

## Thursday Night Cooking Parties

### April

- 12 Grazing on Tapas
- 26 More Paris Bistro

### May

- 10 Another Tuscan Feast
- 24 More French Country Cooking

### June

- 7 Summer Salads

Special programs always available on request

## Private Chef Services

Company Dinners or Lunches, Celebrations for Family & Friends or Romantic Dinners. At my house or yours.

Cooking with Kids  
Birthday Parties

For more information  
Visit the web at  
[www.susannye.com](http://www.susannye.com)

Contact Susan Nye at  
[aroundthetable@tds.net](mailto:aroundthetable@tds.net) or  
603/526 7319

The snow was rapidly melting and the crocuses, early tulips and daffodils were just starting to break through the mud. It looked like spring was just around the corner. Instead we've been hit with a fluke return to winter. An April snow storm stuck the Northeast and my yard was graced with at least 10 inches of new snow. After a slow start to winter and so-so snow, I did not waste any time and headed off to ski. After all, Mount Sunapee was scheduled to close in a few days and with any luck the snow in my driveway would magically disappear on its own or at least begin to melt.

I am well aware that not everyone receives an April snow storm with a smile. If the unexpected return to winter is getting you down, defy the cold and bring together friends and family for a tapas party. What better way to ignore a return to winter weather than to enjoy a tradition from sunny Spain. (And if you are delighted with the late snow, it won't last long so why not celebrate.) Tapas are little bits and bites eaten with a glass of wine or beer in the late afternoon or early evening. Translated, tapas means "cover" and there are lots of explanations for what's being covered. One legend has it that small slices of bread were used to cover wine glasses from marauding fruit flies. Another proposes that Spanish tavern owners in the 16<sup>th</sup> century served their patrons smelly cheese, free of charge, to cover up the taste of cheap wine.

In Spain tapas can include anything from fried baby squid to marinated olives to a nibble of cheese or sausage. I am a fan of tapas because they are often strongly flavored with garlic and chilies. Called mezze in the Middle East, dim sum in China and grazing here in the US, these little bits and bites are a delightful way to start, or better yet replace a meal. Grazing on lots of small dishes makes for a great party. And I have a theory, still unproven, that if you can eat a treat in one or two bites, the calories don't count. I served a grazing menu, complete with mini cupcakes, for my last birthday party for a relaxed, laid back evening. We cooked a little, ate a little, drank a little wine, chatted and laughed a lot.

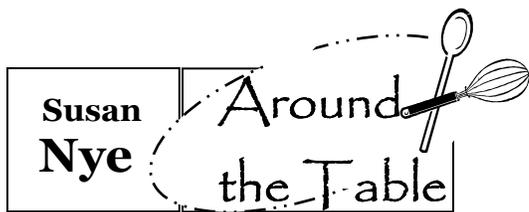
Purists stick to Spanish flavors when serving tapas but for my grazing menus I look for flavors that work together; regardless of origin. I include dishes which can be purchased or made in advance and served cold or at room temperature including Mediterranean dips like humus, baba ghanoush and tapenade served with fresh vegetables. I add something hot – spanakopita, shrimp with garlic and fresh oregano or pizza with sun-dried tomatoes and goat cheese. Toss in a wedge of your favorite cheese, a few grapes and some nuts and you've got a party.



Regardless of whether you serve tapas as an appetizer and to replace a meal; have a wonderful evening,

Bon appétit! –

Susan



## Try Grazing on Tapas to Chase Away the Never-Ending-Winter Blues

Early Spring 2007/volume 30

Thursday Night Cooking  
Parties  
Learn & Laugh

Private Chef Services  
Like to entertain? Too  
busy to cook? Let me do it  
for you.

For more information  
Visit the web at  
[www.susannye.com](http://www.susannye.com)

Contact Susan Nye at  
[aroundthetable@tds.net](mailto:aroundthetable@tds.net) or  
603/526 7319

### Tapenade

Tapenade is a staple in my kitchen – you can always find a jar in the back of my refrigerator. I use it as a dip or spread for parties, planned and impromptu, and everyday on pizza and sandwiches.

8 ounces dry pack, oil cured black Greek olives, pitted  
Juice of ½ lemon  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
2-3 tablespoon dry white wine  
Grated peel of ½ - 1 lemon  
3 cloves of garlic, roasted  
1 teaspoon dry thyme (or for a change, herbs de Provence)  
½ teaspoon dry chili pepper or to taste

1. To roast the garlic, put the garlic in a small, oven proof cup (I use a small custard cup); drizzle with a little olive oil and cook at 350° until soft, 20-30 minutes. Cool to room temperature.
2. Throw everything in a small food processor. Blend until finely chopped and well mixed. Store in the refrigerator for 4 hours or overnight before using to combine the flavors.
3. Serve with crackers, bread or raw bell peppers and cucumbers.