



When we were little we always looked forward to Easter. Without fail we could count on family reunions and parties, a festive new dress and the Easter Bunny. Much to the delight and giggles of his two little girls, my Dad once dressed up as the Easter Bunny. He was covered from head to foot with fake fur, sported a pink nose, whiskers and a fluffy white tail. But I'll get back to his transformation in a minute.

First things first. All women love party dresses and little girls are no exception. When my sister and I were small my Dad's cousin Virginia ensured that we were the best dressed little girls in New England, if not the world. Or rather it was Ginny's friend Frances who was a buyer at G. Fox & Company. Frances scoured the samples and latest children's clothes and found perfect outfits for my sister and me. My parents were just starting out with a mortgage and car payments and appreciated the help. My Mom always said that she and my Dad shopped the sales rack but her girls were dressed in top-of-the-line style. For Sunday school, birthdays and holiday parties we were decked out in beautiful dresses with lace collars and embroidery or chic little suits. In the spring we wore straw Easter bonnets with ribbons and flowers. We were picture perfect and ready for any party or Easter parade.

The Maugus Club was a few miles from our house. It was a big brick building with bowling lanes on the ground floor and a big room upstairs. On rainy Wednesday afternoons we went to the Maugus Club to bowl. Every Easter, the Club threw open its doors for a children's party. Decked out in our new spring finery, my sister and I joined the horde of kids in the great room. Bedlam reigned throughout the afternoon with games, music and a visit from the Easter Bunny.



*The Nyes on Easter Sunday, 1962*

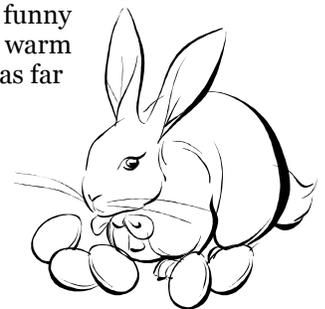
Every year some poor dad was cajoled into dressing up in an Easter Bunny costume. The costume's oversized rabbit head had enough blind spots to leave the wearer virtually helpless and the fake fur suit was warm enough to keep him toasty on even the coldest winter day. The hapless volunteer hopped into the party to a rousing chorus of "Here Comes Peter Cottontail", passed out a few chocolate eggs and then hopped out again. A melee of kids high on excitement, good cheer and bright yellow Peeps were left in his wake.

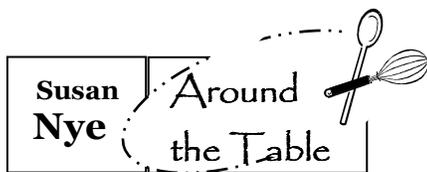
Peter's departure signaled the end of the party. We were herded into station wagons and carpoled home to recover from our sugar rush. Not to be outdone, more often than not our parents would soon head out for their own celebration. We never heard all the facts, in truth we've never heard any facts, but I'm pretty sure that a good time was had by all. One particular year stands out.

The details have always been a bit sketchy; we were only told that my Dad lost a bet. As the loser, he was obliged to walk all the dogs in neighborhood dressed in the rabbit costume. On Easter Sunday afternoon he donned the heavy white suit and, barely able to see, he paraded down the street in all his splendor, tripping over a tangle of dogs and leashes. Most of the neighborhood kids joined in the fun, waving carrots, shouting and laughing. I was all of five or six and thought that it was incredibly funny and cool that MY Dad was dressed up as the Easter Bunny. It was a glorious afternoon, warm and sunny more like summer than spring. My Dad almost melted in the heavy suit, but as far as I was concerned it was the best Easter ever!

I wish you all a wonderful day with family and friends and maybe even a giant rabbit,

Happy Easter & Bon appétit! - Susan





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**Linguine with Lemon Braised Artichokes**

*I first enjoyed this dish several years ago over an Easter Weekend in Rome. Italians eat pasta as a first course or *Primi*. Try starting your Easter Feast with this delicious pasta. Follow it with grilled or roasted lamb and vegetables. Enjoy!*

6 - 8 first course or 3-4 main course servings

8 ounces linguine

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh oregano leaves

1/4 cup chicken stock

Lemon Braised Artichoke Hearts, recipe follows

1 tablespoon butter

2 tablespoons chopped Italian parsley

Grated Parmesan cheese

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Olive oil

1. Cook the pasta according to package directions.
2. While pasta is cooking, heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute; add the oregano and broth. Bring to a simmer. Add the braised artichokes and butter.
3. Drain the pasta, reserving a little pasta water. Add the pasta to the skillet and combine. Add a little pasta water if it seems dry. Sprinkle with parsley and Parmesan cheese and serve.

**Lemon-Braised Artichoke Hearts**

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1/4 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

1/4 cup chicken stock

1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves

1/2 teaspoon finely chopped fresh rosemary

1 clove garlic minced

1 teaspoon kosher salt

Small pinch freshly ground pepper

2 medium to large artichokes

1. Preheat the oven to 375°.
2. Combine the olive oil, lemon juice, thyme, garlic, salt, and pepper in a medium non-reactive, oven proof saucepan. Mix well and set aside while preparing the artichokes.
3. Trim artichokes stems, leaving about 1 inch. Snap outer leaves off the artichokes. Cut off the top 2 inches. Cut the artichoke in half and scrape out the choke with a spoon. Cut the artichokes in eighths. Immediately put the artichoke pieces in the marinade and turn to coat completely.
4. Add the chicken stock; put the pan over high heat and bring to a boil. Cover, transfer to the oven and cook at 375° until the artichokes are tender when pierced with a fork, about 30 minutes. Cool and reserve until ready to use.