

NHF&G Urges Everyone To Hike Safely In Winter

With New Hampshire's mountains enjoying a very snowy winter, outdoor authorities are advising the Granite State's backcountry visitors to "hikeSafe."

"New Hampshire's woods and mountains are a great place for winter recreation. Whether snowshoeing, backcountry skiing, or ice-climbing, there are many fantastic opportunities here," says New Hampshire Fish and Game Conservation Officer Lieutenant Todd Bogardus. "But the winter environment can be a dangerous place. Cold temperatures, deep snow cover and, especially above treeline, sometimes fierce winds, mean that hikers and others need to take special precautions to enjoy their adventures safely."

Recent tragic incidents in the White Mountains, including a hiker death by hypothermia and a climber's death in an avalanche, underscore the seriousness of Bogardus's message and highlight the principles of "hikeSafe," a joint initiative of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department and the White Mountain National Forest to promote safe and responsible hiking.

Rebecca Oreskes of the White Mountain National Forest says that the hikeSafe Hiker Responsibility Code sums up the basic tenets of backcountry safety. "Winter hiking has great rewards, but also comes with innate challenges and dangers. Being aware of and following the Hiker Responsibility Code are important first steps toward an enjoyable and safe journey."

There are six tenets of the code. You are responsible for yourself, so:

- Be prepared with the appropriate knowledge and gear.
- Leave your plans with someone.
- If hiking in a group, stick together and do not let yourselves become separated.
- Be ready to turn back if circumstances, such as changing weather, dictate.
- Be ready for emergencies, and, ideally, be set to effect "self rescue."
- Know the code and share its lessons with others.

Bogardus notes that the Hiker Responsibility Code applies year-round, but there are special considerations for winter hiking. "Winter weather can be extreme, especially on the highest summits of the White Mountains, so anyone venturing to those areas absolutely must be prepared for bitter cold, strong winds, and poor visibility – and must be ready to turn back if conditions become too difficult. Plus, the mix of weather we've received so far this season means that deep snows can be found in the forests, requiring snowshoes, yet in some places, icy slopes mean that special gear such as ice axes and crampons may be needed."

Some locations have added hazards. "The Forest Service Snow Rangers on Mount Washington have noted a lot of avalanche activity this winter," adds Oreskes, "and similar hazards can be found in other areas, especially those with steep, open slopes. All backcountry visitors should be aware of avalanches and the special training and equipment needed for anyone who is traveling in potential avalanche terrain."

For more information about the hikeSafe program, visit hikeSafe.com.

Food, Friends, & Merriment!

By Tracy Merriman
Beacon Staff

Judy Perreault wanted to share a recipe she made for a tasting table at the Pilgrim Church Fair in Nashua. A tasting table is a fundraising event where people provide foods to sell, and the recipes are given out for free.

According to Judy her recipe was a hit, and one woman came back to buy seconds. No doubt. The recipe is called Chicken Normandy, and it is from a cookbook called *Country Casseroles* by Reiman Publications. Reiman is a wonderful publishing company that puts out great favorites like *Taste of Home*, *Light & Tasty*, *Simple & Delicious*, and *Country Woman*, to name a few.

When a recipe comes from a book called *Country Casseroles* you can guarantee we are talking about down-home cooking at its finest. This recipe is no exception and actually exemplifies what comfort food really is. It couldn't have come to us at a better time, either. With the winter rearing its snowy cold head every other day; this is just what you need to eat to rid yourself of the chill and aggravation the winter has bestowed upon us.

Another great thing about this recipe is that it is kid friendly, and adults, too, will revel in all its creamy hot goodness. Nothing beats a crowd pleaser, and this dish is that. Judy points out that this dish is versatile, and you could easily replace the chicken with whatever protein you have on hand, like pork or even fish.

One thing this recipe has you do is prepare it the night before and refrigerate, which is just another wonderful attribute to a dish with so much going for it already. Enjoy the warm blanket of home that this dish provides and take respite

from the winter, if only for one night!

Send your favorite recipe to Cooking@AndoverBeacon.com or PO Box 149, Andover 03216. Include your name and phone number so we can print a little interview along with the featured recipe.

Chicken Normandy

Contributed by Judy Perreault

Crust:

- 1 package (8 oz.) seasoned bread stuffing mix
- ½ cup melted butter or margarine
- 1 cup water

Filling:

- 2 ½ cups diced chicken
- ½ cup chopped onion
- ½ cup chopped celery
- ½ cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 eggs
- 1 ½ cups milk

Topping:

- 1 can (10 ¾ oz) condensed cream of mushroom soup, undiluted
- 1 cup (4 oz) shredded cheddar

This recipe is to be prepared the day before serving. Combine the crust ingredients, and mix lightly. Spread half of the crust mixture into a greased 13" x 9" x 2" baking dish.

For the filling, combine the chicken, onion, celery, mayonnaise, and salt. Spread the chicken mixture over the bottom crust, and top it with the remaining crust mixture. Beat together the eggs and milk, and pour the mixture over everything. Cover with foil, and refrigerate overnight.

An hour before cooking, remove the casserole from the refrigerator and spread the mushroom soup over the top. Bake it at 325 degrees for 40 minutes. Remove from the oven and sprinkle with cheese. Bake for 10 minutes more. Serves 12.



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