

Dish!

Chitchat, tips & whimsy for foodies at heart

Someone's in the Kitchen with Betsy

Love to entertain? Daunted by the thought of trying your hand at your own culinary creations? Looking for a unique — and extraordinarily fun — experience for your next dinner party? How about hosting an Ovens to Betsy cooking class!

Chef Betsy makes learning how to cook fun and enlightening — in the comforts of your own kitchen. Not only will you savor a delectable meal, you'll also have the opportunity to participate in preparing it. Chef Betsy helps demystify the secrets of cookery by teaching various techniques in a lively and informative manner.

Tracy Anderson of Gal Friday Organization Service, who recently hosted a Spanish Dinner Party, found the class to be a great way to bring friends together. “We had so much fun learning about the various Spanish ingredients used in each of the dishes, but the best part was sitting down at the end to a fabulous feast!”

Chef Betsy strives to make each dish as authentic as possible, and therefore features Spanish chorizo, smoked sweet paprika, Spanish arborio rice and the finest saffron for the Mediterranean paella. Fire-roasted organic tomatoes and Spanish extra-virgin olive oil add extra depth to the gazpacho. She purchases many of the ingredients for the class at The Spanish Table near Pike Place Market (see p. 3 for more info).

Each class is designed for 6 to 12 people, and you and your guests will receive all the recipes used in the class. So whether you're a culinary novice who doesn't know your braiser from your brasier, or you're a confident cook who's looking to fine-tune your skills, Ovens to Betsy has a class for you (see sidebar for current course offerings).



Chef Betsy demonstrates beating cream cheese and sugar for a Spanish cheesecake

Class Offerings

App-solutely Fabulous!

Spend more time with your guests and less time in the kitchen! Learn essential techniques and make-ahead tips for stuffed and filled appetizers.

- Roasted Feta Mushrooms
- Tabbouleh
- Cherry Tomatoes with Blue Cheese & Bacon

Asian Inspirations

Explore and savor the magical cuisine of Asia. You'll learn about Asian flavors and how to balance these components to create an engaging presentation.

- Sake-Soy Glazed Chicken
- Creamy Wasabi Mashed Potatoes
- Asian Veggie Sauté

Spanish Dinner Party

Transport yourself to the different regions of Spain! Top-quality Spanish ingredients are used to create an authentic Spanish menu.

- Classic Andalusia Gazpacho
- Mediterranean Paella
- Spanish Cheesecake

Around the World on a Small Plate

Learn how to prepare tasty world-cuisine appetizers. Recipes can be the beginning of a great meal, or combine them for a simple, yet sumptuous feast.

- Indonesian Chicken Satay with Peanut Dipping Sauce
- Greek Minced Beef and Currant Pitas
- Italian Caprese Crostini
- Mexican Roasted Pumpkin Seed Dip

More offerings coming soon! Check www.ovenstobetsy.com for more info.



Ovens to Betsy serves up new *Dish!*

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Dish!*, the bi-monthly newsletter from Ovens to Betsy personal chef service. Each issue will feature the latest news from Ovens to Betsy, profiles on food-related companies and personalities, as well as cooking tips and techniques that you can use to create your own scrumptious meals.

If you know someone who would like to receive *Dish!*, simply email Chef Betsy at chef@ovenstobetsy.com. *Bon Appétit!*

Vol. 1, Issue 1 June 2003

Inside this issue:

The “Whatcha Got” Meal	2
Focus On: The Spanish Table	3
Freezing Techniques: A Primer	3
Profile: Health by Romi	4

What's For Dinner? Whipping up the 'Whatcha Got' Meal!

Personal chefs perform magic for their clients in the form of expertly prepared, healthy and delicious meals that are ready in a snap. But what happens when WE get home, tired, sore and famished?

Where's our own personal chef when we need them?

Fortunately the creativity and resourcefulness that steered us toward this field come in handy when we're trying to figure out what to prepare for dinner for our own families. It's what I call the "Whatcha Got" meal.

I always shop for all my produce, meat and dairy products the morning of my cook date to ensure my clients receive the freshest ingredients possible. If I have anything left over, I take it with me.

This particularly happens with cheeses; many recipes call for just ¼ cup of cheese, yet the smallest package the store carries contains two cups. I hate to waste food, so rather than throw it out, it comes home with me.

With all the cooking I do, in no time my refrigerator bulges with

extraneous food. I can't tell you how many times my husband has hounded me to clear out the refrigerator of myriad half-packages of cheese!



Whatcha Got: SpanakóBetsy

That's how the "Whatcha Got" meal was born in our house. It's when you open the refrigerator, look at what ya got, and figure out a way to whip it up into a delicious meal for you and your family.

The idea is to come up with something that's a bit unusual – perhaps a subtle spin on an old classic. I've added Kalamata olives, feta cheese, roasted red peppers and marinated artichokes to turn traditional lasagna into a wonderful Greek-inspired meal. Sautéed mushrooms and shallots combine with blue cheese for a filling for pork roulade topped with blue cheese sauce.

So if you're looking to hone your cooking skills, or you'd just like to clean out your refrigerator, the Whatcha Got meal is a fun way to come up with new culinary treats. And who knows, your creation may become a new family favorite!

Bon Appétit!

Recipe: SpanakóBetsy

Inspired by the Greek dish Spanópokita, with spinach, ricotta and feta cheeses.

1 c. finely chopped onion
7 T. olive oil, divided use
5 eggs
1 ½ c. small curd cottage cheese or ricotta
1 ½ c. Monterey Jack cheese
½ c. minced Italian parsley
4 oz. turkey breast slices, diced
¼ c. green olives, chopped (optional)
Salt & pepper to taste
16 phyllo sheets
¾ c. unsalted butter
12 oz. jarred Marinara sauce

Preheat the oven to 350. Sauté the onions in 2 T. olive oil until just tender. In a large bowl, beat the eggs. Add the cheeses, parsley, turkey, olives (if using) and another 2 T. of oil. Season with salt & pepper to taste.

Melt ¾ c. butter with remaining 3 T. olive oil. Brush an 8" x 12" baking dish. Cut 8 sheets of phyllo 1" larger than the baking dish. Keep the unused phyllo covered with a dampened towel. Brush each layer of phyllo with butter/oil mixture and place in the bottom of the baking dish.

Add the filling and spread evenly. Top with about ½ of the marinara sauce (save some sauce to serve over the top). Cut 8 more sheets of phyllo to the size of the top of the baking dish. Brush each layer with butter/oil mixture. Tuck in the edges of the phyllo and butter the top layer again. Score the top of the dough with a sharp knife into serving-size portions. Bake for 55-60 minutes or until puffed & golden. Cool briefly and serve with remaining marinara sauce.



Dinners in a Snap: Taking Advantage of Prepared Foods

Hectic schedules may prevent you from preparing your meals from scratch, but that doesn't mean you have to settle for take-out. By combining a few already-prepared foods with your own pantry staples, you can have dinner on the table in minutes!

Rotisserie Chicken

Many upscale grocery stores now

offer full rotisserie chickens at reasonable prices. Cut one up for filling burritos, topping a pizza (using a prepared crust) or tossing with packaged Caesar salad greens and dressing for an entrée salad.

Salad Bars

Today's salad bar has a variety of fresh vegetables that you can mix & match for a stir-fry — simply add

your favorite sauce. You can purchase in small amounts (great for single people), plus all the chopping has been done for you!

Pasta Sauces

Take a top quality marinara sauce, add some Kalamata olives & capers, and Voila! you have a puttanesca sauce! Serve with fettuccine and top with feta cheese — Yum!

Focus On: The Spanish Table

While Seattle may not be blessed with the climate of Spain, thanks to The Spanish Table we can at least enjoy some of the authentic flavors of the region. Located on Western Avenue at the top of the Pike Street Hill Climb, The Spanish Table features a host of delectable treats, wines, spices and cookware that are a must-have for your next paella party. They even have a coffee table-sized paella pan that serves 200 people!

For her Spanish Dinner Party cooking class, Chef Betsy uses Bilbao chorizo, which provides an incredible taste and slightly chewy texture to her paella. Bomba rice forms the base; it's more expensive than traditional Arborio rice, but the flavor and texture are superb. The rice absorbs more liquid, resulting

in a much more flavorful dish. Pure Spanish saffron threads are steeped in chicken broth, and El Rey smoked sweet paprika rounds out the paella.

To give the gazpacho more depth, Chef Betsy uses the richly flavored Capirete sherry vinegar. She finishes the gazpacho with a splash of Luis Herrera Almazara extra-virgin olive oil. This delicious oil is an un-pressed, free-run oil from fruit, milled with ancient granite stones.

The Spanish Table features a tasting room upstairs where you can sample the various olive oils and vinegars, and free wine tastings are held every Saturday from 2 to 5 pm. You can also nibble on Spanish salads, sandwiches and cheeses in the small lunch café.



Quick Primer: Freezing Techniques

Ever wanted to prepare a whole weeks' worth of meals in advance, yet not sure what freezes well? The following are some personal chef tips & tricks!

Packaging

To prevent freezer burn, use only sturdier freezer-grade wraps, including air-proof plastic wrap, freezer aluminum foil and freezer Ziplock bags.

Sauces

To protect food from freezer burn, prepare double the amount of sauce the recipe calls for.

Baked Goods

Most baked goods freeze well, however, cornbread and biscuits tend to get too dry and crumbly for freezing unless you add more fat to the recipe.

Dairy Products and Eggs

Generally, the more fat the dairy product has, the less likely it is to

separate after freezing. When using sour cream, yogurt, cream cheese or mayonnaise, try adding a touch of thickener to help it bind.

Meats

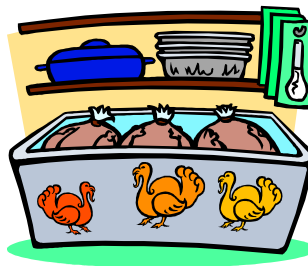
The best cuts for freezing are loin, ground and top round. Partially freeze the meat first before adding marinade so that it's not over-marinated.

Chicken and Poultry

When freezing, dark meat remains moister than light, and pieces on the bone remain moister and retain more flavor than boneless.

Fish

Take extra care when packaging to keep raw fish thoroughly protected. Sturdier fish such as tuna and salmon freeze well in sauces.



Vegetables

Many vegetables freeze well when partially cooked. Blanch vegetables first in boiling water, then plunge them into an ice-water bath.

Rice, Grains & Legumes

Fully cooked grains and grain dishes freeze well; simply add a splash of water or broth when reheating. Leave bean dishes a bit "saucy" so that they can absorb liquid as they cool without compromising the quality or appearance of the dish.

Pasta

Cook pasta extra "al dente," shock in cold water and toss with oil before freezing. Sturdier shapes such as fusilli, farfalle and rigatoni are more reliable when freezing.

If you're preparing a dish that you're not sure will freeze well, send Chef Betsy an email at chef@ovenstobetsy.com and I'd be happy to provide the answer!



Ovens to Betsy!
Personal Chef Service

Delectable dishes prepared to your wishes

Betsy Rogers, owner and chef

706 N. 67th Street
Seattle, WA 98103
Kitchen: (206) 788-0280
Mobile: (206) 369-1783
chef@ovenstobetsy.com
www.ovenstobetsy.com

Know someone who loves food and would like to be added to the *Dish!* mailing list? Forward their name and address to the email above!

Privacy ➔ Your name and contact information is for Ovens to Betsy's use only. Please contact Chef Betsy if you wish to be removed from the mailing list.

PROFILE: Health by Romi

Do you feel you need to eat better, yet have no idea what a healthy diet is? Health by Romi teaches individuals and families how to easily incorporate healthy eating into their busy lives. Through personalized, in-home coaching, Romi assesses your habits, lifestyle and medical history to create realistic and sustainable solutions to get you making better choices for better health.

Romi helps you remove harmful foods from your kitchen and teaches you how to stock your cupboards and refrigerator with healthier alternatives. Understanding that eating is one of the great pleasures in life, she also shows you how to shop efficiently and economically and to prepare delicious meals for your entire family based on your cooking level and desires. And for those on medically directed diets, Romi helps you immediately implement the necessary changes to promote a return to health. She has extensive experience implementing appropriate diets for diabetes, hypothyroidism,

Parkinson's Disease, MS, candida, rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia, obesity and food allergies, among others.

Romi's personal struggle with chronic illness and the central role nutrition played in her healing process prompted her to turn a lifelong passion for nutrition, cooking and health into a career. She has helped transform the eating habits of individuals and entire families, giving them the tools to change their relationship with food and encourage optimal health.



So whether you want to drop extra pounds and reach your natural weight, need to fight an illness, are pregnant or breastfeeding and want to do what's best for you and your baby, or simply want to learn to make better choices for better health, Romi can help.

For more information, check out www.healthbyromi.com. And for a FREE consultation contact Romi at (206) 947-5792 or romi@healthbyromi.com.