

It's the second half of summer. We need to make the most of it. There will be no grousing about the rain or heat or anything else. Until we built the little brown house in the woods, my family always spent August on Cape Cod. From the time they were babies, my parents vacationed on the Cape in August. The tradition continued.

July was a crazy quilt of long weekends on the Cape at one or the other grandparents' cottage, a day trip to the north shore and summer camp. When all else failed, we spent the afternoon at the town beach. August was a rickety rental a stone's throw from the ocean.

I don't know why but I never questioned the August vacation rule. For that matter, I doubt I thought much about it. However, I did find it decidedly strange when some of my friends went off to the beach in July.

My mother was pretty good at declarations. When I told her of friends heading to the Cape or New Hampshire or Maine in July, her reply was something akin to, "some people just don't know any better." If you didn't know her, from that remark, you might think Mom was a snob or at least very opinionated. While Mom loved a good opinion, she was never a snob.

I admit at some point, probably when I was a teenager, I was vaguely uncomfortable with her pronouncement. I think I had just read the *Great Gatsby*. I hated to think that we were the kind of people who fled the city in August. Was it possible that we were among those careless people with more money than sense?

I needn't have worried. Our family was neither fabulously wealthy nor remarkably careless. We lived in the suburbs. We didn't lie around all day in white dresses surrounded by billowing curtains and complain about the heat. We wore shorts and t-shirts. We road bikes, climbed trees and ran through the sprinkler when Mom couldn't take us to Morses Pond.

Anyway, except for my *Great Gatsby* moment, once we were ensconced in the little brown house in the woods, the subject was moot. Mom and we kids left the suburbs within minutes of the final school bell in June and returned late in the afternoon of Labor Day. Dad took the 4th of July holiday week off and came up weekends. We still wore shorts and t-shirts. We left our bikes at home but climbed trees and hiked in the hills. We swam, sailed and made a feeble attempt to learn tennis. If it rained, we played Monopoly and did jigsaw puzzles. We didn't wear white dresses and the little brown house did not have billowing, floor-to-ceiling curtains.

It wasn't until fairly recently, like maybe in the last few years that it finally dawned on me as to why the Nyes took their vacation in August. The Atlantic Ocean was too cold for swimming in July. Or so said, generation after generation of adults. Ocean or lake, salt water or fresh, you name it, kids will swim anytime from Mother's Day to Columbus Day. Unless there's an El Niño (or is it La Niña), then they'll swim on Christmas Day too.

Anyway, it is just about time for my father to greet the second half of summer with a swim in Pleasant Lake. While July is definitely the warmer of the two months, Dad's now ninety-year-old bones prefer to wait until the lake reaches a more balmy 75 degrees or at least a refreshing 65. Who needs a calendar when you've got family traditions?

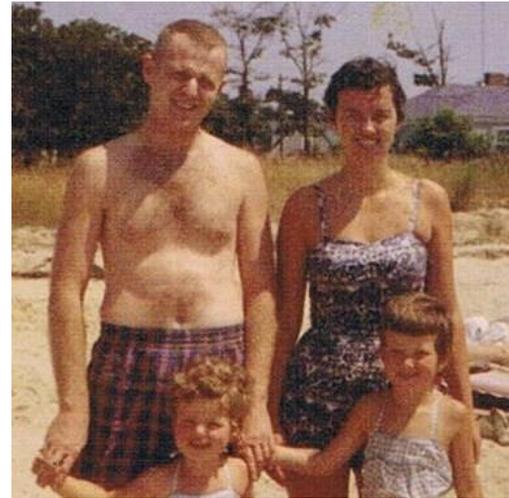
Wishing you a lovely August and bon appétit!



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Blueberry-Ginger Cobbler

Pick-your-own or pick up a couple of quarts at the farm, it's blueberry season. Enjoy!

Serves 8

Blueberry filling:

6 cups picked over blueberries
3/4 cup brown sugar
3 tablespoons cornstarch
1-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and minced
Zest and juice of 1 lime
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon salt

Biscuit dough:

1 cup all-purpose flour
1/3 cup finely chopped crystallized ginger
1/4 cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons cold butter, cut into small bits
1/2-3/4 cup sour cream



Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Lightly butter a 2-quart baking dish.

Prepare the filling: put the blueberries in a bowl, add the brown sugar, cornstarch, ginger, lime zest, cinnamon and salt and toss to combine. Add the lime juice and toss again. Set aside.

Make the biscuit dough: put the flour, crystallized ginger, brown sugar, baking powder and soda and salt and cinnamon in food processor and pulse to combine. Add the butter and process again until the mixture resembles fine meal. Transfer to a bowl, add the sour cream and stir until the dough comes together.

Assemble the cobbler and bake: transfer the blueberry mixture to the prepared baking dish, drop spoonfuls of biscuit dough onto the fruit and transfer the cobbler to the oven.

Bake at 350 degrees for about 45 minutes or until the fruit is bubbling and the top is golden. Serve warm with vanilla or ginger ice cream.

