

# Celebrate International Women's Day

Winter 2008/volume 77

## Join Me 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

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March is here which means that spring should be arriving any minute. Or maybe not! With record snow falls we are drowning in the cold, white stuff. It feels like it could be several months before the first crocus peaks out and the forsythia bloom. I recently received an email from my friend Julie in Switzerland; she is already enjoying the first signs of spring. Her garden is starting to sprout daffodils, hyacinths and tulips and she is busily planting primroses. Meanwhile, I am busily shoveling out from under another foot of snow. The snow banks are taking over my house and driveway and the roof on my sunroom has collapsed. All this winter weather brings to mind the cliché; March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. Since February was pretty ferocious, the only question is, how long will the lion roar?

March gets its name from the ancient Romans. The month was named to honor Mars, the god of war and it is a fitting moniker. Every year when the snow and ice melted legions of Romans took to the road on their annual mission to plunder and conquer Celts, Goths and barbarians. March kicked off the Romans' pillaging season and with Mars' help they eventually captured territory as far north as Great Britain, as far south and west as Morocco and as far east as Hungary.

The Roman Empire eventually fell. And a century or two later, the spring campaign took on a whole new twist. In the early 1900's the industrial revolution had, well, revolutionized industry. Skilled craftsmen and women were replaced by factories with assembly lines and efficiency experts. Factories mass produced everything from automobiles to shoes and shirts and widgets. I'm not exactly sure what a widget is, but it seems that factories produce a lot of them. Horrendous working conditions in many factories forced legions of workers take to the streets in protest.

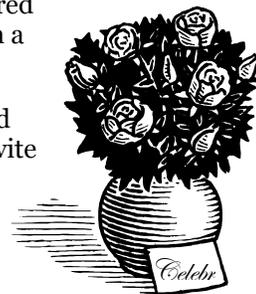
Workers began to organize, unions formed and March ushered in more than a few early spring flowers; it began a season of demonstrations. Warm weather, sunshine and longer days brought out pickets and protesters. Women were among the many groups to stir up the status quo. Suffragettes demonstrated for the right to vote. Working women marched for better pay and working conditions in the sweatshops and mills. Demonstrations, debate and discussions were held in cities around the world from New York to Copenhagen to Moscow.

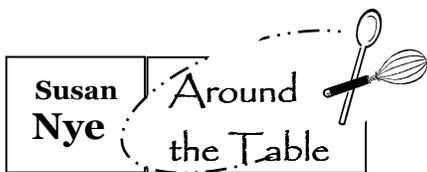
To commemorate this on-going struggle various conferences, congresses and groups declared and celebrated International Women's Day. For years it bounced around several dates but eventually International Women's Day landed on March 8<sup>th</sup> and is an official holiday in many countries. Businesses and schools are closed and women of all ages are honored with cards, small gifts and flowers. In most places it is just another day on the assembly line, at the office or wherever. But with or without an official day off, women around the world get together in groups large and small to connect, to celebrate their achievements and to inspire each other.

I like to celebrate International Women's Day, but then I like to celebrate almost everything. In the past few years I have found lots of ways to honor the day. I have attended business conferences and networking events and heard inspiring stories. I have invited friends over for a casual girls' night out and shared laughter and lively conversation. And I have joined forces with a few other Chicks on Sticks and celebrated on the ski slopes.

This International Women's Day, send your best wishes, a card or flowers to all the special ladies in your life. Or better yet, invite them around your table to inspire, to celebrate and to share a wonderful evening.

Bon appétit! - Susan





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### Crudités with Lemon-Garlic Aioli

*This light and refreshing hors d'oeuvre platter is perfect for a casual gathering. It is great for warm weather parties or when you just desperately wish it would finally warm up! Enjoy!*

Fresh vegetables – try radishes, Belgian endive leaves, cherry or grape tomatoes, sliced fennel, cucumbers and bell peppers

Fresh fruit – try strawberries, fresh figs, melon and grapes

Dried fruit – try apricots, dates and figs

Nuts

Lemon-Garlic Aioli (recipe follows)

1. Wash, peel, chop and slice the vegetables and fruit. Arrange vegetables and aioli, fruit and nuts on a large platter. Serve immediately and let your guests help themselves.

### Lemon-Garlic Aioli

Makes about 1 cup

1/2 cup olive oil

1/4 cup mayonnaise

4 garlic cloves, minced

Juice of 1 lemon

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

2 teaspoons grated lemon peel

Pinch of red pepper flakes

Salt and pepper, to taste

1. Whisk all ingredients in small bowl to blend. Cover with plastic and refrigerate for 4 hours or overnight to combine flavors.