

# PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



## February 2013 – Chinese New Year

This year Chinese New Year will begin on February 10 all over the world in countries with significant Chinese populations, such as Thailand. Pork, a classic protein found in many holiday dishes, is a central theme of this menu and is a delicious and cost effective way to kick-off your new year.

I found a recipe for Pork Lettuce Wraps that I consider one of the most authentic recipes I have ever made. The dipping sauce is a perfect balance of sweet, savory, sour and spicy. The flavor of the caramelized garlic is excellent. You can even double the recipe and serve it as an entrée. Choose a wine that is fruit forward, like an off-dry White Zinfandel. The fruit flavors will be intensified by the umami flavors of the pork and fish sauce. The slight sweetness in the wine will create a nice cooling effect on the spice from the chilies.

Asian Pork Tenderloin is the star of your main course. It is very easy to make and you can add white or fried rice along with steamed sugar snap peas for a complete plate. This recipe can handle a wine with a bit of depth, but would still benefit from lighter tannins due to the slight heat. Consider a Cru Beaujolais. Made from the Gamay grape, Cru Beaujolais is very different from the Nouveau Beaujolais that arrives once a year in November. These are serious wines with complexity and weight. The Gamay grape is known for its bright raspberry and strawberry flavors, and when you combine this with the rustic leather and dark earthiness often found in French wine, you get a nice balance of fruit and earth that will harmonize and complement the soy and Worcestershire in the meat marinade. Each of the ten Cru Beaujolais (e.g., Fleurie, Morgon, etc.) has its own personality, but

they should all work well. If you prefer your wines closer to home, a lighter style Zinfandel from Sonoma or Mendocino would substitute.

Celebrate the end of the meal with a Thai custard that has a delicate sweetness. You will need to seek out a sparkling wine with a touch of sweetness to match. Look for words like Demi-Sec, Doux or Dolce on the label. If you can find a Blanc de Blancs, that is great. Blanc de Blancs literally means White of Whites. It is made from 100% Chardonnay, which often has tropical flavors that pair well with the coconut.

So, go on. Pair Up!

*Maria Terry is a Certified Sommelier and Wine Educator in the San Francisco Bay Area. [www.LaSommeliere.com](http://www.LaSommeliere.com)*

## Thai Pork Lettuce Wraps

### INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon sugar  
2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon Asian fish sauce  
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice  
3 Thai chilies, very thinly sliced with seeds  
1 tablespoon vegetable oil  
4 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced  
1/2 pound ground or finely chopped pork  
2 tablespoons soy sauce  
Salt and pepper  
1/4 small red onion, thinly sliced  
1/4 cup torn Thai basil leaves  
1/4 cup torn mint leaves  
1/4 cup torn cilantro leaves  
Boston lettuce leaves, for serving

### DIRECTIONS

In a small bowl, combine lime juice with 2 tablespoons of the fish sauce, 1 tablespoon of the sugar, two-thirds of the chilies and 1

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tablespoon of water. Stir to dissolve the sugar.

In the skillet, heat the oil. Add the garlic and cook over moderately low heat, stirring a few times until golden brown, about 1 minute. Add 1 teaspoon of the sugar and cook for about 20 seconds. Add the ground pork and cook over moderately high heat, breaking up the meat finely, until no pink remains, about 3 minutes. Add 1 teaspoon of the fish sauce and soy sauce and season with salt and pepper.

Just before serving, add onion, basil, mint, cilantro and the remaining chili. Serve in lettuce leaves and season with the dipping sauce.

Yield: 4 servings

## Asian Pork Tenderloin

### INGREDIENTS

1/3 cup soy sauce  
1/4 cup sesame oil  
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce  
1/8 cup packed light brown sugar  
3 green onions, chopped  
4 cloves garlic, crushed  
1 1/2 tablespoons Asian chili paste  
1 1/2 teaspoons pepper  
1 (2 pound) fat-trimmed pork tenderloin

### DIRECTIONS

Mix marinade ingredients. Place the tenderloin in a shallow dish. Pour marinade over tenderloin, turning the meat a few times to coat. Cover and refrigerate two to eight hours.

Preheat oven to 450°. Transfer pork with marinade into an aluminum foil-lined baking

pan. Roast 25 to 30 minutes. Remove and let stand 5 to 10 minutes before carving.

Yield: 4 servings

## Thai Coconut Custard

### INGREDIENTS

1½ cups coconut milk  
6 eggs, beaten  
¾ cup dark brown sugar  
1/2 teaspoon salt

### DIRECTIONS

Beat coconut milk, eggs, sugar and salt together. Cook in a double boiler, stirring constantly, until it resembles soft scrambled eggs. Pour into a small casserole dish. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes. Brown under a broiler.

Yield: 4 servings