

**What can I say?** The sky is the color of dirty snow. One last pile of dirty snow still clings to the edge of the driveway. Rain is not just in the forecast; it is imminent. Step outside and it feels like your thermometer is off by at least five degrees. Could it get any worse? Yes, of course, our taxes are due next Monday. (No, that's not a typo. April 15<sup>th</sup> is a holiday in Washington so the deadline has been pushed back.)

**While paying taxes is no picnic,** filing is even worse. I assume that there are people who embrace the process as a fascinating puzzle or mystery to unravel. Not I. Running through all those numbers is pure drudge. I suppose that if I was a clever accountant, I would appreciate the finesse and creativity it takes to master the tax code. But I'm not. I'm just an ordinary person with a mountain of forms and receipts and a not-quite-as-easy-as-advertised software package to navigate. Don't get me wrong, I'm certainly not complaining about the software. For years I did my taxes with a calculator and pencil, this way is much, much better.



**I'm not alone.** None other than Albert Einstein said, "The hardest thing in the world to understand is the income tax." If the dreaded tax season has you down, here are a few quotes to perk you up. If you like, you can use them to make refrigerator magnets. (You can sell the magnets to help pay your tax bill. Don't forget to include your sales as miscellaneous income next year.)

**Perhaps these lines will cheer you up, perhaps not. Anyway, here goes:**

**"No taxation without representation"** was a popular slogan during the mid-1700s. The quote summarized the American colonists' primary grievance against Mad King George. The notion of taxes without a voice in government led to the American Revolution. We have since learned that taxation with representation isn't all that much fun either.

**Benjamin Franklin shared the rather distressing truth that,** "nothing is certain except death and taxes." However, he failed to add that if you are hard pressed for time, the IRS will give you an extension. You just need to ask.

**Too bad Richard Nixon didn't heed his own words,** "Make sure you pay your taxes; otherwise you can get in a lot of trouble." The Watergate scandal, political corruption, dirty tricks and, yes, tax evasion landed Nixon in a whole heap of trouble and forced him to resign. Charges were not restricted to the president. Pleading no contest to tax evasion, Veep Spiro Agnew left office in disgrace ten months before Nixon stepped down.

**Nixon and Agnew are not alone.** Perhaps Leona Helmsley summed it up best, "We don't pay taxes. Only the little people pay taxes." That was before the Queen of Mean was sentenced to four years in prison and fined \$7 million for tax fraud. Al Capone must have been similarly deluded when he said, "They can't collect legal taxes from illegal money."

**I guess Barry Goldwater knew what he was talking about** when he said, "The income tax created more criminals than any other single act of government." Will Rogers didn't go quite so far. His take on our annual calculations and filing was, "The income tax has made more liars out of the American people than golf has."

**If your W-2 and myriad of other forms are signed and sent,** well, good for you. If you are still busy calculating; my sympathies and best wishes.

Either way, with any luck, you're due a refund. Bon appétit!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan".

## Lavender Scones

*Once your taxes are filed, clear your head of convoluted instructions and calculations with a leisurely cup of tea and a scone. Enjoy!*

Makes 16 scones



3 cups all-purpose flour plus more for your work surface  
 3/4 cup brown sugar  
 1 tablespoon dried lavender buds  
 Grated zest of 1 lemon  
 1 tablespoon baking powder  
 1 teaspoon salt  
 1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
 3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) cold butter, cut into small pieces  
 1 cup sour cream  
 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
 2 tablespoons heavy cream  
 Lavender Honey Butter, recipe follows

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with non-stick silicon mats or parchment paper.

Put the flour, sugar, lavender, lemon zest, baking powder, salt and baking soda in the bowl of a food processor and pulse to combine. Add the butter and pulse until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Transfer the buttery flour mixture to a bowl.

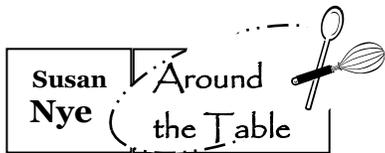
Stir the vanilla into the sour cream and then add the wet ingredients to the buttery flour mixture. Stir to combine.

Transfer the dough to a lightly floured surface, pat together and knead for 10 or 12 turns. Pat the dough into a 10x5-inch rectangle. Cut the dough in half lengthwise and then cut each half into 4 squares. Cut each square diagonally into 2 triangles.

Arrange the scones on the baking sheets and brush the tops with cream. Bake the scones at 400 degrees for 15-20 minutes or until golden. A tester inserted into the center of one of the scones should come out clean. Transfer to a wire rack to cool for a few minutes. Serve warm with honey butter.



*Can be made ahead and reheated in a 350 degree oven for 5 minutes.*



*Another recipe from Susan Nye:  
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### Lavender Honey Butter

2 tablespoons lavender\* honey

2 teaspoons lemon zest

1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

8 ounces (2 sticks) butter, softened and cut in 1-inch pieces

Put the honey, lemon zest and juice in a bowl and beat with an electric mixer on medium speed to combine. Add the butter and beat on low speed to break up the butter and begin mixing. Gradually increase the speed to medium-high and beat until well combined, about 5 minutes.

Spoon the butter onto parchment paper or plastic wrap, roll into a log and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

*\* Don't worry if you can't find lavender honey. Your favorite honey should work almost as well.*