

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



January 2021 – Biscuits and Gravy

Fried chicken, biscuits, and gravy are the ultimate in comfort foods. Who could ask for more on a blustery January evening? You might consider asking for a classic whiskey cocktail with a sweet twist. Together, they will warm you right up.

I love whole pieces of bone-in fried chicken. However, I have come to accept that I can't make it. I don't own a deep fryer and I don't want one. Honestly, I'd rather just order it dining out. On the other hand, good, boneless, fried chicken breast is easy to make in a pan. You can even ask the butcher to slice the breasts crosswise into 1/4" large flat slices that cook evenly.

Biscuits and gravy take the chicken on a southern route. Feel free to take advantage of a pop-open can of biscuits and a package of McCormick's Homestyle Country Gravy since making the chicken takes a fair amount of work. As a side, Broccoli Salad with Bacon can be made ahead of time and is ready when the last piece of chicken is fried. The meaty bacon and salty sunflower seeds in the salad echo the savory saltiness of the chicken, and the sweet-tart salad dressing provides high notes to contrast.

The same way you pick a side dish can help you with your beverage pairing. Mixologists create a balanced cocktail by bringing resonant and contrasting notes into perfect harmony. The maple syrup in a Maple Manhattan is a sweet note and works with this meal for the same reason chefs pair waffles with fried chicken; the sweet brings out the savory. Furthermore, lemon offers a contrast to the sweetness, and the bitters round out both what is on the plate and in the glass. The crescendo is the salt from the dish, which brings out all the flavors and tamps down the high alcohol of the cocktail.

All these reasons make this pairing a match made in heaven.

After this decadent meal, you are likely to be full, but a full stomach may not stop the brain from wanting something sweet! Adult Hot Chocolate is a non-filling way to satisfy your sweet tooth. If you can drink it sitting by a blazing fire, you may find yourself dreaming of warm summer nights to come.

So, go on. Pair Up!

Maria Terry is a Certified Sommelier and Wine Educator in the Northern California Sierra Foothills. Readers wishing to continue following Maria's work can find it at www.LaSommeliere.com

Maple Manhattan

INGREDIENTS

1 ounce dry vermouth
1 ounce rye whiskey
2 teaspoons pure maple syrup
Dash of angostura bitters
Lemon twist and bourbon-soaked cherry, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Fill a shaker with ice; add vermouth, whiskey, maple syrup, and bitters. Shake vigorously until frosty and cold on the outside, 30 seconds. Strain over ice; garnish with a lemon twist and cherry.

Yield: 1 drink

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Thinly Sliced Fried Chicken Breast

INGREDIENTS

1 cup flour
½ teaspoon poultry seasoning
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground pepper
2 eggs
¼ cup milk
2 cups panko breadcrumbs
1 Tablespoon paprika
2 lbs. thinly sliced chicken
Cooking oil

DIRECTIONS

Create a breading station with three shallow bowls. In the first bowl, blend flour, poultry seasoning, salt, and pepper. In the second bowl, blend two eggs and milk. In the third bowl, blend breadcrumbs and paprika.

Create a landing platter layered with paper towels to catch the hot chicken as it comes out of the pan.

In a frying pan, heat to medium ¼ cup of cooking oil. Using a separate fork for each station, dredge the chicken in the flour, then the egg, and then the breadcrumbs. Fry each chicken slice until golden brown and cooked through. Remove to landing platter and sprinkle each slice with salt while still hot.

Yield: 4 servings

Broccoli Salad with Bacon

INGREDIENTS

2 bunches broccoli, florets only (5 to 6 cups)
1 medium red onion, chopped
½ cup raisins

10 to 12 slices bacon, fried and crumbled

Dressing

1 cup mayonnaise
2 Tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 teaspoons sugar

Topping:

½ cup sunflower seeds

DIRECTIONS

Mix vegetables and raisins and toss with dressing. Top with sunflower seeds just before serving to maintain the crunch.

Yield: 4 cups

Adult Hot Chocolate

INGREDIENTS

4 cups whole milk
2 Tablespoons sugar
½ vanilla bean or 1 teaspoon vanilla
6 oz. dark chocolate (60%)
1 teaspoon sea salt
4 oz. bourbon
2 oz. Frangelico (hazelnut liqueur)
2 oz. Irish cream (whiskey cream liqueur)
Marshmallows

DIRECTIONS

In a small saucepan, heat milk, sugar, salt, and vanilla over medium-low heat until sugar and salt are completely dissolved. Make sure the milk does not come to a boil. Add the chocolate in pieces, whisking until completely incorporated. Remove from heat. Once removed from heat, stir in bourbon, Frangelico, and Irish cream. Serve immediately with marshmallows.

Yield: 4 servings