

Thursday Night
Cooking Parties

May

- 10 Cooking in Tuscany
- 24 French Country Cooking

June

- 7 Summer Salads

July & August

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special programs are always
available on request.

Private Chef Services

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Celebrations for Family & Friends.
At my house or yours.

Cooking with Kids
Birthday Parties

For more information
Visit the web at www.susannye.com

Contact Susan Nye at
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603/526 7319



How do you celebrate spring? Do you tie ribbons to a May Pole and dance or light huge bonfires to chase away the cold? Maybe you let out all the stops with a Mexican fiesta. Cinco de Mayo or the 5th of May commemorates a Mexican victory over the French almost 150 years ago. I suspect that, like me, most Americans do not know much about the history behind Cinco de Mayo. However, we have figured out that it is an excellent excuse to celebrate Mexican culture with wonderful spicy food, music and of course margaritas.

The 1st of May is International Workers Day. The Day honors the fight for better working conditions in the late 1800's. Warm spring weather brought workers out on to the streets to protest long hours and low pay. One of the most famous was the Haymarket Square rally in Chicago. The US honors workers on Labor Day in September, but May 1st is a holiday throughout most of Europe. The 60 hour work week at a dollar a day is a thing of the past and now the holiday is primarily embraced as the kick-off to summer. I worked in Europe for many years and lived in Geneva. I don't know whether it is Calvinism or Capitalism but somehow or other the Swiss have managed to avoid unions and Workers Day. Most of Europe heads to the beach on May 1st, but for the industrious Swiss it is business as usual.

It is too early to kick-off summer in New Hampshire on the 1st of May. However there are lots of signs that spring finally has arrived. One of my favorite rites of spring is the annual ice out. Ice out is a phenomena unique to northern climates and quite simply it marks the day and time when a lake is clear of ice. For several days last week I kept half an eye on Pleasant Lake. I do admit that watching a lake melt sounds a bit like watching paint dry. So it is no surprise that unlike the fall foliage, crowds of tourists do not flock North to watch the ice disappear. But with summer-like temperatures last weekend, I was delighted to sit on the beach and enjoy a glass of wine with friends while watching the ice melt and the sun set.

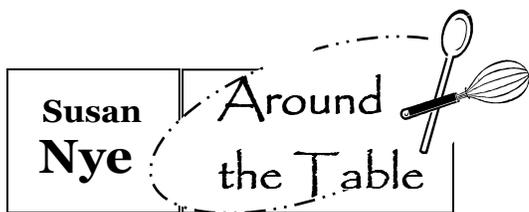
If you are like me, you celebrate spring in the garden. Although, celebrate might not be quite the right word. This morning my annual manure delivery landed in my driveway with all its stinky glory. Over the next few days I will spread cow poop throughout the garden. Moving this mountain is back breaking work and it is often feels like the pile is growing not shrinking. It will eventually disappear and I will be rewarded with a bounty of beautiful flowers, herbs and vegetables. Bounty is the key word; my garden is somewhat chaotic and subscribes to the more is better school of design. What it lacks in order, it makes up in enthusiasm.

Now is the time to bring spring's bounty to your table. It is the season for artichokes, asparagus, lamb, fresh herbs and anything with lemon. Or if you like Mexican food as much as I do, why not cook up a south of the border feast to celebrate Cinco de Mayo? Enjoy and,



Bon appétit! -

Susan



Signs of Spring: Melting Ice, Manure & Mexican Fiestas

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Shrimp Fajitas – Celebrate Cinco de Mayo with shrimp, spicy salsa and creamy guacamole.

Serves 6

2 pounds large shrimp, shelled, deveined
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 shallot, finely chopped
½ tablespoon fresh thyme or ½ teaspoon dried
½ teaspoon dried chili flakes
½ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons cumin
½ cup dry white wine
Juice of one lime
1 small red onion, sliced into ¼ inch rings
½ red pepper, julienne
½ yellow pepper, julienne
8-12 small flour tortillas

1. Put the onions and peppers in a large skillet, toss with a little olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper. Sauté over medium high heat, stirring occasionally, for about 5 minutes until tender crisp.
2. Meanwhile, in a large skillet combine the garlic, shallots, salt, chili, cumin and thyme with a little olive oil; cook over medium heat for 5 minutes. Add the wine; continue to cook until almost dry. Add the lime juice. Raise heat to medium high and simmer for a minute or 2. Add the shrimp and toss to coat. Cook the shrimp for 2-3 minutes or until pink, do not over cook. Serve with warm tortillas, sautéed onions and peppers, salsa and guacamole.

Simple Salsa

1 pint grape tomatoes, chopped
1 teaspoon (or more to taste) jalapeno pepper, minced
½ small red onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
½ yellow bell pepper, finely chopped
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice or red wine vinegar
1 tablespoon olive oil
½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon cilantro, finely chopped

1. Combine all ingredients. Check for seasoning.

Guacamole

2 ripe avocados, peeled, seeded and cut into large chunks
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
3-4 grape tomatoes, chopped
1 tablespoon red onion, finely chopped
1 tablespoon yellow bell pepper, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon cumin
Pinch cayenne pepper
2 tablespoon cilantro, finely chopped
2-3 tablespoons sour cream

1. Put the avocado and lime juice in a small bowl, mash with a fork. Add the tomatoes, onion, garlic, bell pepper, cumin, salt, cayenne and cilantro. Whisk with a fork to combine. Add the sour cream and combine. Check for seasoning.

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