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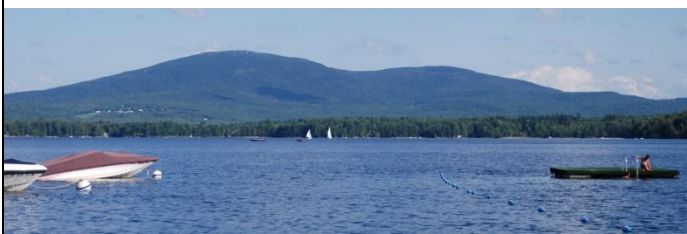
Watch me cook on www.youtube.com/susannye

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No More Pencils. No More Books.
No More Teachers' Dirty Looks. &
Crunchy Slaw with Cilantro, Mint and Peanuts

Spring 2012/Volume 301

There was a wonderful sense of urgency in our house on the last day of school.



The final bell rang at 11:15 and the Nye children had strict instructions to come right home. No dilly-dallying. Within minutes of walking in the door we were out again and in the car headed to Pleasant Lake.

My mother was a master of organization and efficiency. She deftly orchestrated the last minute frenzy. Bathing suits, t-shirts, shorts and flip-flops were thrown into duffel bags along with a pile of books. Except for the books, we packed light. There was no need for fancy clothes or shoes at the lake. In no time at all, our bags were lined up by the back door.

Our dogs, Eeyore and Penny, danced nervously around the kitchen. Most mornings, the dogs roamed the neighborhood. They had a regular route with little old ladies to visit and cats to chase. But never on the last day of school. Fearful they would miss out on something or be left behind, they spent the morning close to home. The dogs always knew when something was up.

Finally the duffels along with a few bags of groceries, three kids, two dogs and three turtles were crammed into our big, blue station wagon. After one last check, Mom locked the door and we hit the road, leaving the manicured lawns of suburbia in our wake. If it wasn't packed, we didn't need it. If it wasn't done, it had to wait until September.

In spite of our rush to get to Pleasant Lake, Mom always took us to Ricky's in Nashua to celebrate the end of school and start of summer. Ricky's was one of those funky, family-owned roadside drive-ins. At one time prolific throughout New England, most of them, including Ricky's, have long since disappeared. They were squeezed out by clowns and kings or maybe their owners got tired of the cold and retired to Florida. Instead of golden arches, Ricky's was decorated with two giant, smiling dachshunds. It wasn't high art but the hot dogs and onion rings were terrific.

Ricky's was open year round but we rarely stopped during the ski season. During the winter you had to eat in your car. Mom and Dad didn't want to mess up the Country Squire Lounge (the inside of our Ford station wagon) with mustard spills or greasy stains. But there were picnic tables for warm weather feasting, perfect for our first day of freedom lunch. Eeyore and Penny snoozed under the picnic table. The turtles, Touché, Daniel Boone and Mingo, hung out in their plastic pool and gave us beseeching looks, hoping for a French fry to nibble.

Satiated and well satisfied we jumped back in the car. Alas, the Nye kids were never great travelers. The station wagon was huge but both dogs and kids managed to stretch and sprawl and get in each other's way. Eventually Mom would shout above the fray, "Do I need to stop this car? You don't want me to stop this car!" Except for a few pitiful sniffles, that quieted us down for a good three, maybe five minutes.

Much to Mom's relief, somehow or other, we always made it to our little house in the woods in one piece. Not wanting to delay another minute, we unloaded the car in a flash, threw on bathing suits and waved good bye to the turtles. Dogs in tow, we were off to the beach for another great start to another great summer in paradise.

Have a wonderful summer and bon appétit!





Crunchy Slaw with Cilantro, Mint and Peanuts

Celebrate the end of school with an easy, breezy cookout.

Throw some burgers and dogs on the grill and dish up some slaw. Try my crispy, crunchy version of this old favorite.

Enjoy!

Serves 12

8 ounces coleslaw mix or cabbage, cut in thin ribbons

8 ounces broccoli slaw

3 carrots, grated

1/2 – 1 cucumber, chopped

1 red or yellow bell pepper or a mix, chopped

4 scallions, trimmed and thinly sliced

1/4 cup roughly chopped cilantro

1/4 cup roughly chopped mint

About 3/4 cup roughly chopped salted, roasted peanuts

Make the vinaigrette (recipe follows) and let sit for at least 30 minutes to combine the flavors.

Combine the vegetables and herbs and toss to combine. Drizzle with enough spicy vinaigrette to lightly coat and toss. Let the slaw sit in the refrigerator for 2-4 hours to combine the flavors.

To serve: add half of the peanuts to the slaw and toss. Transfer the slaw to a platter and sprinkle with the remaining peanuts.

If you like a sweeter slaw, chop an crisp apple and add it to the veggies.

Spicy Vinaigrette

3-4 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

2-3 cloves garlic, minced

1 tablespoon or to taste minced jalapeno

1-2 teaspoons brown sugar

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

1/2 cup or to taste extra-virgin olive oil or peanut oil

Put all the ingredients except the oil in a blender, process to combine. Slowly add the oil and process until well combined.

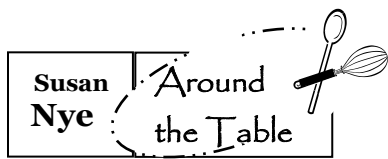
Store extra vinaigrette in the refrigerator.



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Another recipe from Susan Nye: Spring 2012/Volume 301

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