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Contact Susan Nye at susannye@tds.net or 603/526 7319

More information the web at www.susannye.com

There is a black cloud hanging overhead, literally and figuratively. It's raining today. It might not qualify as pouring and no one is snoring but it is cold, just teetering above freezing and the rain is slow and steady. It is in fact relentless and I don't want to imagine the damage the rain is doing to the ski slopes. And spring skiing.

After freezing cold and biting winds, New England skiers deserve a little spring skiing. It's time to stop looking like the Michelin man, put away big, bulky parkas and heavy fleece. It's time to dig out a comfortable, old sweatshirt or windbreaker, trade in goggles for sunglasses and bare our heads to the sun. The air is not just warmer; it is more festive. Up and down the mountain, there is a general feeling of; well there is no easy way to express it, except to yell Yahoooooo!

Warmer weather brings out a whole new crop of skiers. We used to call them the snow bunnies. They are dressed to the nines. No, you won't find them in old sweatshirts or ancient windbreakers from LL Bean. Their outfits are perfect, never outdated or faded by years of winter sun, and color coordinated to match their skis, boots and poles. They bask in the sunshine, holding court on the terrace in front of the lodge. Some days these beauties even take a run, maybe two.

When we were little we were always under pressure to make sure our season pass paid for itself. I think the fathers in the neighborhood had a little competition going; who could get the most runs out of their season pass. We skied at King Ridge. If we bought the pass before Thanksgiving, our family skied for \$108. That's all five of us for the entire season. In a good year, between weekends and Christmas and February vacations, we got about thirty days of skiing.

We were expected to ski hard, no matter how cold or icy, from nine in the morning until four in the afternoon. Breaks were to be kept at a minimum and runs to a maximum. The dads would quiz us at lunch time and again on the way home, "how many runs had we taken?" An on-going tally was kept throughout the winter. I think their goal was to bring the cost per run down to a penny. A goal I'm sure we never met, although our friends, the Pevensers, might have come close.

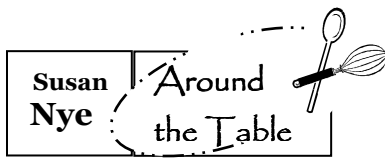
On freezing days in January, Dad or one of his friends often caught us huddled around the fireplace. No pity was taken. Frigid temperatures or not, we were invariably sent back out into the torturous cold. My Dad's favorite trick was to put us in ski school on the coldest days. It was his way of ensuring that we stayed outside for at least an hour.

But in March the weather was warm, the sun high in the sky and no tricks were necessary. Spring skiing was the treat we could only dream of during the dark days of December and the arctic cold of January. Before snowmaking, spring skiing was a dream that didn't always come true. Ski resorts didn't boast of deep bases of fifty, sixty or more inches and had trouble recovering from early spring rain showers. King Ridge was usually washed out by St. Paddy's Day.

Some habits not only die hard, they are passed on. With the first day of spring rapidly approaching, a friend (and a dad) recently asked me how many days I'd managed to ski this winter. A quick and dirty calculation and I figure I'm looking at about 800 runs, probably more. Enjoy the rest of the ski season,

Bon appétit!

Susan



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### Traditional Cheese Fondue

*Before you hang up your skis, why not have one last après-ski fondue. A mix of cheeses is best; gruyere and emmental are most common and easiest to find. If you can track some down, try adding Fribourg vacherine or a combination of tilsit and appenzell. Enjoy!*

Serves 6

- 1 clove garlic, halved
- 1 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 2 1/2 pounds cheese
  - Use 1/2 gruyere and 1/2 emmental
  - Or try 1/2 gruyere and 1/2 Fribourg vacherin or 1/2 gruyere, 1/4 tilsit and 1/4 appenzell
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 ounce Kirsch
- Freshly ground pepper
- Crusty country bread cut or torn into bite sized pieces

Special equipment: a fondue pot, stand for the pot, alcohol burner and long handled fondue forks.

1. Grate the cheeses and toss to combine.
2. Mix the cornstarch with the Kirsch.
3. Rub the fondue pot with the garlic. Drop both clove halves in the bottom of the pot. Add the wine to the pot and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Add the cheese. Stir constantly until the cheese is melted and bubbling. Add the kirsch/corn starch mixture and stir to combine. Sprinkle with freshly ground pepper.
4. Set the fondue pot on its stand over a low flame. Pierce a piece of bread with a fondue fork and swirl it through the cheese.

*For cooking tips, recipes and more, follow me on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/susannye> or Facebook.*