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**The pressure is on. Friday is the Fourth of July**, a day filled with tradition and special memories. From the flag waving by the front door to the t-shirt and sneakers we don for the cookout, it's a red, white and blue holiday.

**On a serious note**, the Fourth of July marks the birth of our country and the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It's hard to believe that Congress was able to sign, seal and deliver the Declaration within two days of approving a resolution of independence. The current Congress could certainly learn a lesson or two from the Founding Fathers.

**On a more frivolous note**, at least in New England, the Fourth of July means that summer is well and truly here. Before the long holiday weekend is over, we'll have the mosquito bites and sunburns to prove it. Many Independence Day traditions go back to the Founding Fathers. One of those Fathers, John Adams, set the scene for future Independence Day celebrations in a letter to his wife Abigail,

*"I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports,... bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more."*

**Although we are not nearly as solemn as Adams predicted;** the Fourth certainly qualifies as a great festival. For our modern day celebrations, we like nothing better than to spend most if not all of the day and evening outdoors. Today we are less solemn acts and pomp and more games, sports, bonfires and illuminations. And of course parades. Small town parades honor veterans but also welcome kids on brightly decorated bicycles. No matter what your age, consider some star spangled streamers for your handlebars and playing cards for your spokes.

**When we were kids, we spent most of the Fourth in the water.** Our mothers did their best to yank us out of the lake for a few minutes for lunch and again for dinner. In spite of blue lips and wrinkly fingers and toes, we couldn't wait to jump back in again. Now we create our own tri- or pentathlons by combining our favorite summer sports into an action-packed weekend. Knowing the season is short, we race between hiking trails, bike routes, the beach and the tennis court. We keep busy with fun runs, family golf tournaments and friendly games of volleyball. With all that fun, at some point we are bound to crash and need a nap in the hammock or under a beach umbrella.

**The Fourth is a great time for families and friends to get together.** Unlike Thanksgiving, it's not fraught with a history of family melodrama. There's no turkey to wrestle, no earthshattering confessions to make or certain disappointments to contend. The latest (or on-going) scandal, reprisal or tragedy can take a backseat to the sunshine and fun. It's summer and time to relax. Besides, Adams may have mentioned fireworks but said nothing about angst or trauma in his letter to Abigail.

**Top off the celebration and games with an easy potluck cookout** in the backyard or beach. Stock up on hotdogs and hamburgers and let everyone bring an appetizer, salad or dessert. Sharing the work means everyone will have time for games and sport and still have a fabulous feast.

Have a wonderful holiday and bon appétit!



*Susan*

## Potato Salad Niçoise

*This composed salad will look beautiful on your Fourth of July picnic table and tastes wonderful. Enjoy!*

Serves 8

### Vinaigrette Niçoise (recipe follows)

2 pounds red skinned or Yukon gold potatoes, peeled (optional) and cut in bite size pieces  
2 tablespoons dry white wine  
1 small red onion, diced  
1 pound assorted cherry tomatoes, cut in half  
1 European cucumber, peeled, seeded and chopped  
3/4 cup Niçoise or oil cured black Greek olives, pitted and halved or quartered  
2 tablespoons capers, drained

Make the vinaigrette.

Put the potatoes in a large pot and cover by 2-inches with cold salted water. Bring the potatoes to a boil over high heat, reduce the temperature to medium-low and simmer until tender, about 15 minutes.

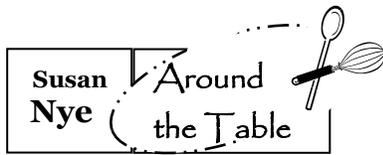
Drain the potatoes well and shake off excess water. Transfer the potatoes to a bowl, add the wine and enough vinaigrette to generously coat but not drown the potatoes and gently toss to combine. Stirring occasionally, cool to room temperature and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.



Put the onion in a bowl, add enough vinaigrette to generously coat, cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Marinating will take the bite out of the raw onion.

To serve: Spoon the potatoes onto a large serving platter.

Add the tomatoes and cucumber to the onion and, adding more vinaigrette if necessary, toss to lightly coat. Artfully arrange the tomatoes, cucumber and onion over the potatoes and sprinkle with olives and capers.



*Another recipe from Susan Nye:  
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## Vinaigrette Niçoise

Makes about 1 cup

1/4 cup roughly chopped basil  
2 tablespoons roughly chopped flat-leaf parsley  
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
3 tablespoons white wine vinegar  
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard  
2 teaspoons anchovy paste  
3 cloves garlic, chopped  
1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce  
1/2 teaspoon (or to taste) hot pepper sauce  
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste  
About 1 cup (or to taste) extra virgin olive oil

Put the herbs, lemon juice, vinegar, mustard, anchovy paste, garlic, Worcestershire sauce and hot sauce in the food processor, season with salt and pepper and process until smooth. With the motor running, gradually add the olive oil and process until smooth.