

Join Me for a Cooking Class!
Summer 2008

During the summer I'll take a break from open sessions.

I am always available for private classes. Get a group of family and friends together for

Summer Salads

or

Chillin' & Grillin'

or

Tapas

Or a

Summery Feast from the
Mediterranean or the South of
France

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Contact Susan Nye at

susannye@tds.net

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More information the web at

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Fathers' Day has come and gone; so has summer solstice, the longest day. We've survived the black flies and suffered through the year's first heat wave. Local schools have sent kids packing on yellow busses for the last time. They will not darken the school house doors again until late August. Kids are now free to sleep late, play hard and enjoy life. With that last school bell, it is finally, really and truly summer.

After a cold winter and a hectic spring, summer is a wonderful time to kick-back and relax. It's time to buy a new pair of flip flops or find your old ones, get some sunscreen and head to the beach. It's time to discover if you are still fit enough to swim to the Island or even the raft. It's time to break out your kayak and drift by the loons. It's time to grab a big tote bag full of books and spend a lazy afternoon snoozing and reading in the shade. And at the end of the day, it's a time for stress free, no fuss picnic or cookout.

Summer is a great time to spend some extra time with family and friends. As a little girl, I spent my summers first on Cape Cod and then on Pleasant Lake. My sister and I joined forces with a mini mafia of cousins and vacation buddies. The days were filled with sailing, swimming, tennis lessons and sun burns. The evenings were filled with lots and lots of cookouts.

When I set up my first apartment it didn't take long for me to figure out and assemble my list of culinary must-haves. A barbeque grill (along with a blender and fondue pot) was high on my list. My first grill was a hand-me-down hibachi. The good thing about a hibachi is it is indestructible. You can leave it out in the rain, kick it off a balcony, heck, you can probably run it over with a steam roller. Then just pick it up, add some charcoal and begin grilling again. On the downside, the grill surface is so small it can barely handle a couple of burgers let alone a cookout for a crowd. For anyone who likes to entertain, it is no surprise that these tiny grills disappeared along with disco balls and fondue pots. But who knows, fondue is back, maybe the hibachi will make a comeback too.

My second grill was a Weber knock-off. It was a bit rickety, the grill was still pretty small, but the price was right so who was I to complain. I was living in Switzerland and that grill brought a little slice of Americana to me and my expatriate friends. The knock-off played a starring role in many wonderful summer evenings. It was called into action for parties large and small; feeding as many as 50 people in a single night.

Tragedy struck when my Dad, visiting from the States, backed into the little grill with his rental car. We picked it up and managed to wrestle it back into shape; well, at least sort of. Good old Dad promised a replacement but got on a plane before making good on his pledge. Thrifty New Englander, I continued to use it for a couple more years. In spite of the wobbles, lots of fun evenings were had by all. Eventually the rickety faux-Weber's legs demanded retirement. It was left on the curb on recycling day and replaced first with a larger knock-off and eventually with a gas grill. When I moved back to the States, the grill refused to emigrate and some friends agreed to adopt it.

After many years living in Europe, I'm back on Pleasant Lake, lazing away (yah right!) the summer with family and friends. Not much has changed. The mini mafia is still active and a new generation of cousins plays and swims together. And there are still lots and lots of cook-outs. A few years ago my Dad finally made good on his promise. His housewarming gift, you guessed it, a new grill. I wish you a wonderful summer and good grilling,

Bon appétit! - Susan

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Grilled Chicken Salad Provencal

This colorful salad is as beautiful as it is delicious, perfect for a hot summer night on the deck or on the beach. Enjoy!

Serves 4-6

- 1 – 1 1/2 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- Sun-dried tomato marinade (recipe follows)
- 2 small heads romaine lettuce, torn into bite sized pieces
- 12 cherry or grape tomatoes, cut in half
- 1 avocado, diced
- 2-3 radishes, cut in matchstick-sized julienne
- 1/2 European cucumber, peeled, seeded and chopped
- 1/2 red or yellow bell pepper, seeded and cut in matchstick-sized julienne
- 1 carrot; cut into curls (use a peeler)
- 2-3 green onions or 1/2 small red onion, thinly sliced
- Sun-Dried Tomato Vinaigrette (recipe follows)

1. Put the chicken in a large, heavy-duty plastic resealable bag. Add the marinade; seal bag, pressing out excess air. Marinate the chicken in the refrigerator, turning every few hours, for at least 4 hours or overnight. Longer is better.
2. Preheat the grill to medium high. Remove the chicken from the marinade. Arrange the chicken on the grill. Reduce heat to medium; grill, turning once, until cooked through, about 4-6 minutes per side. Remove the chicken from the grill and let rest for 5 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, toss together all the salad ingredients in a large bowl. Just before serving, toss the salad with just enough dressing to lightly coat.
4. To serve: arrange the salad on a large platter. Thinly slice the chicken and arrange on top of the salad. Drizzle a little vinaigrette over the chicken and serve.

Sun-Dried Tomato Marinade

- 2 cloves garlic
- 1/2 shallot
- 2 halves oil packed sun dried tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon dried herbs de Provence
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon hot pepper sauce
- 1 cup dry white wine

1. In a blender or mini food processor, combine all the ingredients except the wine. Add the wine a little bit at a time and process until smooth.

Sun-Dried Tomato Vinaigrette

- 2 halves oil packed sun dried tomatoes
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon dried herbs de Provence
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1. In a blender or mini food processor, combine all the ingredients except the olive oil; pulse a few times to mince and combine. With machine running, slowly add the oil; process until incorporated.

Makes about 1 cup, store extra vinaigrette in the refrigerator.