

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



Sept 2010 – Carnitas Mexicanas

Mexican food is perfect for the fall. It utilizes the last of the summer's fresh vegetables while offering some warming spice. To combat the spice in the food, you will need to choose a beverage that is slightly sweet and has lots of fruit flavor.

Sangria is a dynamite solution. Below is a sangria recipe based on proportions. This way you can make up just enough for 1 or 2 or serve a crowd. It is also a great way to use up a bottle of wine that has been left open just a little too long. Change the color of the wine or the fruit you add and the final taste is completely different.

For white wine sangria add fresh pears or peaches and serve it with a Mexican Caesar Salad. My favorite is the recipe from El Torito (www.LaSommeliere.com). The verdant cilantro, mild cotija and crunchy pepitas give it a unique spin.

For red wine Sangria use fruits like raspberries, blackberries and plums it will work nicely with my mother-in-law's delicious Baja Bean Pasta Salad and the Carnitas Mexicanas recipe shown below.

After the bold flavors of the meal, bring out a Cardamom Mango Custard (www.LaSommeliere.com). It is light and slightly exotic. Serve with a large pitcher of ice cold still or sparkling water with fresh sliced strawberries and lightly crushed basil leaves floating on top.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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Sangria

INGREDIENTS

3 parts red, pink or white wine
1 part soda water
1 part lemon, lime and/or orange juice
½ part sugar
½ part brandy (opt.)
Fruit to float on top

DIRECTIONS

Mix all ingredients except soda water early in day or the night before. If you can throw in some fresh slices of oranges and lemons (peel on), the flavors will be even more intense. Add the soda water and fresh fruit just before serving.

Yield: varies

El Torito Mexican Caesar Salad

INGREDIENTS

Salad:
1 large head romaine lettuce
¼ cup shelled pepita seeds (pumpkin seeds)
¼ cup cotija cheese, grated
3-4 plum tomatoes

Dressing:

1 small bunch cilantro, stemmed
2 tablespoons diced green chiles, roasted
3 tbsp roasted pepitas or sunflower seeds
1 garlic clove, peeled
1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
½ teaspoon salt
6 ounces salad oil
1/8 cup red wine vinegar
2 ½ tablespoons grated cotija cheese
¾ cup mayonnaise
1/8 cup water

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DIRECTIONS

Place all dressing ingredients except cilantro, mayonnaise and water in a blender or food processor. Blend approximately 10 seconds, and then add cilantro little by little until blended smooth. Depending on size of blender, it may be necessary to do in batches.

Place mayonnaise and water in a large stainless steel bowl, and mix with a wire whip until smooth. Add the blended ingredients to the mayonnaise mixture, and mix thoroughly. Place in an airtight container and refrigerate and it will keep for three to seven days.

Yield: six servings with extra dressing

Betty's Baja Bean Pasta Salad

INGREDIENTS

Salad:

12 oz. tri-colored rotelle
15 oz. can black beans
6 oz. can or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cooked corn kernels
 $2\frac{1}{2}$ oz. can sliced olives
1 small jar of pimento
 $\frac{1}{2}$ red onion, chopped

Dressing:

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup olive oil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh lime juice
 $\frac{1}{2}$ bunch fresh cilantro, coarsely chopped
2 tablespoons pickled jalapeño, diced
2 cloves minced garlic
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon salt
Ground pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Cook pasta until just tender. Drain and combine with other salad ingredients in a LARGE bowl.

Combine dressing ingredients in a small bowl and then add to salad. Toss well.

Refrigeration blends and mellows flavors. Olive oil may solidify a bit in the refrigerator. Allow standing at room temperature for 15 minutes and toss to redistribute dressing before serving.

Yield: 10 servings

Slow-Cooker Carnitas

INGREDIENTS

1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon ground cumin
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon crumbled dried oregano
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground coriander
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 (4 pound) boneless pork shoulder roast
2 bay leaves
2 cups chicken broth

DIRECTIONS

Mix together salt, garlic powder, cumin, oregano, coriander, and cinnamon in a bowl. Coat pork with the spice mixture. Place the bay leaves in the bottom of a slow cooker and place the pork on top. Pour the chicken broth around the sides of the pork, being careful not to rinse off the spice mixture.

Cover and cook on Low until the pork shreds easily with a fork, about 10 hours. Turn the meat after it has cooked for 5 hours. When the pork is tender, remove from slow cooker, and shred with two forks.

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Use cooking liquid as needed to moisten the meat.

Yield: 10 servings

Cardamom Mango Custard

INGREDIENTS

6 cardamom pods
4 ¼ cups whole milk
½ cup sugar
1/3 cup cornstarch
½ teaspoon ground cardamom
About 2 pounds ripe mango
2 tablespoons ginger-flavored liqueur (optional)
Fresh basil leaves

DIRECTIONS

Crack cardamom pods by gently pressing with a rolling pin. Combine with 4 cups milk in a 3- to 4-quart pan; stir occasionally over medium-high heat until milk is boiling, 9 to 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, mix 1/4 cup sugar, the cornstarch, and the ground cardamom. Stir in remaining 1/4 cup milk. When milk in pan is boiling, remove from heat and gradually whisk in cornstarch mixture. Return to medium-low heat and stir just until mixture comes to a boil, 3 to 7 minutes. Pour through a fine strainer set over a bowl; discard residue. Ladle pudding into 6 to 8 small bowls or ramekins (3/4- to 1-cup capacity). Let cool about 10 minutes, then cover and chill until cold and set, at least 1 1/2 hours.

Pit and peel mango. Cut flesh into about 1-inch chunks (you need 2 cups). In a food processor or blender, combine 2 cups

mango, remaining 1/4 cup sugar, and ginger liqueur if using; whirl just until mango is coarsely puréed (mixture should be slightly chunky). Cover and chill.

Just before serving, spoon all of the mango mixture evenly over puddings. Garnish with basil leaves.

Yield: 6 to 8 servings

Note: This soft, cardamom-scented pudding refreshes and soothes chile-singed palates. Prepare through step 3 up to 1 day ahead; cover and chill.