

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/swnye or follow me on Twitter at twitter.com/susannye Watch me cook on www.youtube.com/susannye

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If you've lost track of time, we are now into March and Barbie's birthday is coming up.

You know Barbie, the one with the pink dream house, pink convertible and more than one hundred careers. She started out as a teenage fashion model. Although she never seems to age, she's moved on to be everything from a nurse and doctor, to a teacher, flight attendant, cowgirl and candidate for President of the United States. Yes, that Barbie, with all the clothes and teeny, tiny stilettos, legs that go on forever, a miniscule waist and voluptuous front and back porch. It's her birthday on Sunday.

So how will you celebrate Barbie's birthday? For starters you should think seriously about buying a new pair of shoes. Preferably something summery, even if you can't wear them now, you can dream of warm weather, flirty sandals and flowery dresses. Or DO wear them now and invite your friends over for a party with pink champagne and pink cupcakes.



Unfortunately, a Barbie party might not be politically correct. The poor doll has been blamed for a long list of crimes against women. It seems that Barbie is to blame if we have low self-esteem, anorexia, bulimia or a lousy body image. That's a lot of guilt piled on her narrow, plastic shoulders. So here are some alternatives:

Get physical. Yes, there were tennis dresses and tracksuits among her thousands of wardrobe changes but with those little feet and kitten heels, Barbie seemed to be the epitome of the *I-don't-do-sports* girl. Maybe we should take another look. In case you've forgotten (or didn't notice), Barbie played in the 1998 woman's world soccer cup tournament. Celebrate Barbie's athletic prowess and her birthday with a long walk, Zumba workout or day on the slopes.

Use your brain. Although she didn't specialize in brains, surgeon is among Barbie's almost endless list of careers. Make no mistake; Barbie is more than a pretty face and anatomically incorrect body. She has been a Zoologist, News Anchor and Computer Engineer. Even if she has a fondness for pink and sparkles, Barbie went to the moon four years before Neil Armstrong. In recognition of her fifty-five years, visit the planetarium, museum or sit back and enjoy a good book. If you do spend the day with a book, find something uplifting or intellectually stimulating. Leave the trashy romance novel for another, less esteemed day.

Pamper yourself. If you're going to honor a woman who prides herself in her good grooming and pink wardrobe, house and car, a little pampering is in order. Whether you spend the entire day at the spa, take a long bubble bath after your day on the slopes or give yourself a mani-pedi, take some time to indulge and coddle yourself.

Oh what the heck – life's too short to worry about being politically correct!

Raise a glass. Pink champagne or not, enjoy a glass of wine or a sparkling cocktail and a fun chat with your girlfriends. Reminisce about your first Barbie or favorite Barbie or your first Barbie protest or the paper you wrote proving Barbie is a she-devil, setting womankind back several decades if not a century or two.

Eat healthy and well. After cocktails, cheerful reminiscences or indignant rants, share a lovely dinner. I don't see nutritionist on her long and illustrious list of jobs but Barbie counts chef among her many talents.

Have a fun trip down Memory Lane into Barbie World. Bon appétit!

Panna Cotta with Strawberries

Forget cake; celebrate Barbie's birthday with this creamy and delicious dessert. Enjoy!

Serves 6-8

1/2 cup whole milk or half & half
2 teaspoons unflavored gelatin
2 cups heavy cream
Brown sugar
Grated zest of 1 orange
1 cup sour cream
2-3 tablespoons Grand Marnier
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
About 1 quart strawberries

Put the milk in a small bowl, sprinkle with the gelatin and let sit until the gelatin softens, about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, combine the cream, 1/2 cup brown sugar and orange zest in a large saucepan. Stirring frequently, bring the cream to a simmer over low heat. Remove from the heat, stir until the sugar dissolves and let the orange zest steep for about 30 minutes.

Reheat the cream to a simmer. Add the gelatin mixture and whisk until the gelatin dissolves. Remove from the heat.

Put the sour cream into a large measuring cup. A little bit at a time, pour the warm cream through a fine mesh sieve and whisk to combine with the sour cream. Stir in 1 tablespoon Grand Marnier and the vanilla. Pour the panna cotta into 6 or 8 small dessert or wine glasses. Chill uncovered until the panna cotta has set, 4-6 hours. Cover and keep in the refrigerator until ready to serve, up to 2 days.

Remove the panna cottas from the refrigerator about 20 minutes before serving. Just before serving, cut the strawberries into bite-sized pieces and toss with 1-2 tablespoons of Grand Marnier and brown sugar to taste. Top each panna cotta with a generous spoonful of strawberries and serve.

