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for an Eat Well-Do Good
Dinner!

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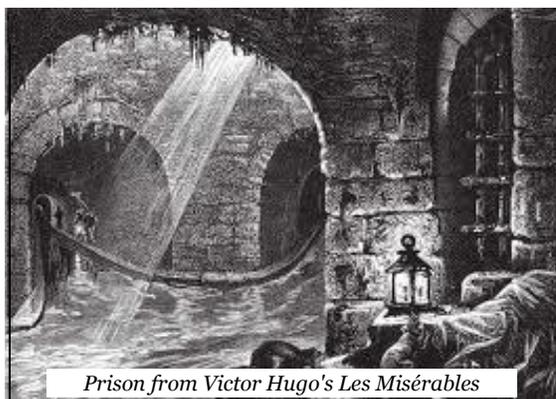
Treat Yourself to an
Around the Table
Chef's Apron

Cook like a chef or just look like one!

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www.susannye.com and
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Prison from Victor Hugo's Les Misérables

As we coast into June, the end of the school year is just around the corner. Thank goodness! As the weather continues to warm up, classrooms get stuffier and stuffier and kids and teachers get grumpier and grumpier. Knowing that summer vacation is almost here, it gets harder to sit still and figure out when or where those two cars will pass each other. Minds begin to wander. Who knows, maybe Charles will cheat and drive sixty-five instead of sixty. Maybe Emily will take a detour to the mall to look for shoes for the prom. The same holds true for biology, English class and French. Teacher or student, anyone stuck in a classroom figures nothing is more *misérable* than spending a glorious, early summer day inside.

My worse year had to have been when I was in the ninth grade. My sister Brenda was a senior in high school. It was in the days before Middle School so I was over at the Junior High with the seventh and eighth graders. My brother John was in elementary school.

As soon as college acceptances arrived, usually no later than mid-April, the seniors slacked off. The faculty did their best to keep them at their books but it was an uphill battle. Facing reality and fearing they would somehow taint the younger students, the seniors were set free in mid-May. There were still a few assemblies and graduation rehearsals but more or less, mostly more, they were done.

At the same time the ninth grade teachers decided it was time to treat us like freshman even if we were the big kids at the junior high. To that end, they ramped up the end of the school year with final exams. Sure we'd had tests and quizzes in the past but these were our first final exams. Even the words, FINAL, as in *this is it, don't screw up*, and EXAM, as in *much bigger than a test*, sounded daunting. Not to mention, our teachers had never before expected us to remember stuff we learned back in September!

The only good part was you got to feel a little bit older. After all, only high school students took finals, not little kids in the junior high. I even had the lingo down; *finals* not final exams. It was a long time ago so maybe they were a big deal, maybe not. What's important is, nerd that I was (and still am), I decided finals were indeed something to worry about.

And not just worry; they were definitely a cause for too much studying. Fortunately or unfortunately I have a tendency to over-prepare. (It's small consolation but maybe I can blame my ninth grade teachers for this neurosis.) Anyway ... there was my sister ... sleeping late every morning and working on her tan every afternoon. And me ... I was stuck inside dark, stuffy classrooms. Several of my teachers turned the lights off on hot days pretending it kept the classroom cooler. It didn't.

In the afternoon and again after a quick dinner, I was at my desk studying and studying some more. Meanwhile, my sister was free as a bird, out gallivanting or just lazing around the front steps. And my brother? Sure he was still in school but he was only in the second grade. He didn't have homework let alone FINAL EXAMS. He too spent the afternoons and evenings outside. It was just poor pitiful me slogging away at my desk while my family enjoyed the first warm and wonderful evenings of summer.

Here's hoping that you are enjoying many warm and wonderful evenings. Have fun and bon
appétit

Susan

Asparagus Crostini with Sun-dried Tomato Pesto & Goat Cheese



A delicious hors d'oeuvre to nibble at your next cookout or serve at your favorite graduate's celebration! Enjoy!

Makes 16 pieces

16-32 asparagus spears
 Extra virgin olive oil
 16 thin slices baguette, toasted
 Sun-dried Tomato Pesto (recipe follows)
 6-8 ounces goat cheese, crumbled

Snap the woody ends off of the asparagus and discard. Neatly cut off the spears' top 2 to 3 inches. (Save the remaining pieces of asparagus for soup. You can use these pieces on the crostini but the pointy spears look prettier.)

Heat a little olive in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the asparagus spears in batches (don't crowd the pan) and stir-fry until tender-crisp, about 3 minutes.

Assemble the crostini: spread a little pesto on the toasted baguette slices, sprinkle with goat cheese and top with 1-2 asparagus tips. Serve immediately or place in a 350 degree oven for about 3 minutes to warm through.

Sun-dried Tomato & Tarragon Pesto

Makes about 1 cup

1 cup oil packed sun dried tomato halves, well drained
 2 cloves garlic
 2 tablespoon red wine vinegar
 2-3 tablespoons fresh tarragon*
 1 tablespoon fresh parsley leaves
 Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
 Extra virgin olive oil

In the small bowl of a food processor combine the sun-dried tomatoes, garlic, vinegar, tarragon and parsley, season with salt and pepper and process to chop and combine.

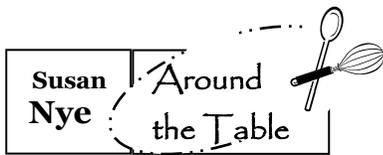
Add olive oil a little bit at a time until the pesto is smooth and spreadable.

** Tarragon is wonderful with asparagus but if you can't find it or don't have any in your garden, basil is a tasty substitute.*



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Another recipe from Susan Nye: Spring 2012/Volume 298

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