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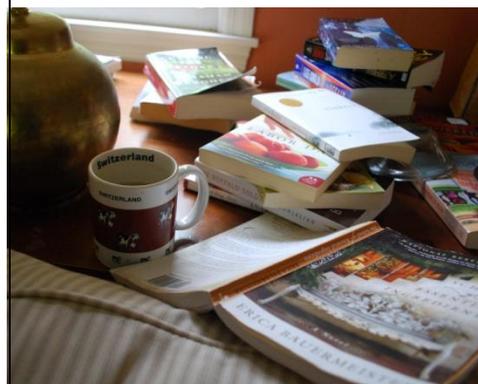
Contact me at susannye@tds.net 603/526 7319



sometimes a lot) I don't really mind those cold, rainy days in late October and November. I look forward to the first snowfall, even if it makes for a slippery Halloween. What better excuse to flop on the couch and read the day away? (If only it didn't get dark so early!)

Just like the first day of school way-back-when, September means a new start. My brain is already churning with new ideas. Rather than rush, I think I'll ease into the next set of adventures. Perhaps I should amend that and promise to try to take it slow for awhile. It could be my imagination or wishful thinking but for once there seems to be fewer things to juggle. Or maybe I'm just too pooped to mind if something, even two things slip and fall. Real or imagined, I'm pretty sure this lull won't last more than a week, two tops.

In the meantime, the birds are singing, the crickets are chirping and my kayak calls. September is a wonderful time to be outdoors. As if by magic, the humidity gets sucked out of the air. The sun shines in a brilliant blue sky. The leaves start to turn red and gold. New Hampshire is at its best. I'm looking forward to a peaceful morning paddle with the loons and ducks on Pleasant Lake.



But it won't be all get up and go out the door. A lazy morning is also on my agenda. Rain or shine, I want to spend at least one long, luxurious morning in my pajamas. No alarms. No to-do list. Not even an early morning walk. And definitely no multi-tasking. Unless you count sipping coffee while reading a good book multi-tasking. And if a book seems too taxing, I may have to indulge in an old movie or television rerun. I have a thing for hottie detectives, in print or on film.

And from there? Surprise me! I'd like to take each day as it comes for awhile. Of course a good long chat over a leisurely lunch, preferably on a terrace, sounds about right. An afternoon stroll through a farmers' market or hike in the woods would be nice. And I can't think of a lovelier way to end the day than watching the sun go down with good friends and a glass of wine.

Have a lovely September and bon appétit!

Susan

Roasted Tomato and Corn Soup



Our New Hampshire growing season will end all too soon but beautiful, garden ripe tomatoes and local corn are still plentiful. Take advantage of your local farmers' market before the first frost hits. Enjoy!

Makes about 2 quarts

2 1/2 - 3 pounds tomatoes, peeled, cut in half and seeded
 1 large onion, chopped
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 1 stalk celery, finely chopped
 1 carrot, finely chopped
 2-3 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
 Pinch cayenne pepper or to taste
 Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
 About 1 quart chicken stock
 1/2 tablespoon fresh sage, chopped (or 1/2 teaspoon dry)
 1/2 tablespoon fresh thyme (or 1/2 teaspoon dry)
 1 bay leaf
 4 ears fresh corn, kernels cut from the cob
 1 cup half and half (optional)
 Garnish: grated Parmigiano-Reggiano and chopped, fresh chives



Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Put the tomatoes, onion, garlic, celery and carrot in a large, shallow pan. Drizzle with olive oil and vinegar, sprinkle with cayenne, salt and pepper and toss to combine.



Roast for about 45 minutes or until the vegetables are tender and caramelized. Cool for 10-15 minutes, transfer to a food processor and process until smooth (or chunky if you prefer).

Put the tomatoes in a large pot, add the chicken stock, sage, thyme and bay leaf and bring to a simmer. Simmer the soup for 15-20 minutes. Add the corn kernels and simmer for 5 minutes more. Add the half and half, heat until steaming and serve with a little Parmigiano-Reggiano and fresh chives.

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