

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



November 2014 – Turkey Traditions

Thanksgiving is all about traditions, and each family has their own time-honored recipes. The sommelier's challenge is finding one wine that goes with everything on the plate. The good news is there is usually an abundance of people, so there are often multiple wines. Here are a few of my favorite Thanksgiving recipes paired with some classic wines.

Chilled shrimp is a popular appetizer to serve before the real eating begins. Add an extra bit of flavor by serving it alongside this zesty Green Goddess Dressing. The fresh, delicate flavor of shrimp is excellent with a lively Sauvignon Blanc. The bright burst of vinegar and herbal flavors of the dressing will echo the substantial acid and inherent herbal flavors of the wine. If you prefer a wine with a little less acid and sometimes a touch of sweetness, try a Chenin Blanc. Either will work wonderfully.

When the group sits down to the main course, bigger, more complex wines often arrive at the table. But, complexity does not always mean more tannin. Less tannin in a wine improves its ability to pair with food. Merlots, which have less tannin than Cabernet Sauvignon, can be a great option for the demanding Thanksgiving plate. The soft, round nature of Merlot, along with its red-tinged dark fruit and moderate acidity, goes well with most dishes, from turkey and savory gravy to, the ever-difficult to pair with, sweet-tart cranberry sauce. Vegetables can also be difficult with wine. This recipe for Brussels Sprouts, Green Bean & Wild Mushroom Sauté brings together three historic vegetables along with diced potatoes and bacon fat. The slight loamy character of the mushroom contrasts with the Merlot's fruit and reflects its earthy notes. Bacon fat and butter are always welcome, as they

soften the astringency of the wine tannins.

If you skipped the cranberry sauce at dinner, Pear-Cranberry Pie with Oatmeal Streusel will provide you with your cranberry fix. Cranberries mixed with sweet Anjou pears contribute to the perfect blend of sweet and tart. Top with vanilla ice cream and don't even try to serve with wine; choose a spiced cranberry hot tea instead. The tea's flavors will be spot on with the dessert and will gently calm your very full stomach as well.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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Green Goddess Dressing

INGREDIENTS

1oz. anchovies
2 whole green onion, chopped
¼ cup coarsely chopped parsley
1/2 tbsp. tarragon, chopped
1½ tbsp. tarragon or white wine vinegar
½ cup mayonnaise
½ cup sour cream
Pinch of sugar to taste
Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Pat anchovy of excess oil and place in blender. Puree until fine. Add remaining ingredients and blend.

Yield: 1 cup

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Brussels Sprouts, Green Bean & Wild Mushroom Sauté

INGREDIENTS

1/2 pound chanterelles or other mushroom, cleaned and diced into bite size pieces
4 slices lightly smoked bacon, sliced crosswise into 1/4-inch lardons
4 medium-size Yukon gold potatoes, about 1 pound, in 1/2-inch dice
1/2 large onion, in 1/2-inch dice
2 large garlic cloves, minced
3/4 pound green beans, trimmed and cut into 3/4-inch lengths
1/2 pound Brussels sprouts, quartered
-- Splash of brandy or Amontillado sherry
1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon minced thyme
2 tablespoons unsalted butter or olive oil
-- Kosher salt and pepper to taste
1/2 cup chopped toasted walnuts

DIRECTIONS

In a large nonstick skillet over medium heat, cook bacon until crispy. Move bacon bits to a paper towel-lined bowl and reserve. Leave some bacon fat in the pan and pour the remainder in a small, heat-proof container.

Season the potatoes to taste and add to the hot skillet. Stir occasionally until partially cooked, about 3-4 minutes. Remove potatoes from pan. Add the onion, sauté for 1 minute, and then add the garlic. When garlic is aromatic, add green beans, Brussels sprouts and sherry. Add more bacon fat if needed. Cook 2 minutes, then add the mushrooms and thyme, plus the butter or olive oil to add richness. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Continue to cook, stirring and tossing, until beans, Brussels sprouts and mushrooms are tender-crisp, about 3 minutes more, then return potatoes to pan to finish cooking, about 1-2 minutes

more. Everything should finish cooking at the same time.

Garnish with walnuts, reserved bacon bits and serve.

Yield: 8-10 side-dish servings

Pear-Cranberry Pie with Oatmeal

Streusel

INGREDIENTS

Streusel:

3/4 cup regular oats
1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
Dash of salt
2 tablespoons chilled butter, cut into small pieces

Filling:

3 cups (1/2-inch) cubed peeled Anjou pear (2 large)
2 cups cranberries, fresh or frozen and thawed
2/3 cup packed light brown sugar
2 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch
1 unbaked 9-inch deep-dish pie crust

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°.

Streusel: combine first 5 ingredients in a medium bowl; cut in butter with a pastry blender or 2 knives until mixture resembles coarse meal.

Filling: combine pear, cranberries, 2/3 cup brown sugar, and cornstarch in a large bowl; toss well to combine. Spoon pear mixture into pie crust; sprinkle streusel over pear mixture. Bake at 350° for 1 hour or until bubbly and streusel is browned. Cool at least 1 hour on a wire rack.

Yield: 12 servings