

Private Chef, Catering & Cooking Classes

I'd be delighted to help you with any and all of your celebrations.

Join Me Around the Table for an Eat Well-Do Good Dinner! Support the fight against Alzheimer's Disease & Enjoy delicious food & fun!

Treat Yourself to an Around the Table Chef's Apron

Cook like a chef or just look like one!

You can find lots more information on the web at www.susannye.com and www.susannye.wordpress.com

For cooking tips, recipes and more, connect with me on FaceBook www.facebook.com/swny or follow me on Twitter at twitter.com/susannye Watch me cook on www.youtube.com/susannye

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Last week when Sandy was tearing into New Jersey and heading north, I read the following advice on Facebook: *Here's a great suggestion from those of us who can't live without our morning coffee. Make a large pot now. Cold coffee tomorrow is better than no coffee tomorrow.*

Are you one of those people who can't live without your morning cup of joe? You can easily recognize the type as they are more or less, mostly more, incoherent until fortified with that first jolt of caffeine.

For many years I was addicted to coffee. A java junkie, I supported a seven, eight, even nine cup a day habit. I started my day with a large café au lait and usually ended it with a tiny espresso. At the time I worked in a big stuffy office. Coffee revived me when I was feeling logy. More important, it gave me an excuse to get up and away from my desk, if only for a few minutes. Forget the water cooler, in offices around the world, lots of information, important and not, is shared over coffee.

My fascination with coffee began when I was little. First of all, it smelled wonderful. And second, it was off limits. I seem to remember a well circulated old wives tale that drinking coffee stunted a child's growth. I'm sure it was all a ruse. Moms everywhere knew all too well that their children had enough energy and didn't need the additional jolt. After countless requests, my Mother humored me when I was ten, maybe eleven. She'd let me try a little but had one caveat. If I wanted to drink coffee; I had to drink it black, no sugar and no milk. She insisted that loading it up with milk and sugar would be like drinking hot, melted ice cream. I was game, took a sip and, as expected, once was enough ...

... until college. College is the perfect time for experimenting and new adventures. I tried lots of new stuff, including coffee; lots and lots of coffee. It felt cool and adult to sit around with my friends drinking cup after cup after cup. (Even if we did add a ton of milk and sugar!) Like most students, I was not a master at time management and un-regrettably I wasted a lot of time having fun. As a result I spent many late nights in the art studio and library. Coffee was not an option; it was a necessity.

In the early days of my coffee addiction, I was hardly a snob. The college dining room served huge pots of mediocrity which I drank at every meal. For late nights, I use a little electric percolator. When pressed for time, I threw a couple of spoonfuls of instant coffee into a mug and added hot tap water. I confess I bought the cheapest coffee I could find, blaming it on my student budget.

It wasn't until I moved to Switzerland that I discovered that coffee could be, should be more than a caffeine and sugar fix. The Swiss have very good, very strong coffee. In fact it is so good that I drank it without sugar. In short order I was not only hooked but became a coffee snob. I bought French, Italian and even Turkish coffee and espresso makers and didn't skimp on the beans. Every morning I enjoyed a big, beautiful cup of café au lait. Afternoons and evenings, I moved on to tiny cups of thick, black espresso.



Unfortunately, some good things must come to an end. At least a decade ago, bouts of insomnia forced me to cut back on my coffee habit. I still have two, maybe three coffees in the morning but noon is my witching hour. I am still a coffee snob and my favorite is a shot of very strong, very good espresso topped off with lots of steaming milk. And Mum was right (isn't she always?), *even without sugar, it does taste a little like a hot milk shake!*

Bon appétit!

Apple Muffins

When was the last time you met friends for coffee? Gather around the kitchen table and indulge in a perfect cup of coffee, a tasty muffin and even better conversation. Enjoy!

Makes about 16 muffins



- 1 3/4 cups all purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup shredded apple
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup walnuts
- Grated zest of 1 orange
- 3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 large egg
- 3/4 cup sour cream
- 2 teaspoons orange liqueur

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Line muffin tins with paper liners.

Put the flour, baking powder and soda, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and salt in a bowl and whisk to combine.

Cream the butter and sugar with an electric mixer on medium speed. Add the egg, sour cream and orange liqueur, gradually increase the mixer speed to high and beat until smooth.

Toss the shredded apple, raisins, walnuts and orange zest with the flour to combine.

With the mixer on low speed, add the flour, fruit and nuts to the egg mixture and mix until just combined. Fill the muffin cups about two-thirds full and sprinkle with the streusel topping.

Bake the muffins in the middle of the oven until the tops are golden and a toothpick inserted in the center of a muffin comes out clean, 20 to 25 minutes. Cool the muffins in the pan for a few minutes before transferring to a cooling rack. Serve the muffins warm or at room temperature.

Streusel Topping

- 1/2 cup all purpose flour
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons cold butter, cut into pieces

Combine the flour, sugar, salt and cinnamon in a food processor and pulse to combine. Add the butter, pulse until the topping comes together in large lumps.

