

Join Me in the New Year for a
Cooking Class

February

- 1 Italian Country Kitchen
- 15 French Country Cooking
- 29 Italian Country Kitchen

March

- 7 Mediterranean Easter Feast
- 28 Tapas & Finger Food

April

- 4 Italian Country Kitchen
- 18 French Country Cooking

May

- 2 Italian Country Kitchen
- 16 French Country Cooking

June

- 6 Summer Salads

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....

at your house or mine.

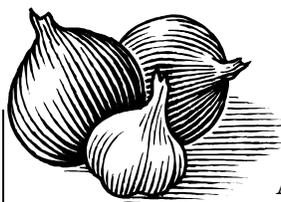
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Contact Susan Nye at
susannye@tds.net
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Sometimes called the "stinking rose" for its strong smell, garlic is one of my favorite ingredients. Native to Central Asia, garlic is a member of the onion family along with shallots and leeks. Earthy, pungent, it has been a kitchen staple for thousands of years. Ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans all used garlic to create gastronomic heaven. Garlic has been embraced by chefs and cooks around the world and has found its way into pots and pans in Asia, Africa and Europe as well as the Americas. Traditional English and Japanese cooking stand out as two of the few cuisines which are more or less immune to garlic's seductive taste.

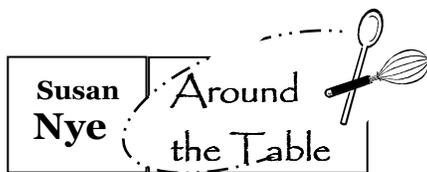
Or perhaps, I should say tastes. Garlic is remarkable in its versatility. Serve it raw and the taste is sharp and hot but roast it slowly in olive oil and it takes on a subtle sweetness. Pair it with ginger and chilies for a fiery Asian feast, with lemons and anchovies for a summery French standard or with tomatoes and herbs for a spicy Sicilian treat. When I cook with garlic, my guests always warm to the wonderful aromas that welcome them at the door and then delight in the dishes. Oh yes, I do know an unfortunate few who claim that age or allergies prevent them from indulging in garlicky or spicy delights. They certainly have my sympathy and I will rue the day if I am ever forced to join their unfortunate ranks.

There is lots of folklore surrounding the stinking rose. Throughout history garlic has been used for protection and white magic. Garlic has been worn to repel vampires and werewolves, for protection against the Evil Eye and by young maidens to ward off jealous nymphs. And then there is garlic's reputed power as an aphrodisiac. Particularly on a cold night, a little garlic adds a warm, savory touch to any romantic dinner. But it will only work its magic if both you and your beloved partake. A charming hotelier in Provence once told me that young men in his village always carry a clove of garlic in their pockets in case of emergency. What kind of emergency you might ask? Well special measures are required when the target of a young man's affection has not eaten garlic that day. Nibbling on a garlic clove is not a substitute for Cupid's arrow; it just ensures that the suitor and suitee are equally fragrant.

With few if any natural predators, garlic has been hyped as a medical cure-all throughout the ages. The ancient Egyptians were great believers in the medicinal powers of garlic. When they built the pyramids more than 5,000 years ago laborers feasted on garlic daily to build and maintain endurance and strength. Garlic has been given credit for preventing everything from the common cold to high cholesterol and heart disease. It has been used for relief of sun stroke, to ward off the plague and to treat smallpox and tuberculosis. Although there is no scientific proof, some believe that garlic is a natural mosquito repellent. This may be due to the strong scent that has been known to exude from the pores of an over-indulgent diner. Louis Pasteur wrote about garlic's antibacterial powers in the 1850's and medics used it during World Wars I and II as an antiseptic to prevent gangrene. Today garlic appears on many lists of super foods for its powerful antioxidants.

While there are lots of tales of miracle cures with garlic, I can not vouch for any of these claims. However, I can vouch for the versatility and epicurean magic of cooking with garlic. In addition, I am only too happy to report that my house is free of both vampires and werewolves. So after a day skiing or snowshoeing in the cold or playing in the snow build up your strength with a leisurely feast liberally laced with fragrant garlic. Enjoy a wonderful evening around the table with your family and friends and,

Bon appétit! - Susan



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Spicy Sicilian Chicken

Enjoy the flavors of sunny Sicily with family and friends on a cold winter evening.

Serves 4

4 chicken breasts, bone in and skin on, rinsed, and patted dry
1 yellow bell pepper, cored, seeded, and roughly chopped
1 medium yellow onion, roughly chopped
1/2 teaspoon dried hot chili flakes or to taste
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 small eggplant, cut into bite-sized cubes
1 medium zucchini, cut into bite-sized cubes
1 cup canned, crushed plum tomatoes
1/2 cup Sicilian or Greek olives, pitted and roughly chopped
2 tablespoons capers, rinsed and drained
1 cup dry red wine
2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint
2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
Olive Oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper

1. Season chicken pieces with salt and pepper. Heat a little olive oil in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add chicken pieces; brown on both sides, 2-3 minutes per side. Remove from the pan and reserve.
2. Lower the heat to medium and add a little more olive oil to the pan. Put the pepper and onion in the pan, season with the chili flakes, salt and pepper and sauté until the onions start to become translucent, about 10 minutes; add the garlic and cook for 2-3 minutes more. Add the eggplant, zucchini, olives, capers, wine and crushed tomatoes and stir to combine. Return chicken to pan; bring to a boil. Lower heat to a simmer, cover and cook until vegetables are tender and chicken is cooked through, about 20 minutes.
3. Sprinkle with mint and parsley and serve.