



Join Me in the New Year for a Cooking Class

January

18 French Country Cooking

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
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Contact Susan Nye at

susannye@tds.net

or 603/526 7319

More information the web at

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My friend Deb called me last week to see if I wanted to watch ski joring over at the country club on Sunday. For the uninitiated ski joring is kind of like waterskiing on snow. Except instead of a boat, the skier is pulled by a horse. With frigid temperatures in the forecast, I agreed with one caveat. I did not think I could handle standing in the arctic cold for more than a few minutes. Could we also go cross country skiing? Deb agreed and after a leisurely chat and coffee in front a cheery fire we headed off to see the skiers and horses.

We watched four or five riders and skiers race around the course but as predicted, I didn't last long standing idle in the cold. I was soon ready to move myself and we headed over to the cross country ski trails. After about an hour of slipping and sliding through the woods Deb declared that the sport was misnamed. It should be called uphill skiing not cross country. But heck, we were warm in spite of the cold and the sun was shining.

I began cross country skiing when I was in high school. I took up the sport for two reasons. The first was New England's frigid Januarys. Every Saturday and Sunday our family bundled up and headed off to the mountain to ski. I hated the cold but no matter how much I whined or moaned, my complaints fell on deaf ears. When my sister, brother and I were growing up my Mother had an unwavering goal to get us outside in the fresh air as often as possible.

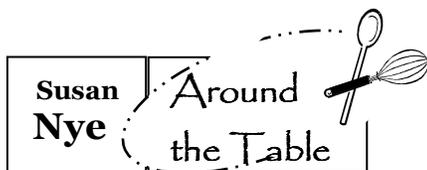
But in January temperatures have a nasty habit of hovering around zero and the wind chill makes it feel much colder. Even my Mom found it difficult to maintain her enthusiasm. We would ski a run and then head into the lodge to warm up. Repeat two or three times and then give up and head home in frozen despair. We found a solution to the frigid January blues with cross country skiing. Cross country skiing is an excellent sport for very cold days. It is easy to stay warm when your arms and legs are in constant motion. And whether you are flailing or gliding through the woods, the trees protect you from the wind.

As I said I took up the sport for two reasons and the ski coach at my suburban high school provided the second. He insisted that if we wanted to join the team, we had to ski both cross country and downhill. We were motley crew of recreational downhill skiers. We never practiced more than once or twice a week but what we lacked in talent and hard work we made up in enthusiasm. We broke no records; in fact we barely held our own at most meets. On the plus side, we had lots of fun, could put a varsity sport on our college applications and we were the school's only co-ed team.

I still think of cross country skiing as my January sport. When the wind blows an arctic gale across Pleasant Lake and whistles up and down the mountains, I head for the woods with my cross country skis. Protected from the wind, I swing my arms and slip-slide my skis through the woods. With all the flailing I manage to stay warm, get a decent workout and enjoy an hour or two of fresh air and sunshine. As long as this bone chilling stretch of arctic weather continues, you can find me most afternoons gliding through the woods. When it ends, fickle creature that I am I will leave my cross country skis in the corner of the garage and head over to the mountain.

Whether your idea of the perfect January afternoon is on skis or snowshoes or curled up in front of the fire with a good book, enjoy and stay warm.

Bon appétit! - Susan



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too little time?

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Thai Vegetable & White Bean Chili

Warm up with this spicy vegetarian chili after a day in the cold. Enjoy!
Serves 6-8

5-6 cups cooked white beans (Great Northern, Cannellini or Navy), rinsed and drained
2 pounds butternut squash, cut into bite size pieces
4 large carrots, chopped
6 stalks celery, chopped
2 medium onions, chopped
2 red or yellow bell peppers, chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons Thai red curry paste or to taste
1/2 jalapeño chili pepper or to taste, minced
1 teaspoon thyme
1/2 cup dry white wine
3 cups vegetable or chicken stock
1 cup unsweeten coconut milk or half and half
3 tablespoons fish sauce
2 tablespoons creamy peanut butter
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
Vegetable oil

Garnish:

Chopped fresh cilantro
Thinly sliced green onions
1/2 cup unsalted roasted peanuts, chopped

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Put the squash, carrots, celery, onions, bell peppers, jalapeño and thyme in a large roasting pan. Thin the curry paste with a little white wine; add the thinned curry paste and a little oil to the vegetables, season with salt and pepper and toss to combine.
3. Roast the vegetables for 25 minutes. Add the garlic, toss to combine and roast for an additional 5 minutes. Transfer the vegetables to a casserole dish, add the white beans, white wine, vegetable broth, coconut milk, fish sauce and peanut butter, stir to combine. Cover and cook for an additional 30 minutes or until vegetables are tender.
4. Serve with basmati rice, garnished with cilantro, green onions and chopped peanuts. Or cool to room temperature, cover and refrigerate. Reheat at 350° for 20 minutes or until hot and bubbling. Can be made 1 day ahead.