

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



June 2016 – Dad’s Dinner

I grew up in a house where parties were the norm. Even though my mom was generally the main cook, my dad is no slouch. He is the master of the grill and a great bartender. Also, on some occasions, he can be found in the kitchen whipping up one of his specialties.

My dad taught me how to make authentic guacamole. When his father’s work took the family to Mexico, his mother became an expert at tacos, enchiladas, and many other traditional Mexican favorites. He explained to me that the simplest recipes are often the best. For guacamole it is all about highlighting the delectable avocado. He adds just a little garlic for kick and some salt to bring out the flavor. Every once in a while, if he’s feeling a little spicy, he adds some serrano pepper. When he does bring the heat, a Mango Margarita is a great pairing partner. Its fresh, fruity sweetness tamps down the spice in the guacamole, and the icy cold cleanses the palate of the rich oils found in avocado.

The main course for this meal needs to be something that goes well with my dad’s favorite wine, Zinfandel. It is an approachable red wine that has bright berry fruit and soft, supple tannins. What would my dad pair with this wine? A fantastic cut of meat seasoned with plenty of salt and grilled until just barely warm in the center. For the starch, he loves baked potatoes. He eats the whole thing, skin included. His trick to creating a baked potato with a delicious skin is to scrub it well, slather it with olive oil, and sprinkle it with salt. Finally, for a green vegetable that goes with red wine, he’ll roast some fresh asparagus drizzled with olive oil and balsamic vinegar and season it to taste with salt, pepper and chili powder. You will find that roasting reduces

the bitterness found in asparagus, and the balsamic vinegar and chili powder accentuate the berry fruit in the wine.

I have never known my dad to bake, but he loves dessert. I found this recipe for Nectarine Upside-Down Cake and felt it would be just up his alley. It is a little rustic, incredibly moist, and has those crunchy edges of caramelized sugar that come with an upside-down cake. Caramelized flavors are great with late harvest dessert wines. Although just about any white dessert wine will work with this cake, I particularly like the idea of a late harvest Sémillon. It has a honeyed quality with stone fruit flavors and aromas that will echo the nectarines in the cake exactly. Sémillon is a thick-skinned grape often grown in regions where the vineyards are blanketed in a morning mist. This is the ideal climate for cultivating Botrytis cinerea, which is also called noble rot. The Botrytis desiccates the berries and magnifies their sweetness. Some of the most wonderful dessert wines in the world, like Sauternes, are affected by Botrytis.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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Guacamole

INGREDIENTS

2 avocados
2 garlic cloves, chopped fine or crushed
½ serrano pepper, ribs and seeds removed,
chopped fine (optional)
Salt to taste

DIRECTIONS

Mash everything together. Serve

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immediately with tortilla chips.

Yield: 2-3 cups

Mango Margarita

INGREDIENTS

2 limes
2 tablespoons coarse or regular sugar
Two 20-ounce jars mango chunks, drained
Ice, for blending
1 1/2 cups tequila
1 1/2 cups triple sec
1/2 cup granulated sugar

DIRECTIONS

Begin by zesting the limes. Pour the coarse sugar over the lime zest and toss with your fingers to combine. Set aside.

Throw the mango into the blender. Top off the blender with ice. Pour the tequila and triple sec. Add the granulated sugar and squeeze in the juice of the limes. Blend until completely smooth, adding more ice if necessary to get it the consistency you want.

Use a piece of one of the limes to moisten the rim of the glasses. Dip the rims of the glasses in the lime sugar.

Pour the drinks and serve them immediately.

Yield: 8 servings

Nectarine Upside-Down Cake

INGREDIENTS

10 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature
1/2 cup brown sugar

4 cups nectarines, cut into bite-sized pieces or 1/4 inch slices
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, spooned and leveled
1 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon coarse salt
3/4 cup granulated sugar
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 325°F. Place 4 tablespoons butter in a round 9-inch cake pan and melt in oven. When melted, sprinkle brown sugar evenly over top. Arrange nectarines in one even layer in bottom of pan.

In a medium bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. In a large mixing bowl, beat 6 tablespoons butter until light and fluffy, add sugar and beat until combined, beat eggs one at a time and mix in vanilla. With the mixer on low, add flour mixture in three parts, alternating with yogurt until combined.

Pour cake batter over nectarines and bake until cake is dark golden brown and a toothpick inserted comes out clean, about an hour and 10 minutes.

Let cool 15 minutes, run a knife along the edge to loosen and invert cake onto a serving plate.

Yield: 8-10 servings