



The Leaf Peepers Edition

Fall 2007/volume 56

Cooking Parties & Classes

The Fall-Holiday Schedule is on the Web!

September

- 12 French Country Cooking
- 26 Italian Country Kitchen

October

- 10 French Country Cooking
- 24 Italian Country Kitchen

November

- 7 French Country Cooking

December

- 5 Tapas & Finger Food

Join me in the Kitchen & Around the Table for delicious seasonal food & fun

Details & Menus on the Web www.susannye.com

Private classes always available

- Girls' Night Out
 - Cooking Couples
 - Customer Appreciation and lots more....
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Contact Susan Nye at susannye@tds.net or 603/526 7319

For more information

Visit the web at www.susannye.com



Aaahhhhhh....October in New Hampshire. The trees change to brilliant reds, oranges and yellows and lots of tourists come to explore the State. Some are packed into buses, others hike mountain trails or ramble along back roads on bicycles. The Leaf Peepers have arrived. Called Dead Leaf Watchers by my Dad, these autumn visitors ooh and ah and admire the glorious colors. They join the celebrations at harvest festivals, visit farm markets and sip apple cider. They enjoy the romance of country inns and the comfort of cozy cafés.

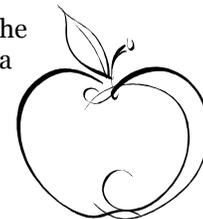
It's a good thing that I live here; otherwise I would probably miss the spectacular show. I have never been good at road trips. When I was little lots of families in our neighborhood jumped in their cars and explored the highways and byways of New England. Some even drove clear across the country to see the Grand Canyon. But not our family. To say that my sister, brother and I were not good in the car would be a gross understatement. For any trip out of town, we could barely make it out of the driveway before one of us piped up with, "How many more minutes?" The three of us complained of boredom, we bickered, we pushed and shoved each other and occasionally came to blows. It is no surprise that the Nye's took very few family car trips.

One exception was a Saturday morning when my Mom and Dad decided that we should hit the road and look at foliage. I still don't know what they were thinking. It felt like we drove for days although I am sure that it was no more than an hour, probably less. The three of us sat in the back seat of our big, blue station wagon, complaining and getting in each others' way. Eventually, we found a pond surrounded by colorful trees and had a picnic. I was eight and my unsolicited opinion was that the trip was hardly worth a bunch of dead leaves.

So what is the story behind all this glorious fall foliage? I may have hated long car rides but at eight years old, I was curious and a big fan of trips to the library. I read beautiful picture books and learned that the fall foliage was due to some mythical combination of a Native American Princess, a mysterious tragedy and a Medicine Man or witch. My memory of this story is very vague, but somehow or other magic happened and brilliant leaves exploded from the trees. It was certainly disappointing to study biology years later and learn that growth, temperature and chemical change are the true creators of fall's bright colors. In biology class I learned that something in the leaves called chlorophyll dissipates in the fall. And a bunch of other stuff called carotenes, xanthophylls, anthocyanin and tannins take over and transform the trees. Not very magical!

I'm still not great on long car trips but am only too happy to walk, hike, bike and paddle. Over the past few weeks, it has been my good fortune to kayak on and walk around Pleasant Lake. Whether it is due to chemistry or princesses and witches, the lake is surrounded by brilliant red maples and yellow beeches. It is indeed magical.

Enjoy the fall sunshine, take a walk, peddle a bike or paddle a boat. The fresh air and exercise are good for you, and help build an appetite for a hearty autumn feast. Regardless of what's in the oven, sweet apples, roasting vegetables or a spicy ragout, is there anything better than the wonderful aromas of an autumn kitchen after an afternoon out in the cold, clear sunshine?



Bon appétit! - Susan



Wednesday Night Cooking Classes

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Roasted Butternut Squash Risotto

Risotto works great as a main course, side dish or appetizer. Roasted butternut squash is a delicious and healthy addition to creamy risotto. Enjoy this perfect fall dish.

Serves 6 as a main dish

1 large butternut squash (about 2 pounds), peeled, seeded, cut into small pieces
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 medium onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
2 cups Arborio rice
1 cup dry white wine
5-6 cups chicken stock
1-2 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage leaves or 1 teaspoon dried sage
2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
1-2 ounces grated Parmesan and/or Pecorino Romano cheese
Olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Place squash on large rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with a little olive oil, balsamic vinegar and sprinkle with salt and pepper; toss to coat. Roast until tender and beginning to brown, stirring occasionally, about 45 minutes.
3. When the squash is almost done, heat a little olive oil in a heavy large saucepan over medium-low heat. Add onion and cook until it begins to wilt, about 2 minutes. Add rice and garlic; stir for 1 minute. Add wine and simmer until absorbed, about 2 minutes. Add roasted squash and 1/2 cup hot stock; simmer until stock is absorbed, stirring frequently. Add remaining stock 1/2 cup at a time, allowing stock to be absorbed before adding more and stirring frequently, until rice is tender and mixture is creamy. Total cooking time is about 20-25 minutes.
4. Season, to taste, with salt and pepper. Add butter, sage, cheeses; stir until butter and cheeses have melted and are well combined. Garnish with chives. Serve immediately.