

# PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



## November 2011 – Holiday Tapas

Spanish tapas are perfect for holiday entertaining because they are small plates of foods that can often be consumed without the use of forks. Here are a few of my favorite recipes and wine pairings that will make them sing.

Look to Spain for wines to pair with tapas. An intense white grape known as garnacha blanca in Spain and grenache blanc in the south of France is truly worth seeking out. To me it tastes like a cross between chardonnay and sauvignon blanc. It has rich notes of apple and pear like chardonnay although it is usually made without oak barrel influence. On the palate it carries a hint of citrus and the same fresh acidity found in sauvignon blanc. Enjoy the tapa listed here, Red Potatoes with Smoked Salmon, with a garnacha blanca or even a sauvignon blanc. Delicate smoked salmon with a creamy garlic mayonnaise, known as aioli in France and alioli in Spain, and will bring out the fruity flavors in the wine.

For the red wine pairing, chose a Rioja, the quintessential Spanish wine. Rioja is made from the tempranillo grape and has three levels of quality, crianza, reserva and gran reserva. The reserva and gran reserva levels are aged for at least three to five years respectively. I recommend the crianza level for this fun bite-size appetizer – crispy Jamon & Manchego Pinwheels. Rioja crianza is fruitier and less oaky than its older siblings so it tends to be a less serious wine.

For something sweet, try a Pedro Jimenez, a sherry-style wine that comes from the southern portion of Spain. Its dried fig, coffee and nut flavors will be delicious with the fig-based dessert found here. The rich mascarpone cheese gives the dish a creaminess that will balance the alcohol in the wine. And the cinnamon, cardamom and

allspice give the honey drizzle an exotic kick that will echo the spice notes that come from the barrel aging.

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)*

## Red Potatoes with Smoked Salmon

### INGREDIENTS

12 small red potatoes  
6 oz. smoked salmon  
Parsley for garnish

Alioli (Spanish for aioli):  
2-4 cloves of garlic (to taste)  
¼ tsp. sea salt  
1 cup olive oil  
2 eggs, at room temperature

### DIRECTIONS

Cut small circles from each end of the potatoes and cut in half to make bite size half-circles that will stand without wobbling. Toss the red potatoes with olive oil, salt and pepper and roast in 350° oven for about 15 minutes or until fork tender. Remove and let cool.

Mash the garlic and salt together to make a paste. In food processor, blend one whole egg plus one yoke with the garlic/salt paste. While food processor is running, slowly drizzle in olive oil until the mixture thickens. It will be thinner than store bought mayo, so the easiest way to dispense it will be to put it into a plastic squeeze bottle.

# PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



Top each potato with a squeeze of alioli and a small chunk of smoked salmon. Add a sprig of fresh parsley for color.

Yield: 12 (2 each) servings

## **Jamon - Manchego Pinwheels**

### **INGREDIENTS**

1 Package Frozen Puff Pastry Sheets, (17.5 ounce), thawed  
2 tsp. grainy mustard  
5 oz. Spanish jamon, thinly sliced  
5 oz. manchego cheese, thinly sliced

### **DIRECTIONS**

Preheat the oven to 350°. Spray a baking sheet with nonstick oil spray.

Roll the thawed pastry out onto a flat surface. Spread mustard to taste on the pastry sheets. Cover the pastry with a layer of ham and then cheese.

Roll the sheets, beginning at the long side. Cut into 1 inch thick sections. Arrange the sections on the prepared baking sheet.

Bake 10 to 12 minutes.

Yield: 12 (1 each) servings

## **Fresh Figs, Mascarpone Cheese and Spiced Honey**

### **INGREDIENTS**

24 small (or 4 large) fresh, ripe figs, stems trimmed, halved lengthwise  
1 cup mascarpone, softened  
1 cup mild honey  
3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom

1/2 teaspoon ground allspice  
sprigs fresh mint for garnish

### **DIRECTIONS**

Arrange the figs cut-side up among four plates. Use the back of a teaspoon to gently press into the center of the flesh and create a small indentation. Add a dollop of mascarpone to the center of each fig half.

Place honey and spices in a small heat-proof bowl and set over a pan with simmering water. Cook over medium heat, whisking to blend, until the honey is liquefied and warm, 1 to 2 minutes. Drizzle honey over each fig, garnish plates with mint sprigs.

Yield: 12 (2 each) servings