, t-shirts and flip-flops.
3. Early morning in my garden when the air is fresh and cool.
4. A leisurely glass of wine on the beach in the evening.
5. Kayaking.
6. The way the air smells after a thundershower.
7. Very good ice cream or better yet very good gelato.
8. Fourth of July fireworks and flares on Pleasant Lake.
9. Lunch under a tree with my mom and sister.
10. Watching the loons.
11. A quiet afternoon on the porch with a cool drink and a good book.
12. Local strawberries, tomatoes and corn.
13. The Hospital Day parade.
14. Watching humming birds in the garden.
15. Cookouts with the entire family.
16. Orange salamanders.
17. Fresh herbs from my garden.
18. Waking up with the twitter and tweet of birds instead of an alarm clock.
19. Daisies, Black-eyed Susans and tiger lilies.
20. A whole day with nothing much to do and not a care in the world.



Leapin' Lena at the Hospital Day Parade

So what's on your list? What do you love about the summertime? Have a wonderful summer and bon appétit!

*Susan*

### Caesar Salad with Parmesan Croutons

*Caesar Salad is a classic. The dressing is easy to make and tastes much better than that stuff in a bottle. Give it a try. Enjoy!*  
Serves 4

1-2 romaine hearts of romaine lettuce, chopped, washed and dried  
Parmesan Croutons (recipe follows)  
Caesar Salad Dressing (recipe follows)  
Garnish: parmesan cheese

Put the chopped romaine in a large bowl and add enough Caesar Salad Dressing to lightly coat. Place the romaine on individual plates. Use a vegetable peeler to create thin shavings of parmesan cheese. Artfully arrange a few parmesan shavings on top of the romaine, add a warm Parmesan Crouton to each plate and serve.

### Parmesan Croutons

Extra virgin olive oil  
4 thin slices ciabatta bread  
1-2 ounces freshly grated parmesan cheese

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Lightly brush both sides of the bread slices with olive oil. Bake the bread, turning once, for about 8 minutes or until golden. (Can be done ahead to this point. Cool the toasts to room temperature and store in an air tight container in the refrigerator.) Sprinkle each piece of toast with grated cheese and return to the oven for 2-3 minutes or until the cheese is melted and golden.



### Caesar Salad Dressing

Makes about 1 cup

2 ounces parmesan cheese, cubed (or 1/4 cup freshly grated)  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar  
2 tablespoons mayonnaise \*  
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard  
2 teaspoons anchovy paste  
2 cloves garlic  
1 (about 1/8-inch thick) slice red onion, roughly chopped  
1/4 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce  
1/2 teaspoon (or to taste) hot pepper sauce  
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper  
1 cup (or to taste) extra virgin olive oil

Put the Parmesan cheese in a mini food processor or blender and pulse to grate the cheese. Remove the cheese from the food processor and set aside.

Put the lemon juice, vinegar, mayonnaise, mustard, anchovy paste, garlic, onion, Worcestershire sauce and hot sauce in the food processor. Season with salt and pepper. Process until smooth and the garlic and onion are finely chopped. Add the olive oil and process until thick and creamy. Add the Parmesan cheese and pulse to combine.

Transfer the dressing to a storage container with a tight fitting lid and store in the refrigerator. When ready to serve, give the container a good long, vigorous shake to recombine the ingredients.

*\* A classic Caesar Salad Dressing calls for raw eggs. I'm not comfortable using raw eggs these days so (even though Julia and Martha would be horrified) I substitute the raw egg with a little mayonnaise.*