

## Marcia's Story – That Beet Slaw

You know how, when you comprehend something new, the whole world seems to be about that one thing? Well, for me, the world is all about that beet slaw.

Let me back up. I am a private cooking instructor. In my business, people come to my house and pay top dollar to cook a sumptuous dinner together, then sit down for a dinner party. They pay for some new recipes and for the chance to cook together, something pretty rare in our world today. Often, the menus include what Dor would call 'whole foods'-fresh vegetables and fruits, whole grains perhaps, animal protein and fats, olive and nut oils. Unfortunately, I've also been bathing in heavy cream and wading through butter and sugar, teaching folks how to prepare what I call "entertainment food". It's elegant fare, and I'm proud of what I have created. But a dinner party for them has become a lifestyle for me, and I just can't make a steady diet of these things and feel well.

Recently, however, I have become aware of pre-diabetic issues within my family, and so I attended a Suppers lunch. At my first Suppers meeting, a mother with two young children said "It was worth coming to this program for that one beet slaw recipe. My kids eat huge servings of raw beets whenever I make the slaw."

I was skeptical. It is easy to fall in love with a food when you love the ideas around it. And it is easy to fall in love with the Suppers ideas. Fill your plate with the good stuff and ease out the bad, cook and eat with purpose in a communal setting, listen to your body. But that won't cut it with *my* students, or with my family for that matter.

At the next Suppers meeting, we made the slaw again, this time with a mixture of sunny disks of golden beets and fine shreds of the blood red (owing to me experimenting with the blades on the food processor). A simple white balsamic vinaigrette and that was it. People just inhaled it.

At home I shredded up the deeply colored beets with over-wintered parsnips and raw sweet potatoes! I added the first of this year's lovage and sorrel, then sprinkled toasted pumpkin seeds. I made a simple vinaigrette from olive oil and my special wine vinegar. I've been working on a vinegar made of leftover wine aged with a 'mother' containing those enzymes and pro-biotics that help us to digest the vegetables. (Most folks with old-world grandmothers know just what I'm talking about.)

My husband couldn't stop eating it. That's not the amazing part. The amazing part is that my college age son went nuts for it too. I'd given him some leftover salad in a jar one day in the car as he was heading for his dorm. A few days later, he brought the jar back. He had a few of his college friends in tow (he never does that!) and here are his exact words:

*"How can I get more of this, and how soon?"*

I packed him off to the grocery store to buy the beets.

I realized that what the Suppers philosophy has going for it, is one of the major culinary principles of taste. If your body is starving for certain nutrients, it goes into orbit when you feed it those foods. It comes off as the most exquisite flavor imaginable. The Suppers program operates on the principle that we as a culture have deprived ourselves of the nutrients and the community that gives a meal its soul, and we've filled the void with other things. Suppers is about reincorporating that good stuff into our lives in an intentional, skillful and joyful way. The other stuff? Eventually, it just won't fit on the plate.