

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, in praise of August and the start of blueberry season, I gave everyone a yummy recipe for Blueberry Clafouti. That's when I started to think, can you get too much of a good thing? Not when it comes to blueberries. Not only are they delicious, blueberries are one of nature's super foods. Why not head to a pick-your-own farm and, well, pick some of your own? Don't worry about picking too many. Any extra will freeze beautifully. When it's cold and snowy, toss the frozen berries in smoothies, muffins and pies for a taste of summer.



Picking blueberries is a great way to spend a morning, especially now when the days start out a little cooler. If it's your first blueberry picking adventure, there are a few things you might like to know:

Before heading out: Always give the farm a call before heading out. Your favorite pick-your-own blueberry farm may not open every day. Changes in weather effect how fast or slow the berries ripen. Farmers open their fields to pickers when fruit is bountiful. If it's cool or rainy for a few days, some fields may close for a while. Many fields close at mid-day so get there early!

Bring your own bucket. Not all growers provide containers.

Lather on the sunscreen, wear a hat and bring plenty of water and a snack.

In the field: Select plump blueberries with a light gray-blue color. If there is a hint of red, the berry isn't ripe. If you pick one by mistake and leave it at room temperature there is a good chance it will ripen. Blueberries which are still white or green will not ripen after they are picked.

To pick, hold your bucket under a bunch of blueberries with one hand. Use the other hand to cup a ripe bunch and gently rub the berries. The ripe berries will drop into the bucket. The unripe ones remain attached to the bush, waiting for you to return in a few days.

Most pick-your-own farms sell berries by the pound. You'll need to pick about three cups for one pound of fresh berries. A pie takes about one quart of blueberries.

Once picked, keep the berries in an open container and out of the sun.

In the kitchen: As soon after picking as possible, get the blueberries into the refrigerator. Store the berries in shallow containers, lightly covered, in the refrigerator. Don't wash the berries until you are ready to use them. Dampness makes them susceptible to spoiling. If you can't use the berries within a week or so, freeze them.

Freezing berries: Rinse the berries in a large colander, remove any stems or stray leaves and drain. Place a clean, dry dish towel on the bottom of a rimmed nonstick baking sheet, add the berries in a single layer and gently roll around to dry. Remove the towel and again arrange in a single layer on the baking sheet.

Place the baking sheet in the freezer. Once the berries are frozen solid, place them in plastic, re-sealable freezer bags or air tight plastic containers and return to the freezer. They'll be ready and waiting for blueberry pancakes and taste of summer on a cold winter morning.

Have fun and bon appétit!

Susan

Summer Salad with Green Beans, Blueberries & Goat Cheese

A delicious way to use some of those berries. Top with grilled chicken or shrimp and it's a one dish supper. Enjoy!

Serves 8

1/4-1/2 pound green beans – use haricot verts or thin green beans if you can find them
About 8 ounces mixed baby greens or spinach
About 4 ounces crumbled goat cheese
1 1/2 cups blueberries
1/2 cup roughly chopped pecans, toasted
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Blanch the beans in boiling salted water for about 2 minutes. Drain and transfer to an ice bath to cool. Drain well.

Toss the beans and greens with enough vinaigrette to lightly coat. Put the salad on individual plates or a large platter, sprinkle with goat cheese, blueberries and pecans and serve.

Balsamic Vinaigrette

Juice of 1 orange
2-3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons finely chopped shallot
1 clove garlic, minced
2 teaspoons wholegrain mustard
Extra-virgin olive oil to taste

Put the orange juice, vinegar, shallot, garlic and mustard into a blender, season with salt and pepper and process until smooth. With the motor running, add olive oil to taste