



Thanksgiving for Two

Thanksgiving is certainly a time for gathering together. This year, our gathering was of two – just Gianna and David. It was by choice, having decided that, our lives being so full, and so full of people in a general way, rather than being a part of a party, we wanted to go out into the forest, and be... just us. It was a day of giving thanks, and we found ourselves in contemplative moods, writing things down: people, events and, you know, stuff, for which we were grateful. My list included all my friends and family, to be sure. My granddaughters give me particular joy. But I am also grateful for soap and water, food on the table, tomatoes in the garden in November. Life force is abundant in Carmel Valley, and 65 degrees is often normal on Thanksgiving Day. I was grateful for sunshine.

Thanksgiving eve, I roasted a turkey thigh and a turkey breast, just enough bird for two reasonably hungry people to enjoy for several days. I put the pieces of bird into a 9" x 12" glass pan, surrounded them with chunks of lemon, onion, garlic and fingerling potatoes. Poured over a little wine; sprinkled with salt, pepper, sage, rosemary and thyme; covered with parchment and stuck it in the oven. 20 minutes per pound meant about two hours. I took a bath. I combed my hair. I polished my toenails. When I was done to perfection, so was the bird and it's accompaniments. I threw together a quick cranberry sauce (why does anyone, ever buy cranberry sauce in a can? It's so easy!!!), steamed some asparagus, and our Thanksgiving eve feast was accomplished.

I remember so many other types of Thanksgivings – the ones whereon I started three days ahead, making the bread, the pies, the stuffing, the potatoes, the gravy, even the napkin rings, ... oh my, what a To Do list I give myself sometimes. We would consume in half an hour way more food than we needed, roll onto the sofa, groan for several hours about how full we were while watching on television someone else play, oh, I don't know, football, probably!

This felt good to me – just enough: no fuss, hardly any muss and thoroughly delicious. On Thanksgiving Day, we made turkey sandwiches (white meat with bread and butter pickles for him, dark meat with cranberry sauce for her) and headed into the Enchanted Forest. We munched our lunch in a grove of woodland clover, listening to the sounds of chirping birds and chattering squirrels. The sun filtered through the moss covered redwoods and dappled the toes of our boots.

We talked about those things for which we were grateful, and the list expanded to include the conditions of our health (good) and the basic quality of our lives. We held hands and walked the trail. We saw a wood nymph, a Santa Cruz sprite with flower petal bell-bottoms and matching knit hat, smiling silently while crossing our path as she made her way into the woods.

It was very quiet, there in the Enchanted Forest. No buzz of traffic, not even a plane heard overhead. It was respite and replenishment to us both. We came home refreshed, thankful, and ready for whatever the rest of the holiday season will bring.

Cranberry Sauce a la Gianna's Café

- One bag fresh cranberries, rinsed
- One cup dried cranberries or dried cherries, chopped
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon dried orange peel
- 1 teaspoon fresh ginger, grated
- pinch of salt

Place all ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to boil. Turn heat down and simmer until cranberries begin to pop. Turn off heat. Mash with fork or pastry cutter. Set aside until ready to serve or chill.