

Private Chef, Catering & Cooking Classes

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for an Eat Well-Do Good Dinner!

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Summer solstice, the longest day has come and gone. Fourth of July has been and done. We've suffered through the year's first heat waves and survived more than our fair share of rain, rain and more rain. With temperatures in the eighties and nineties, sticky humidity and dramatic thundershowers, it is well and truly summer.

After a cold winter and a hectic spring, summer is a wonderful time to kick-back and relax. Dig out those flip flops or splurge on a fancy new pair, get some sunscreen and head to the beach. Perhaps you'll test yourself. Are you still fit enough to swim to the Island or at least the raft? For a more leisurely lake tour, break out your kayak and drift by the loons. On those hot and hazy days, it's best to fill a tote bag with books and enjoy a lazy afternoon snoozing and reading in the shade. Busy or relaxed, at the end of the day, it's a time for stress free, no fuss picnic or cookout.

When I set up my first apartment it didn't take long for me to assemble my list of culinary must-haves. A 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 or kick it off a balcony or both. Heck, you can probably run it over with a steam roller. 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 keeps bouncing back, maybe the hibachi will make a comeback as well.

My second grill was a Weber knock-off. The grill was still pretty small and a bit rickety. However, 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 Avenue de l'Ermitage. 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 fifty people in a single night.

Tragedy struck when my father, visiting from the States, backed into the little grill with his rental car. We picked it up and wrestled 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 the injured grill for a couple more years. In spite of its wobbles, many splendid meals and evenings were enjoyed.

Eventually the rickety faux-Weber's legs gave out. No amount of coaxing could convince it to straighten up and cook right. Sadly, the grill was retired to the curb on recycling day. A larger, shiny, new knock-off soon took its place. Not much sturdier than the first, I eventually switched to a gas grill. When I moved back to the States, the gas grill refused to emigrate. Luckily, some friends agreed to adopt it.

Once I made it back to Pleasant Lake, Dad ran out of excuses and had to make good on his promise. His housewarming gift was, you guessed it, a new grill. Although I'm busier than ever, I still try to find time for cookouts with family and friends.

I wish you a wonderful summer and lots of good grilling. Bon appétit!

Susan



Grilled Swordfish with Olive & Caper Salsa

A delicious addition to your summer grilling repertoire. Enjoy!

Serves 8



1/2 cup pitted and roughly chopped olives – black oil-cured or a mix of your favorites
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 scallion, thinly sliced
3 tablespoons capers
2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano
Zest and juice of 1 lemon

Dash or to taste hot pepper sauce
Extra-virgin olive oil
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
3 pounds swordfish

Put the olives, garlic, scallion, capers, parsley, oregano, lemon zest, juice of 1/2 lemon, the pepper sauce and about 4 tablespoons of olive oil in a bowl, season with salt and pepper and toss to combine. Set aside.

Preheat the grill to high heat.

Drizzle the swordfish with a little olive oil and the juice of 1/2 lemon and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Grill the fish for about 5 minutes per side or until cooked through. Remove from the grill and set on a large serving platter. Let the fish rest for about 5 minutes.

Cut the swordfish into thick slices and serve with olive and caper salsa.

