



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

When I was growing up, my mother and her friends spent many a late afternoon sipping Lipton tea and sharing their news. By four o'clock, in need of sustenance and adult company, they were on the phone tracking each other down. I can still hear Mom proclaiming, "Come over and *swing a bag*; I'm having a *sinking spell*." Before long, the chairs around the kitchen table were filled.

Some days they were light-hearted, sharing gossip and good cheer. Other days the women whispered, drawn into some deep and serious conversation. Always curious, I would find some excuse or other to wander through the kitchen, hoping to catch a snippet or two of their mysterious exchange.



Tea may have been discovered in ancient China but the afternoon tea party is a decidedly English invention. We can thank one of Queen Victoria's dear friends, the Duchess of Bedford, for this charming innovation. Like my mother, the Duchess suffered a sinking feeling towards the late afternoon. She solved the problem with a reviving cup of tea and a light snack. Pleased with her cleverness, the Duchess quickly invited friends along to join her. The tea party was born. Many followed the Duchess' lead and afternoon tea parties became a popular means of entertaining.

Many people confuse these dainty affairs with High Tea. Contrary to popular belief, High Tea has nothing to do with high society ladies sipping from delicate china. Simply put, working men and women took their High Tea at the high board or kitchen table. After a long, hard day, they enjoyed hearty fare and a mug of sweet, milky tea. Afternoon or Low Tea was for ladies and gentlemen of leisure. Dressed to the nines, they gathered in elegant parlors around low tables filled with the dainty treats. (We now call them coffee tables and sometimes put our feet on them).

My mother's casual get-togethers with her friends were a far cry from the Duchess of Bedford's elegant affairs. There were no silver teapots or bone china. These suburban moms cheerfully dunked tea bags into the sturdy ceramic cups that my mother had purchased with Green Stamps. Hardly fussy, they all insisted that each tea bag was good for a second cup and sometimes a third. There were no dainty little teacakes. Oreos from the cookie jar was about as fancy as it got. The friendship these women brought to the table was infinitely more important than silver or petit fours.

We are well into October, the days are growing shorter and there is a definite chill in the air. It is a good time to bring your friends together to swing a bag. A cup of tea, and perhaps a cookie, is the perfect cure for any sinking spell. Whether you sip your brew in a charming tearoom or around the kitchen table, recharge with a cup of tea and the camaraderie of good friends.

Bon appétit!

Cherry-Pistachio Biscotti

Make you tea party a little special with delicious biscotti. Enjoy!

Makes about 30 cookies

2 cups all-purpose flour
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon cinnamon
 1 teaspoon ginger
 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
 Pinch cloves
 Zest of 1 orange
 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter at room temperature
 1 cup sugar
 2 eggs
 1 tablespoon Grand Marnier
 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
 2/3 cup shelled and roughly chopped pistachios
 2/3 cup dried cherries
 8-12 ounces good-quality white chocolate, chopped



Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.

Put the flour, baking powder, salt and spices in a bowl and whisk to combine. Add the orange zest and whisk again. Set aside.

Put the butter and sugar in a bowl and beat with an electric mixer until fluffy. Beat in the eggs, Grand Marnier and vanilla. With the mixer on low speed, slowly add the dry ingredients and combine. Fold in the pistachios and cherries.

Divide the dough into 2 pieces. Dust your hands with a little flour, pat the dough into 2 logs about 12-inches long and set the dough on the prepared baking sheet. Flatten the logs to form loaves about 2-inches wide.

Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes. Remove the loaves from the oven and cool for about 20 minutes. While the loaves are still warm, cut 1/2-inch slices on the bias with a serrated knife. Lay the biscotti on baking sheets and bake at 350 degrees for 8-10 minutes. Flip the biscotti and bake 5-6 minutes more. Transfer the biscotti to a rack to cool.

Put the chocolate in a glass bowl and zap in the microwave for 1 minute. Give the chocolate a stir. Assuming it has not melted completely, return the chocolate to the microwave and zap for 10-20 seconds. Continue to zap and stir until the chocolate has almost melted. Let the chocolate sit for a few minutes to finish melting and give it a stir.

Spread or generously drizzle chocolate onto each cookie, place the biscotti on a rack until the chocolate sets, about 30 minutes.