

# Girlfriends in the **KITCHEN**



Issue #3

From the Kitchen of Marybeth Gregg

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**This month** I have been thinking a lot about those sit-down, middle-of-the-week family meals that are just a memory to many people. This was brought to mind by a commercial that is currently running on TV. You may have seen it. The dad, boy and girl are sitting at an empty table, and wondering why they are there - is it a family meeting? No one has a clue. Then the mom pops into the room, all happy and smiling, and then she plops down a basket of fried chicken and announces- "Dinner" The family is delighted. Well, I had three reactions to that message: how sad, couldn't she at least serve the greasy chicken on a platter, and then, well, she is trying anyway, so that's a good start.

Fact: less than half of American families have dinner together. And when they do, they spend less than 20 minutes on the meal. I do know more and more clearly how important our relationships are, and whether there are two or ten in your family, eating together needs to be thought of again as a pleasure, not a chore. When we do sit down and eat together, you send out a wonderful message- to your kids, to your spouse or friend or other love, "You are very special to me to spend this time together." What could be more important and fundamental than that?

So enjoy the information in this issue and delight in the changing season,

Wishing you the Best of Spring,

*Marybeth Gregg*

## ***Tip of the Month***

### **Spring Arrives March 20th. - So what's new?**

Let's get ready for the new season –Spring can't be early enough for me this year. As you run through the grocery store, stop for a few minutes in produce and see what is fresh, abundant and on sale. The blood oranges (I really hate that name but the fruit is delicious) are coming to an end so scoop them up. I've also been devouring fresh mangoes, which seem to be plentiful and currently at a great price. Asparagus are coming into the produce isles in abundance. Look for asparagus that has been stored, stem down, in water, and not dried out at the bottom. Tips should also be tightly closed and not mushy. Go to my website, [www.cook-with-confidence.com](http://www.cook-with-confidence.com) , for an outrageously delicious soup recipe – easy to make, as usually, Cream of Asparagus and Artichoke Soup. You will love it.

Mangoes are known as 'fruit of the gods' in India, and when you develop a taste for them, you will agree. This month, most mangoes come from Haiti. Those from Mexico will come in late March, and from Florida starting in May. It is one of the richest sources of beta-carotene available. When it is ripe and juicy and fragrant, there is nothing like it. It just takes me away to Hawaii or to other tropical places with warm ocean breezes. Be careful how you handle mangoes since they can bruise easily. To find out if it is ripe, press your thumb against the skin very gently. It should push in just a little and have a sweet smell. If it is ripe, there may be some black specks. If they are really soft and black, don't choose them since they will be too mushy inside. After you have finished reading all of this newsletter, I wouldn't want to miss out and not come back to finish this newsletter - go to a website such as [www.Freshmangos.com](http://www.Freshmangos.com), to find out how to store and easily cut a mango.

The recipe for Mango Glazed Shrimp below is so delicious-you'll get rave reviews. The glaze can also be used for chicken for those of you who don't care for seafood.

### ***Make It Easy On Yourself***

For all of us who have little time during the week to cook, but a little bit of extra time on the weekends, make a couple of recipes in which the entree can be cooked and frozen until needed. You can also double your recipe and freeze the extra. This way, all you will need to do is to reheat it in the microwave or on top of the stove, and make a quick salad or side. (Be sure to label it- it's so easy to stick something in the freezer and wonder what it is several months later and then it gets thrown away.) Quick Tip- Cut your ingredients into a smaller size- it will cook faster.

Some new hints for easy clean-up, too –

One of the worst jobs it to clean a pan that has burnt food stuck to the bottom. To remove burnt-on food more easily from your fry pan or skillet, simply add a drop or two of dish soap and about an inch of water , and bring to a boil on stovetop -- skillet will be much easier to clean. Let it cool a bit before cleaning.

Something I just learned this week: To clean and deodorize your microwave without chemicals, put half a cup of water in a microwave proof dish with one tablespoon of baking soda in the microwave. Cook on high for one minute. The steam from the water loosens the dirt and make it easy to wipe it clean and baking soda absorbs odors. A cup of water with lemon juice, also cooked for a minute, will make it also smell wonderfully fresh.

I will be adding more information to upcoming newsletters and to my website on how to make it easier for you to prepare foods ahead of time, with fewer ingredients, so that you can have time to enjoy yourself and your family time together. The recipe below has great make-ahead tips for you this month.

### ***Special Feature***

#### **ANNOUNCING A SIMPLE, LITTLE CONTEST**

So, back to my initial thoughts on eating together, I would like to generate some more discussion about this somewhat controversial topic, and without trying to impose any guilt (honest), I would love to hear from you about your thoughts, your tips, your successes and funny stories in the area of cooking and eating together as a family.

I think that this is an important enough topic so I am announcing my first 'contest'. There will be two prizes as an incentive for sharing your stories- one for the best recipe for cooking an easy, family meal and another for the funniest story about family meals. The prize for each of the two winners is a \$10.00 gift certificate to Williams-Sonoma, or \$10.00 of on one of my cooking workshops. Send me an email to enter – [Marybeth@cook-with-confidence.com](mailto:Marybeth@cook-with-confidence.com)

Just a few contest rules-

- 1) Contest is void where prohibited by law. Subject to all federal, state and local laws and regs - you know, the usual stuff.
- 2) Entries must be received via email by midnight, March 27th, 2005
- 3) Entries will not be acknowledged or returned and your entry constitutes permission to edit, modify, publish and otherwise use the recipe in any way without compensation.
- 4) Prizes will be awarded no later than April 4th- unless I get swamped with entries so then give me two more weeks until April 18th. Prizes will be sent to you via USPS.

## ***Recipe of the Month***

This is my own recipe for Mango Glazed Shrimp, which is especially great this time of year – the glaze can be used on any grilled fish or chicken. Bring a little summer to March- we all need it badly! (The picture below of the shrimp recipe which follows is seen with Coconut Sorbet and you can find that recipe on my current website. Try it- it's delicious and easy, too. Both recipes and photos are in my upcoming cookbook.)

### **Mango-Glazed Shrimp**

Makes 4 servings.

1 mango, peeled, seeded, and diced	1/2 teaspoons hot pepper sauce
1 red pepper, diced large	2 tablespoons honey
2 tablespoons ketchup	2 teaspoons of extra virgin olive oil
Dash soy sauce	1 fresh lime, juiced
1 can mango nectar	3 tablespoons cilantro
1 clove garlic, sliced	2 tablespoons Thai fish sauce

12 extra jumbo shrimp or 1 pound extra large shrimp, peeled and deveined  
Lightly salt, to taste (remember fish and soy sauces are salty)

### **Mango Glaze**

In a food processor, combine mango, red pepper, ketchup, soy sauce, mango nectar, garlic, hot pepper sauce, honey, extra virgin olive oil, fresh lime juice, cilantro and fish sauce. Process until slightly chunky. Reserve 1 cup for serving after shrimp is cooked. Marinate shrimp up to 2 hours.

Grill shrimp and baste occasionally, for about 3-4 minutes. Shrimp will cook very quickly since it has been marinating. Remove from heat and serve. Garnish with fresh cilantro sprigs and extra mango slices if you have any left over.

Tips –

- Glaze can be made up to 3 days in advance. Stir before using.
- Mango nectar can be found in the Latin section of your supermarket.

In a food processor, combine mango, red pepper, ketchup, soy sauce, mango nectar, garlic, hot pepper sauce, honey, extra virgin olive oil, fresh lime juice, cilantro and fish sauce. Process until slightly chunky. Reserve 1 cup for serving after shrimp is cooked. Marinate shrimp up to 2 hours.

### ***Cooking Advice from Marybeth***

This is a new feature for you. Do you have a question about cooking? Ask Cooking Instructor Marybeth Gregg. Send your E-mail to [Marybeth@cook-with-confidence.com](mailto:Marybeth@cook-with-confidence.com). I will answer as many as I can for the next issue.

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## What is Cook-with-Confidence

As seen in a recent New York Times "Dining In" section on trends, the latest in cooking classes is learning at home. I have been teaching these programs for over two years and my students love the convenience and programs which are like a class and party at the same time!

This is a cooking school that comes to you. Wouldn't you like to learn to cook interesting and delicious new foods that you can cook in advance? And learn great techniques and shortcuts to great meals? Private or group cooking lessons are offered in your home. Learn basic techniques to intermediate skills with ease and have fun at the same time! These are hands-on classes - you get to try out your new skills and will be amazed at how well you do in a short amount of time! You get to learn by doing - new cuisines, new methods, new tastes.

**NEW PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION, GROUP OR CLUBS!** Aren't you always looking for a new and interesting speaker or activity for your meetings? Contact me for the latest program offerings. I provide great recipes and demonstrate new techniques and lots of delicious samples for your next meeting or event.

CHECK OUT MY WEBSITE FOR MORE RECIPES AND TIPS

Website- [www.cook-with-confidence.com](http://www.cook-with-confidence.com)

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Marybeth Gregg has been cooking, entertaining and giving cooking advice for almost 20 years. She is well-known for her wonderful cuisine and great parties. She started her successful cooking school two years ago. She has attended cooking schools in Chicago, Philadelphia and in the New York metropolitan area. She lives in central New Jersey and has been featured in the Asbury Park Press and the Coast Star newspapers and was one of only ten culinary experts to be invited to the Spring Lake Kitchen Tour this fall.

Marybeth is currently working on publishing a cookbook and a series of video tapes and dvd's of cooking lessons.

Vist my [Cook With Confidence Web Site](http://www.cook-with-confidence.com)  
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