

Coming soon:
The Winter-Spring
Cooking Party
Schedule

Girls' Night Out

Easy & Elegant
Entertaining

Cooking for 1 or 2

Cooking with Kids

Visit the web at

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I lived in and near Geneva, Switzerland for many years. It is a beautiful city and I have many wonderful memories of my time there. In early December Geneva celebrates the Escalade, a cross between Independence Day, Halloween and Thanksgiving.

While most of the ancient walls around Geneva have disappeared, they protected city in 1602 when the evil Duke of Savoy laid siege on the city. Throughout the night of December 11th and 12th the Savoyards attacked, attempting to scale the city walls. This attempt to scale the walls gave the battle, and later the holiday, its name - Escalade. All seemed lost until Mother Royaume, defending the lives and liberty of her 14 children, threw a caldron of boiling soup over the wall and onto the invading soldiers. Burned and bruised by the steaming soup and heavy iron pot, the Savoyards realized they were no match for la Mère and the fearless Genevois patriots. They turned tail and headed back to Savoy.

Every year, Geneva takes a week to celebrate the Escalade. There is a parade, proclamations are read and the Escalade song is sung. More important, the chocolate shops bring out a special treat. Chocolate caldrons crammed with marzipan vegetables fill the shops. These luscious pots, marmites in French, come in all sizes.

Escalade celebrations include a sort of Trick or Treat. Children dressed in costume, ride the tram and go door-to-door singing the Escalade song. In appreciation, people hand out coins and candies. The Escalade song has a seemingly endless number of verses and the children of Geneva will continue to sing, and sing, and sing until they get their treat.

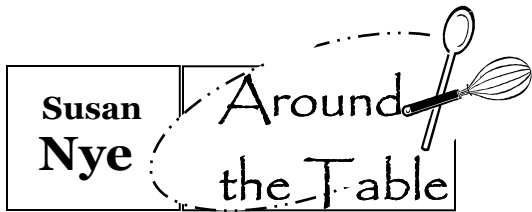
My favorite Escalade event is the fun run. The Course de l'Escalade winds through the Old Town and around the Cathedral. Children and adults of all shapes, ages and abilities dash over the cobblestones and are rewarded at the finish line with, what else, soup. The town fills with runners and spectators and a carnival atmosphere pervades. Many runners dress in costumes; Mère Royaume, clowns and other colorful characters. Runners have been known to do the entire Course wearing skis or linked together as a 20 legged caterpillar.

I ran the Course de l'Escalade many times but confess that I never ran in costume. Last year I did dress up as a Christmas tree for the Reindeer Run. The Reindeer Run winds through New London, past the elementary school, the Barn Players and down Barrett Road with views of Mount Sunapee. There are no cobblestones, but the streets can be a bit icy.

Many Swiss families celebrate the Escalade with a dinner. The traditional menu includes soup, turkey, cardoons, a relative of the artichoke, and a giant chocolate marmite. At the end of the dinner, the oldest and youngest at the party take a rolling pin and smash the chocolate marmite – chocolate and marzipan fly and a free-for-all ensues.

December is a great time to make a big cauldron of soup. It is a handy supper when everyone is busy with holiday preparations, parties and shopping. And while you may not need it to ward off Savoyards, soup can be very comforting on a cold winter night.

Bon appétit! – Susan



Vive la Soupe

Holiday 2006/volume 12

September 7th
 Cooking for 1 or 2
 Chicken 3-Ways

September 14th
 Cooking for 1 or 2
 Pasta with Panache

October 9th
 Cooking with Kids
 Pasta Party

October 12th
 Girls' Night Out
 Soup's On

October 26th
 Girls' Night Out
 French Country Cooking

November 4th
 Easy & Elegant Entertaining
 Hors d'Oeuvre Party

November 11th
 Easy & Elegant Entertaining
 Thanksgiving 202

December 9th
 Cooking with Kids
 Christmas Cookies

Ask about
 Cooking with Kids
 Birthday Parties

Additional dates and special
 programs available on request
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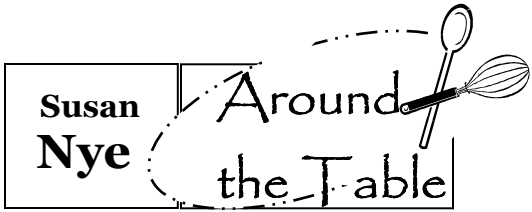
Soupe d'Escarole

Originally a spinach soup, I switched to escarole during the recent e. coli scare. I think the new version is even better than the original.

- 1 large leek, thinly sliced
- 2 carrots, finely chopped
- 2 stalks celery, finely chopped
- 1 potato, finely chopped
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon bacon fat
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon dried tarragon
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 pound escarole, cut into slivers
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 5 cups chicken stock
- 1/2 cup half and half
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. In a large oven proof casserole, melt the bacon and butter. Add the leeks, onions, garlic, carrot, celery, potatoes, balsamic vinegar, tarragon and thyme, bay leaf, salt and pepper. Roast in the oven until vegetables are tender and lightly caramelized, about 30 minutes.
3. Add the escarole and toss. Return to the oven and roast for 10 minutes. Move the pot to the stove top, add the wine, stock, and bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Reduce heat and cook for 10 minutes.
4. Remove the soup from the heat. Puree half of the soup in a blender and return the puree to the soup pot. Add the half and half, stir well and heat over low until heated through; adjust the seasoning and serve.

Serves 6-8



Vive la Soupe

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