

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



December 2018 – Gifts from the Sea

December is the time of giving, and this menu is a great way to express your appreciation for those you love. Start your meal with langoustine, also known as Norway lobster. They won't break your budget. As a main course, scallops are one of my favorite bi-valves. They have a tender, silky texture when properly cooked to "warm in the center" medium rare. For dessert, we leave the oceanside and head home to celebrate the holidays with classic Crinkle Spice Cookies and Hot Buttered Rum.

Semillon is a full-bodied, white wine that is perfect for the winter. Winemakers often encourage malo-lactic fermentation in Semillon to convert the tart green apple flavor of malic acid into buttery lactic acid. Also, winemakers will ferment and/or age Semillon in oak, resulting in a smoky nuttiness. For all these reasons, Semillons are ageable white wines that are at their peak about five years from harvest. Paired with Langoustine Salad in Cucumber Cups, the nuttiness of the wine picks up on the toasted sesame oil in the dressing. The creamy mayonnaise also matches the full-body of the wine.

Herbed Brown Butter Scallops are delightful served with mashed potatoes and steamed green beans. Bi-valves like scallops, clams, and mussels tend to make many white wines taste metallic. On the other hand, bourbon whiskey offers an unexpected pairing due to praline and toffee flavors that pick-up on the sweetness of the scallops and nuttiness of the brown butter. Consider a Four Roses Yellow Label Bourbon. It has hints of pear and apple complimented by floral aromas and a subtle flavor of honey and spice.

What screams, "holiday!" more than Hot Buttered Rum with Crinkle Spice Cookies? Not much. This pairing is a no-brainer. Each recipe includes cinnamon, clove, and plenty of sugar. All in all, soft, pillowy cookies with a hot adult beverage are an excellent way to end a cold winter's night.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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Langoustine Salad in Cucumber

Cups

INGREDIENTS

8 oz. cooked langoustine tails, thawed
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
2 teaspoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
Salt, toasted sesame oil, and Sriracha to taste
1 large seedless cucumber, ends trimmed slightly for flat surfaces

DIRECTIONS

Finely chop langoustine tails. Place in non-reactive mixing bowl.

Add mayo, lemon juice, and Worcestershire. Mix well to incorporate. Season to taste with sea salt, Sriracha and sesame oil. Mix well once more and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Cut cucumber into about 2-inch pieces. Scoop out the middle with a melon baller, being careful not to go through the bottom. Place pieces scooped side down onto a paper towel to drain.

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Stir langoustine salad before assembling cups. Divide salad equally among cucumber cups.

Yield: 6-8 servings

Herbed Brown Butter Scallops

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 pound sea scallops, side muscle removed
Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper
2 tablespoons (1/4 stick) unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
4 sprigs of herbs (such as tarragon, lemon thyme, or sage)
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice

DIRECTIONS

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Season scallops with salt and pepper and cook until deep golden brown on one side, about 3 minutes. Turn scallops and add butter and herbs to pan. Continue cooking, spooning butter over scallops often, until scallops are cooked through and butter is brown and smells nutty, about 3 minutes longer. Add lemon juice. Serve scallops with brown butter pan sauce.

Yield: 4 servings

Crinkle Spice Cookies

INGREDIENTS

2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1 teaspoon ginger
3/4 cup soft shortening

1 cup dark brown sugar, packed
1 egg
1/4 cup molasses
Granulated sugar, for rolling

DIRECTIONS

In a medium bowl whisk together flour, salt, soda, cinnamon, cloves, and ginger; set aside.

Cream sugar and shortening until light and fluffy. Add the egg and continue to beat until combined.

Mix in the molasses until combined. Add the flour mixture and mix on low until the dough just comes together. Wrap dough in plastic wrap and chill at least 1 hour or overnight.

Preheat oven to 375°F. Scoop cookie dough and shape into walnut sized balls.

Roll in sugar and place 2 inches apart on a parchment-lined baking sheet.

Bake 8 minutes or just until they crack. If you prefer a crunchy cookie, leave in a bit longer. Remove to a wire rack to cool.

Yield: 36 cookies

Hot Buttered Rum

INGREDIENTS

2/3 cup packed dark brown sugar
1/2 cup unsalted butter, room temperature
1/4 cup honey
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
Pinch salt

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- ¾ cup spiced rum
- 2 cups boiling water
- 4 sticks cinnamon, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Using an electric mixer, beat the brown sugar, butter, honey, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, and salt in a medium bowl until blended and smooth. Transfer the mixture to a 4-cup (or larger) measuring cup. Add the rum and then 2 cups of boiling water. Stir until the butter mixture dissolves. Divide the buttered rum among 4 mugs. Garnish with the cinnamon sticks and serve.

Yield: 4 servings