

Summertime!

Tomorrow marks the longest day of the year and the official beginning of summer. Celebrate the summer solstice with a festive party featuring some of these star attractions or your own favorites.

Olive Spheres

These party favorites were very popular in the 1960s and deserve to be revived. Olive balls are a simple appetizer that can be frozen and reheated.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
- 1/4 cup soft butter
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 24 small green olives, pimento stuffed

Blend all ingredients together except olives. Form dough into balls around each olive. Bake in preheated 375-degree oven on baking sheet for 12 minutes.

Pit Method Clambake

When you want to gather with a group of friends for a special occasion, this is a memorable way to celebrate! Serves 20 or more to share among friends and family. The work involved is part of the fun of an old-fashioned clambake.

Ingredients: suggested amounts for 20+ hungry adults

- 200 soft-shell Maine steamers or 60 hard-shell clams
- 20 lobsters (1-1/4 lbs. to 1-1/2 lbs. each)
- 4 dozen ears corn
- 20 large new potatoes
- 20 pieces of broiling chicken, parboiled 20-30 minutes
- 20 kielbasa or other similar style sausages
- 20 eggs, parboiled (optional)

Dig a shallow, circular hole in the ground, from 8 to 10 inches deep and about three feet in diameter (for 20 people). The diameter will depend on the number of persons to be fed. (For example, a five-foot circle is needed for 50 people.) Line the hole with hard, clean, round, or oval-shaped rocks about the size of footballs, taking care that the tops are about the same level and as close together as possible. Build a fire and keep it going over the entire surface of the circle of rocks, keeping it as hot as possible. When rocks are hot enough, water will immediately sizzle and turn into steam instantly, a process that takes about two hours. When rocks are hot enough, remove all burning wood with a steel rake or hoe and clean ashes from rocks with a live green tree branch. Place a layer of wet seaweed about 6 inches deep to cover all rocks on top and around the edges to prevent the canvas cover from burning.

Working quickly to prevent loss of steam, spread a layer of clean clams on top of the seaweed. Place lobsters directly on top of clams. On top of lobsters, place any or all of the following: sweet corn, hotdogs or sausages, and new potatoes. Leave the last layer of husk on the corn to keep it clean. (Earlier bakes included eggs, parboiled 2-3 minutes, placed in cheesecloth and added with the potatoes.) If chicken is desired, it should be previously parboiled from 20-30 minutes depending upon size.

Cover all with a piece of canvas that completely protects the whole bake, taking care that as little steam as possible escapes around the edges. Many experts agree that no seaweed should be placed on top of the bake. Small stones can be placed on top of the canvas around edges; make sure canvas does not touch hot rocks around the edges. Keep stones covered with seaweed to make sure the canvas does not burn. After being well covered, the bake can remain for about one hour. Lift the edge of canvas and if the lobster nearest the edge is done, you are ready. If not, continue cooking a little longer until done. Gather the crowd around to watch the grand opening!

Note: If anyone is interested in doing a kitchen stovetop clambake in one pot, just get in touch with me and I'll share a recipe for a simpler method.

Salmon with Sunshine Sauce

What could be nicer for a "summer's arrived" meal than delicately poached salmon! This easily prepared recipe serves 6.

Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 2 shallots, finely chopped
- 6 (4-6 oz. salmon steaks)
- 1-1/2 cups champagne, sparkling white wine, or white grape juice
- 1/3 cup heavy cream
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- bunch of fresh dill leaves, chopped

Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add shallots and cook until softened, 3-4 minutes. Place salmon fillets in skillet on top of shallots, in a single layer. Add champagne and bring to a simmer. Cover and simmer until salmon looks opaque, about 6-8 minutes. Remove salmon to a platter and cover with foil to keep warm. On high heat, boil cooking liquid until it is reduced by half. Add cream and boil until sauce has thickened enough to coat a wooden spoon. Season with salt and pepper and stir in dill. Serve salmon with sauce spooned over the top. Serve with rice or salad of choice.

Heavenly Fruit Salad

A refreshing salad to serve at brunch, lunch, or even with barbecued poultry and seafood. 12-14 servings; recipe may easily be halved, if desired.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup water
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons lime juice
- 1-1/2 teaspoons chopped, fresh mint
- scant teaspoon aniseed
- 5 cups cubed watermelon
- 3 cups cubed cantaloupe
- 3 cups cubed honeydew melon
- 2 sliced peaches
- 1 cup Bing cherries, pitted

In saucepan, bring first 5 ingredients to a boil; boil for 2 minutes and then remove from heat. Cover and cool syrup completely. Combine fruit in a large bowl; add syrup and stir to coat. Cover and chill at least 2 hours before serving, stirring occasionally. Drain before serving if desired.

Cooking Corner

with Nancy Adams



Minestrone Salad

A variation on the well-known Italian pasta soup. Plan to cook the potatoes ahead of time for this salad. 3-4 servings.

Ingredients:

- Dressing:
 - 3/4 cup good quality mayonnaise
 - 1/2 teaspoon freshly grated black pepper
 - 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons minced, fresh basil or 1 teaspoon dried
- 1/2 teaspoon minced garlic

Salad:

- 1/8 lb. uncooked ditalini pasta (or other small tube-shaped pasta)
- 1/2 cup canned chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1/2 cup of each of the following, diced into 1/2-inch cubes: zucchini, carrots, celery, cooked red-skinned new potatoes
- 1/3 cup finely chopped red onions
- 1/2 cup green beans, blanched and cut in 1/2-inch long pieces
- 1 tomato, cut into wedges
- 1/3 cup or more grated Parmesan cheese

Mix mayonnaise with dressing seasonings and set aside. Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain pasta and rinse under cold water; place in mixing bowl and toss with a little olive oil to prevent sticking. Combine pasta with all vegetables except tomato wedges. Fold in 1/2 cup or all of the dressing to taste. Can be prepared in the morning and refrigerated or made just prior to eating. If refrigerated, remove 30 minutes before serving and let stand at room temperature. Garnish each serving with Parmesan cheese and tomato wedges. If desired, serve on lettuce leaves.

Nancy Adams is a native of Peterborough and resides in Hancock. She and her husband, Bud, have raised four sons. She has been featured as one of Yankee Magazine's great New England cooks. Nancy welcomes suggestions – send them to: Nancy P. Adams, PO Box 23, Hancock, NH 03449.

Annual Rock Swap Supper At Gilsum Church

On Saturday, June 23rd, Gilsum Church will hold its Annual Rock Swap Supper with seatings at 4:45 p.m., 5:45 p.m., and 6:45 p.m.

The all-you-can eat menu includes ham, baked beans potato salad, and pies for dessert. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for kids 10 and under. There is a limited number of tickets sold per seating; they will be available at the Rock Swap behind Gilsum School, at the door, or by calling 603-352-0455.

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