

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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food & fun*

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Contact Susan Nye at

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The wonderful thing about words is that they are always changing and adapting. We mix them up, match them in different ways and invent new ones. We transform nouns into verbs, borrow words from Italy, France and Spain, we even take old words and give them brand new meanings.

When it comes to food and entertaining, we have borrowed and invented lots of new words. A few hundred years ago picnic started out as a French word (pique-nique) for pot luck meals. The English adopted it and turned it into a festive outdoor event. While they were around for decades, probably centuries, lovers of all things epicurean were not dubbed "foodies" until 1981. We wouldn't think of serving our pasta any way but al dente, even if we don't speak another word of Italian. And whether we are eating Italian, Thai or all-American, we often start our meal by wishing each other a hearty "bon appétit". When we are over-worked, over-tired or just fed up, we dine on Take-Out which we pick up at the drive-through. And last but not least, let's not forget all those new words and phrases that only seem to be about food. After all, the sandwich generation was not named for its love of a good PB and J.

A few years ago a new foodie word was coined; locavore. Quite simply, a locavore is a person who only eats locally produced food. The New Oxford American Dictionary was so impressed with this new moniker that it chose locavore as its word of the year in 2007. But locavore is not just a new word, it is a whole movement.

A movement can not be complete without a slogan, so the locavores have given us the catchy phrase, "Eat Locally!" More than a bumper sticker, the sentiment is gaining attention in the press as well as enthusiastic support from chefs and families across the country. The reason for this great surge of interest; well, local food just tastes better. More and more people are discovering, or re-discovering, how utterly delicious food can be when it's fresh, harvested at its peak and enjoyed close to home.

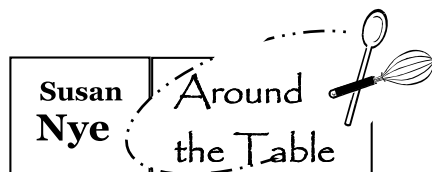
Of course the locavore movement started in California where something is in season twelve months of the year. In New Hampshire we are climatically challenged with our short growing season but even if it is only for a few short months of the year, eating locally makes a lot of sense. After all with skyrocketing gas prices, the cost of transporting our breakfast, lunch and dinner has gone through the roof.

But what does it mean to eat locally? How local is local? Can I cross the county line or even a state line? Most define eating locally as food grown within a 100 mile radius. Compare that to the one, two or even three thousand mile journey which most of our food takes before ending up on our plates. All that long distance travel has an impact on our taste buds. Often picked before they are ripe, what should be a perfect peach or strawberry is often close to tasteless by the time it reaches our shortcake.

Farm stands and farmers' markets are now bursting with gorgeous, local produce. What could be better than a colorful summer salad on a hot night? Salads are summer's answer to the one-pot meal. Delicious and healthy, they are perfect for simple family dinners on the deck or on the beach. Planning a special, summer celebration? Beautiful, bountiful salads are a great solution when you are entertaining a crowd of on a hot night.

Get to know your local farm stands and farmers' markets and celebrate summer with family and friends around the picnic table. Enjoy these warm and wonderful salad days and nights of summer and,

Bon appétit! – Susan



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Lemon-Tarragon Lobster Salad

The seacoast is less than 100 miles away and the home of one of my favorite summer foods. Combine lobster with locally grown greens, heirloom tomatoes and crispy cucumber for a delicious salad. Enjoy!

Serves 6

2 – 2 1/2 pounds cooked lobster meat, cut in bite-sized pieces

Lemon-Tarragon Vinaigrette (recipe follows)

12-16 ounces mesclun greens

1 large tomatoes, chopped

1/2 medium cucumber, peeled, seeded and chopped

2-3 scallions or spring onions, thinly sliced

1 tablespoon lemon juice

2-3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper

1. Put the lobster in a large bowl; add enough lemon-tarragon vinaigrette to lightly coat and toss. Set aside in the refrigerator until ready to serve.
2. When ready to serve: whisk the lemon juice and olive oil together in the bottom of a large bowl; add the greens, tomatoes, cucumber and scallions and toss. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer the greens to a serving platter; top with the lobster and serve.

Lemon-Tarragon Vinaigrette

As far as I know, we don't grow olives or lemons in New Hampshire, but most locavores allow for a few wild cards!

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 clove garlic, finely minced

1/2 shallot, minced

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

1/4 teaspoon fresh ground pepper

1 tablespoon fresh tarragon, finely chopped

1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves

1. Whisk all the vinaigrette ingredients together in a small bowl.

Store extra vinaigrette in the refrigerator.