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Perhaps you haven't heard or barely heard but March is Women's History



Month and the 8th is International Women's Day. I first stumbled upon International Women's Day during one of my many trips to Russia. In a former life, I was an international sales and marketing maven and Russia was part of my territory. IWD is celebrated with great enthusiasm in Russia and much of Eastern Europe. I don't know if Hallmark has a store in Moscow but it's a big day for cards and flowers. A cross between Mothers' Day and Labor Day, it celebrates the contributions of famous and not so famous women.

When it comes to heroes, ordinary or otherwise, my great grandmother comes pretty high on my list. I never met her and only know her from my mother's stories. From what Mom's told me, it is clear that Nana Grant was a remarkable woman. One of eight or nine children, my great grandmother grew up on a farm in Nova Scotia. Living with the harsh climate and rocky terrain of eastern Canada, Elizabeth Hailey

learned the virtues of hard work and thrift early in life. She also developed a healthy respect for education and the opportunities it can bring.

After she married John Grant, they moved to Boston to build a new life in the land of opportunity. After only a few short years, Mr. Grant died of pneumonia. A single mother with a three year old daughter, many, maybe most, women would have hightailed it back Canada and the family farm. But Nana figured that there would be more and better opportunities for her daughter in New England than New Scotland.

That said there were not a lot of options for women like Nana Grant. With only a few years of elementary school, teaching or nursing was not an option. Factories were hiring but the pay was pitifully low and conditions abysmal. In 1900, women did not start their own businesses but that didn't deter Nana. Necessity was the mother of her entrepreneurship.

Nana opened a notions shop. In the age of Walmart, there is a least a generation of people who have never been to, let alone heard of, a notions shop. Her tiny store sold bits and bobs, thread, pins and needles and penny candy. Her courage, hard work and drive were the keys to her success. She didn't build an empire; her success cannot be measured in hundreds or thousands of stores across the country. Quite simply, she made a living, loved and raised her daughter and gave her a university education and all the opportunities that go with it. She also adored my mother but that's a story for another day.

International Women's Day is a good time to celebrate and reflect on the courage, achievements and determination of remarkable women. Maybe you'll raise your glass to someone famous, a noted and notable senator, favorite author, brilliant CEO or award-winning actor. Then again, maybe you will honor someone closer to home, your mother or grandmother, your daughter, granddaughter or niece. Take a few minutes to think about the women who have helped you become you. Offer a toast to that special teacher, an old boss or wise friend ... even a great grandmother you never met but whose life and courage inspired you.

Bon appétit!



Scallops and Roasted Pepper Sauce

Nova Scotia is famous for its seafood. This scallop dish is perfect for a cozy celebration. Enjoy!



Serves 4

About 1 1/2 pounds sea scallops
1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
Olive oil
1/2 cup dry white wine
Roasted Pepper Sauce (recipe follows)
1-2tablespoon cold butter, cut in small pieces
Chopped fresh flat leaf parsley

Pat the scallops dry and season with paprika, salt and pepper. Heat a little olive oil in a heavy large skillet over medium-high heat. Put the scallops in the skillet and cook until opaque in center, about 1 minute per side. Remove from the skillet and keep warm.

Add the wine to the skillet, deglaze the pan and reduce by 1/3. Add about 3/4 cup of Roasted Pepper Sauce and simmer for 2-3 minutes. Add the butter and whisk until smooth.

To serve: Arrange the scallops on a platter or individual plates, drizzle with sauce and sprinkle with parsley.

Roasted Pepper Sauce

Makes about 1 1/2 cups

2 large red bell pepper, seeded and roughly chopped
1 medium onion, roughly chopped
2 cloves garlic
1/2 (or to taste) Thai pepper, seeds and veins removed and finely chopped
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
Olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh oregano
1/2 cup chicken broth

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Put the bell pepper, onion, garlic and Thai pepper in an ovenproof skillet, add the vinegar and just enough olive oil to lightly coat, season with salt and pepper and toss to combine. Roast at 375 degrees until the vegetables are soft and caramelized, about 30 minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes.

Transfer the pepper mixture to a blender or food processor. Add the oregano and chicken broth and process until smooth.

Cover and store extra sauce in the refrigerator or freezer. It's a great sauce for chicken and pasta.

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