

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

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

There is no doubt about it. At least in New Hampshire, April is a crummy month. The ski season ends. Most days the sky is any one of more than fifty shades of gray. The clouds all too frequently open up and dampen more than our spirits with a fine drizzle, torrential rain or even snow. At least in my yard, all but a few spring blooms are hiding under dirty snow banks. Dirt roads are filled with muddy ruts. Paved roads are a roller coaster of pot holes and frost heaves. To add insult to injury, taxes are due.



So how do you lift your spirits when you are surrounded by gray skies, mud and piles of forms and receipts? Here are a few ideas:

1. **Put on your rubber boots** and slicker and go out anyway. It helps if your rain gear is bright red or yellow, polka dotted or flowered.
2. **Find a change of venue.** Instead of reading a book in your own cozy living room, grab a comfy chair at the library or coffee shop. Look up periodically; you never know who you might spot to share a cup of tea or coffee and a chat.
3. **Do that thing that you've been postponing** for weeks. It could be a boring piece of paperwork or cleaning out the refrigerator. The dreary weather won't make it more fun or interesting but you will enjoy the feeling of satisfaction when you are done.
4. **Take an afternoon nap.**
5. **Create a scrapbook for someone special.** Mothers' and Fathers' Day as well as graduation and wedding season are coming.
6. **Read all the Dr. Seuss books.** *The Cat in the Hat* is a good place to start ... "The sun did not shine, it was too wet to play, so we sat in the house all that cold, cold wet day."
7. **Go to the gym.** Get your blood pumping with a zumba workout or find serenity with a yoga class.
8. **Do a crossword puzzle.** And another.
9. **Invite your pals over to play poker.** Or bridge if you prefer.
10. **Rearrange the furniture.** You'll have a brand new room without spending a dime.
11. **Buy flowers.** They'll look great in your brand new room! Buy a second bunch and surprise a friend or neighbor.
12. **Play with your dog or cat.** They're probably bored too. Make a video of your adorable pet and post it on YouTube. Just don't let it go to Fido's head when the video goes viral.
13. **Learn something new.** Attend a lecture, take a guided tour of an historic landmark or peruse a how-to-fix-anything book and then fix something.
14. **Cook one of those dishes that you've been avoiding** because it takes too long or is too complicated. Fill the house with the warm and wonderful smell of homemade moussaka, simmering soup or braised beef.
15. **Invite all your favorite people to dinner** to share that dish. We tend to entertain in the summer, on special occasions and holidays so a party for no reason at all in the middle of April will be highly appreciated and memorable.

Before you know it, the ice will be off the lake and the garden will be filled with flowers. Good luck and bon appetit!

Susan

Moussaka

Rich and hearty after a dreary day, this Greek dish is great for casual dinner parties. Enjoy!

Serves 12

About 3 pounds (3-4) small eggplants, trimmed and sliced into 1/4-inch thick rounds



Olive oil

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 large onion, chopped

3 cloves garlic, minced

8-10 ounces each ground pork and turkey

1/2 cup dry white wine

2 cups crushed tomatoes

2 teaspoons dried Italian herbs

Pinch cinnamon

Pinch allspice

2 tablespoons butter and more for the baking dish

3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

2 cups milk

1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

8 ounces Pecorino Romano cheese, grated

4 ounces Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, grated

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Brush both sides of the eggplant slices with olive oil and arrange in a single layer on a baking sheet. Sprinkle the eggplant with salt and pepper and bake until tender and browned, about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the meat sauce. Heat a little olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion and sauté until tender, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook 1 minute more. Add the meat and season with salt and pepper. Breaking the meat up into bite-size pieces, sauté until browned, about 5 minutes. Add the wine and simmer until reduced by half. Add the crushed tomatoes, herbs, cinnamon and allspice and season with salt and pepper. Lower the heat and simmer for about 15 minutes.

While the meat sauce simmers, make the béchamel sauce. Melt the butter in a heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add the flour and cook, whisking, for 1 minute. Gradually whisk in the milk, bring to a simmer and reduce the heat to low. Add the nutmeg, season with salt and pepper and simmer, whisking often, until the sauce thickens about 5 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Butter a deep 9x13-inch baking dish.

Put the cheeses in a bowl and toss to combine.

Layer half the eggplant in the bottom on the prepared dish, top with half the meat sauce and sprinkle with a third of the cheese. Repeat. Top with béchamel and sprinkle with the remaining cheeses.

Bake for 40 minutes or until browned and bubbly. Let sit for 10 minutes, cut into squares and serve.

** Moussaka can be prepped and assembled in advance. Cover and store in the refrigerator. It will take longer to cook if it goes into the oven cold.*