

Private Chef, Catering & Cooking Classes

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Join Me Around the Table for an Eat Well-Do Good Dinner!

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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

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When I was little, August was vacation time.

According to my parents, it was the best, they might have said the only, time for a Cape Cod vacation. According to Mom and Dad, *everyone* went to the Cape in August. At four or five, I assumed they knew what they were talking about and didn't ask too many questions.

Years later, I learned that our escape to the seaside was very French or, if you prefer, very Italian. Both countries are famous for closing up shop and heading to the country or seaside every August. If it weren't for the North American tourists, Paris and Rome would be ghost towns.

I grew up in suburbia, about twenty miles west of Boston. We spent most of July at the town beach. We learned to swim, picked up an earache or two and more than a few sunburns. When not at the beach, we rode bikes, pouted in the backyard and listened for the Popsicle man. It wasn't too bad. In addition to the town beach, we spent a lot of weekends at my grandparent's house on the Cape.

My mother's parents owned a little cottage within walking distance of the ocean. They were there most weekends in July plus the entire month of August. Our little family was Nana and Grandpa's favorite houseguests. When an unbearable heat wave hit, Mom and Nana didn't wait for the weekend. They packed up the car with little girls, dogs and bathing suits and headed to the shore.

The back and forth ended on August 1st. If nothing else, our timing was close to perfect. More often than not, the town beach started to get, well, just a wee bit nasty by the end of July. Off we went to the Cape. It was the best of all worlds. My sister and I were spoiled rotten by two sets of grandparents and we could swim in the ocean every day.

Parisians and Romans leave their cities to escape the dog days of August. Since New England days start to get shorter and temperatures cooler in August, our exodus didn't make a whole lot of sense. Just because I took my parents' decrees as absolute at four or five doesn't mean I can't question their logic today. I do. All the time. And have for years!

It took a while but I finally figured out why generation after generation of my family waited until August to enjoy their hard-earned vacation days. It wasn't the heat. Or the humidity. If that were the case, we would have spent July on the seaside. Plain and simple, it's all about the water.

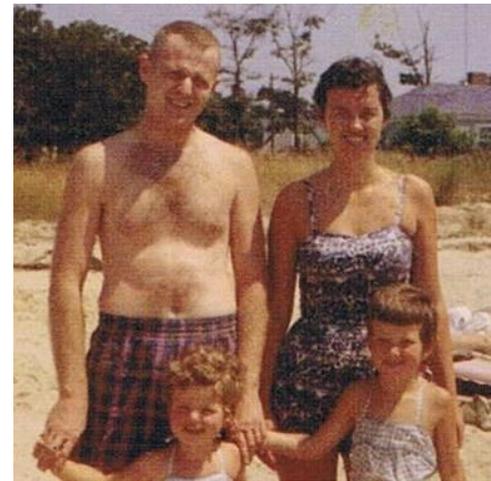
My parents and grandparents were among the legions of New Englanders who deemed the Atlantic too cold for swimming in June and July. In addition, by midsummer, our local suburban swimming hole was more petri dish than cool oasis. Not that little kids notice these sorts of issues. Memorial Day, Independence or Labor Day, if it was hot or not, murky pond or briny sea, I'd plunge right in.

Was I fearless? Foolish might be a better word for it. I like to think I was footloose and fancy free. I'll let you make the call. One thing's for certain, my lips were always blue and my teeth chattering when I finally climbed out of the water.

True to his New England roots, last week my father announced it was almost time for his first swim of the season.

Enjoy the water and bon appétit!





Double Corn & Cheddar Muffins

Delicious year round, these muffins will be a great addition to your next cookout or lobster or crab fest. Enjoy!

Makes about 2 dozen muffins

1 1/2 cups cornmeal
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2-4 tablespoons (to taste) brown sugar
1 1/2 tablespoons baking powder
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
About 4 ounces (1 1/2 cups grated) extra-sharp cheddar cheese, grated
3 ears (about 1 1/2 cups kernels) fresh* corn, shucked and kernels removed
1 scallion, white and green parts, finely chopped
3 tablespoons seeded and minced jalapeno pepper
3 eggs
1 1/2 cups sour cream
3/4 cup (1 1/2 stick) butter, melted and cooled

Put the cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in a large bowl and whisk to combine. Add the cheddar, corn, scallion and jalapeno and toss to combine.

Put the sour cream in a bowl, whisk in the eggs one at a time until well combined. Slowly add the butter and continue whisking until combined.

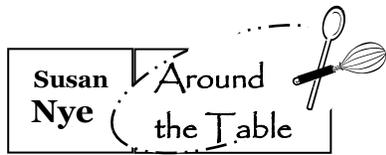
Add the wet ingredients to the dry and stir until the batter is more or less lump-free. Don't over-mix! Let the batter sit at room temperature for 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Line muffin tins with paper liners.

Give the batter a quick stir. Filling each muffin cup about 3/4 full, spoon the batter into the prepared tin. (A 2-ounce ice cream works beautifully.) Bake for 20-25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into one of the muffins comes out clean. Cool in the pan for 5 minutes before transferring to a rack to cool for later or a basket to serve warm.

* *Out of season, it's okay to use frozen corn.*





*Another recipe from Susan Nye:
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