

Join Me for a Cooking Class!

Winter-Spring 2008 Schedule

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

30 Tapas & Finger Food

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

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Contact Susan Nye at
susannye@tds.net
or 603/526 7319

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"... Enter the difference between the amount that would be reported for the activity on Schedule C, C-EZ, E, or F or Form 4835 for the AMT and the regular tax amount. If (a) the AMT loss is more than the regular tax loss, (b) the AMT gain is less than the regular tax gain, or (c) you have an AMT loss and a regular tax gain, enter the adjustment as a negative amount..." (Instructions for IRS Form 6251)

Is there anything worse than April 15th, tax day? Well, maybe a root canal without anesthesia or rain on the 4th of July. But with good dental hygiene you have a pretty good chance of avoiding major dental work. And if it rains on Independence Day, well, with a bit of luck you will be surprised with a great fireworks display sometime later in the summer.

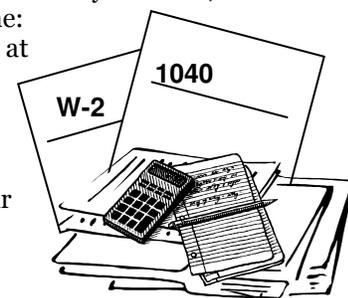
Benjamin Franklin warned us, "In this world nothing is certain but death and taxes." I like to think that there are at least a few other sure things. For instance, I am pretty confident that the day after a big snow or rain storm will dawn crystal clear with a bright blue sky. I know that my nieces and nephews will hug me when I arrive for a visit, even if I have to prod them. And I know that a walk in the sunshine or an hour on the ski slopes or in my kayak are sure to improve even my most foul mood. No one said life would be one big bed of roses and I know the black flies will be back soon (but they'll be gone by Fathers' Day). I know that if there is even a remote chance that I will get lost on my way to anywhere, I will. And unfortunately, I also know I will have a bad hair day almost every day from late June until early September. But a few mishaps, un-pleasantries or curls gone wild are minor hiccups when compared the grief brought on by April 15th.

It may be tempting, but don't even think of skipping the misery of doing your taxes. The IRS is relentless and tough as nails. Look at Al Capone. The FBI, led by that terribly handsome Kevin Costner and handsomer Sean Connery, chased him all over Chicago and half the country but couldn't pin him to any crime. It was the humble accountant who nailed him on tax evasion and sent him off to prison.

You can't even escape the IRS by leaving the country. I lived in Switzerland for almost two decades and I still had to file my taxes every year. Living overseas only adds to the complexity with exchange rates, a few extra forms and the special treat of the dreaded alternative minimum tax. Wading through the instructions for the AMT was almost comical until I had to write a check to my Uncle Sam.

Putting on my optimist hat, I can make happy talk and insist I don't mind paying taxes. After all, paying taxes means I have an income to tax. But even if my glass is half full, there is still that worrisome empty part. No matter how optimistic I pretend to be or how happy I talk, April 15th still means that I have to navigate all those forms. The government must have scoured the country and looked high and low to find the people to design and write these forms. The authors must be terribly heartless men and women. Their one and only mission is to make our lives absolutely miserable by twisting and turning the English language into an incomprehensible jumble.

I wish you good luck as you struggle through your calculations. Once you finish, take some time to relax and celebrate. You deserve it. If you get one: celebrate your rebate or refund. If not, celebrate your success at navigating through all those forms with your sanity intact. Your thank-goodness-that's-done party doesn't have to be elaborate or expensive. Unless the government is giving you back buckets of money, don't go wild with champagne and caviar. Drinking French champagne and eating Russian caviar won't help the US economy anyway. Grab a few beers, preferably domestic, some good friends, let out a big sign of relief and relax, it's over. At least for this year.



Bon appétit! – Susan

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Al Capone Calzone with Marinara Sauce - *Al Capone avoided the Chicago police, the feds and the tax man for years. Even if the IRS leaves you counting your last few pennies you can enjoy this treat with a few friends and a cold beer!*

Serves 8

Homemade or store bought pizza dough – enough for 2 large pizzas

Flour

Spinach and cheese filling (recipe follows)

Marinara sauce (recipe follows)

1. If you have a baking stone, place it in the oven. Preheat oven to 425°.
2. Divide the pizza dough into 8 rounds. Dust a clean work surface lightly with flour. Flatten the rounds of dough with your fingers and palms until each is about 1/8 inch to 1/4 inch thick and oval shaped.
3. Place 1/2 cup of the spinach-cheese filling in the center of each dough oval. Fold dough to form half moons and seal the edges.
4. Place the calzone on the hot baking stone or on a baking sheet and cook until golden brown, about 10 to 12 minutes. Serve with marinara sauce.

Spinach and Cheese Filling

2 garlic cloves, minced

1 small onion, finely chopped

1 pound baby spinach, washed and dried

15 ounces ricotta

2 ounces Parmesan cheese, grated

2 ounces Pecorino Romano cheese, grated

2 ounces Fontina cheese, grated

1 egg

1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes or to taste

1/2 teaspoon Kosher salt

Olive oil

1. Heat a little olive oil in a large sauté pan, over medium heat. Add pepper flakes and onion; cook until soft and translucent; add the garlic and cook 1-2 minutes. Add the spinach and salt toss to combine; raise heat to medium-high and cook until wilted, 2-3 minutes.
2. Put the spinach in a large bowl and let cool for a few minutes. Add the cheeses and egg and combine.

Marinara Sauce

1 medium onion, finely chopped

4 garlic cloves, minced

Pinch red pepper flakes, or to taste

1 teaspoon dried herbs de Provence or Italian herbs

1/2 medium carrot, finely shredded

1 (28-ounce) can ground tomatoes

1/2 cup dry red wine

3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil (optional)

Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper

Olive Oil

1. In a 3-quart saucepan, heat a little olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until soft and translucent; add the garlic and pepper flakes; cook for 1-2 minutes.
2. Add the herbs and carrot; cook until the carrot is quite soft. Add the tomatoes and wine; stir to combine. Bring to a simmer; lower the heat and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring often. Add the fresh basil and serve.