



## Private Chef, Catering & Cooking Classes

I'd be delighted to help you with any and all of your celebrations.

## Join Me Around the Table for an Eat Well-Do Good Dinner!

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Enjoy delicious food & fun!

## Treat Yourself to an Around the Table Chef's Apron

Cook like a chef or just look like  
one!

You can find lots more  
information on the web at  
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[www.susannye.wordpress.com](http://www.susannye.wordpress.com)

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For many years I lived a stone's throw from the French border in Geneva. It was wonderful. All of it! The charm of the international city. The magnificent view of Mont Blanc framed by the lake and vineyards. Cozy dinners on Saturday evening and Sunday morning trips to the Farmer's Market. And most of all, the dear friends I made along the way.

Since I was less than a mile from the border, I was inspired by the French and adopted their custom of four and five course dinners. Eee gads, you say. Were you nuts? Probably. Maybe. No, not really. It took a while to figure out these grand feasts but it's much easier than you might think. Any success was due to equal parts good food, good wine and even better friends.

Dinner for eight was my favorite. Someone (I don't remember who) once told me that eight is the perfect number for dinner table conversation. Think about it. Someone interesting is always within easy reach and two or three conversations can bubble and flow simultaneously. Not interested in fly fishing? Turn your head and chat about the new fall fashions or latest best seller. Plus with eight around the table, the party is intimate enough for everyone to share in one discussion. Especially if the topic is food. Did you ever notice that dinner conversations almost always turn to favorite restaurants, recipes and fabulous food finds? There is something about a good meal that brings out the foodie in all of us.

**My parties began** with warm greetings and trois bises (three kisses). Soon everyone was chatting by the fire, sipping a glass of wine and nibbling a few nuts or olives. Unlike Americans, the French don't go to town with lots of fancy appetizers. From time to time I worried that someone might be disappointed by the scant hors d'oeuvres. On those occasions, I deftly (or maybe not so deftly) snuck in a quick description of what was behind the wonderful aromas wafting from the kitchen.

**After an hour or so, we would drift over to the table.** I usually started the meal with soup, especially on chilly fall evenings. My favorite is a wonderful concoction of wild mushrooms\* with just a touch of cognac and cream. Since a five course dinner is a marathon not a sprint, you need to keep the servings small; I've discovered that a teacup makes a lovely little soup bowl.

**And on to the main course.** The conversation ambled and rambled over roast chicken\*, boeuf bourguignon\* or roasted salmon. Talk might lag for a moment while a green bean was speared or a sauce savored, but only for a moment. Before you knew it, the contented silence was broken by a spirited discussion on where to find the best steak au poivre, morning croissant or wild mushrooms.

**Two down, two or three more to go.** The main event was followed by salad with a classic French vinaigrette\*, nothing fussy, just a bit of green to refresh the palate. Sometime I combined the salad with the cheese course but more often waited to present a gorgeous platter of local cheeses. There's nothing wrong with a little drama at the dinner table as long as it doesn't come with tears.

**And finally sweets...** followed by coffee and cognac. And chocolates, if I remembered to buy them! Many, maybe most, French hosts buy dessert at the corner patisserie. French tarts and gateaux are works of confectionary art. Rule breaker than I am, I usually made one of my favorite American sweets. (Or let my friend Julie bring one of hers along.) A homey apple crisp\* gave a taste of America to my European friends and a taste of home to fellow expatriates.

Around midnight, sometimes later, the evening wound down. After extended goodbyes and last minute plans for Sunday morning coffee at the Market, trois bises were again exchanged. Soon the last guest was gone, leaving behind a sink full of dirty dishes and a lingering sense of contentment and friendship.

Bon appétit!

\* You can find recipes for these dishes on my website at [www.susannye.com](http://www.susannye.com).

### Lemon Roasted Salmon with Beurre Blanc

*Invite your friends over for an elegant but easy dinner!*

Serves 8

Juice and grated zest of 1 lemon  
 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard  
 Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste  
 2 tablespoons olive oil  
 1 (about 3 pounds) salmon fillet, skin-on  
 Beurre Blanc (recipe follows)

Preheat the oven to 500 degrees

Whisk the lemon juice and zest, mustard, salt and pepper together in a small bowl. Add the olive oil and whisk to combine.

Place the salmon on a sheet pan that has been covered with aluminum foil. Spread the marinade on the fish and let it sit for 15 minutes.

Roast the salmon at 500 degrees for 12 to 15 minutes or until it is almost cooked through.

Transfer the fish to a platter, loosely cover with foil and let it rest for 10-15 minutes. Cut the fish into wedges and serve with a drizzle of Beurre Blanc.

### Beurre Blanc

Makes about 1 cup

1/4 cup champagne or white wine vinegar  
 1 cup dry white wine  
 1/4 cup finely chopped shallots  
 Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper  
 6-8 ounces cold unsalted butter cut into small cubes  
 Juice of 1/2 lemon  
 1 tablespoon fresh, chopped tarragon

Put the vinegar, white wine and shallots in a heavy saucepan, season with salt and pepper and simmer over medium heat until almost dry, about 10 minutes.

Reduce the heat to low and whisk in the butter a few cubes at a time. Whisk in the lemon juice and tarragon and check for seasoning.



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