

## What Did I Get Myself Into?

*by Liz Gibbons*

My chiropractor/friend, Dr. Suzan Rossi in Atlanta is certified to teach a variety of courses. In early 2004 she began teaching a two week course titled Divine Intervention. I was one of her first students to take this course. We lived at Suzan's home for the two weeks, and Suzan's daughter prepared the meals for all of us. Her daughter was pregnant at the time, and, despite dealing with morning sickness, she was able to provide delicious meals.

In the fall Suzan offered this class again with a schedule manageable for more people: an ongoing class one weekend a month for seven months. Since her daughter had a newborn baby she needed someone to cook for the class. In a weak moment I volunteered to do the cooking. When I submitted my menu ideas for the first weekend I learned that among the eight students there was one vegetarian, a man who was allergic to eggs, a woman who was very allergic to chocolate, one woman who did not eat pork, and Suzan experienced reactions to soy, shrimp, and wheat. "Oh my," I thought, "what have I got myself into? What was I thinking?" By substituting ingredients and providing additional choices I was able to meet everyone's needs.

There is a fantastic 140,000 square foot market in Atlanta called Your DeKalb Farmers Market with foods from all over the world. Over 100,000 people shop there each week. About half of the market is devoted to fresh produce. They make all their baked goods using all natural ingredients and no preservatives. They offer over 400 varieties of cheese, hundreds of varieties of seafood and meats, coffees from all over the world, and other well-stocked departments. They have a wide selection of organic produce at reasonable prices. This market helped me provide healthy ingredients for our meals.

Overall each weekend went fairly smoothly and everyone seemed to like the meals. The roughest weekend was one in which I was not feeling well. I arrived at Suzan's home late Friday afternoon and realized I had forgotten to bring the meat for dinner that night. My home was 30 miles away, so I rushed off to a nearby market that stocked pasture-raised meats to replace it.

Sometimes on Saturday or Sunday mornings there were activities that Suzan's patients or students could participate in. Some of them stayed for lunch. I had to be flexible and be able to add extra food to accommodate them.

At the end of the seven months I made up a binder with all the menus and recipes for each weekend for Suzan to have for future reference. Eventually Suzan decided to have the students prepare the meals as part of their class activities. On a positive note this experience provided me with lots of new recipe ideas and more variety in my own cooking.