

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



July 2015 – Portables

Summer is a time for getting out of the house and enjoying the great outdoors. Whether you are spending an afternoon at a ball game or hiking in the mountains, a picnic lunch can be tasty and economical. Your picnic will be more efficient (and environmental) if you bring foods requiring little or no utensils and single-serve bottled beverages that are easy to keep cold and recycle once consumed. And at the end of the day, you will be happy when you have very little to carry home.

Pecan-Rosemary-Cheddar Buttons combine pecans and rosemary to create a robust riff on the average cheddar cheese straw. Any excess dough can be frozen for baking later. Even months later, they will taste like you just whipped up a batch. As a beverage option, try a full-bodied, nutty amber ale to stand up to the sharp cheddar cheese and match the toasty pecans. The intense flavors in this “cookie” call for a beverage with equal intensity, and the bubbles in beer act as a palate cleanser for the richness of the cheese.

BLT Wraps feature sundried tomatoes in place of fresh tomatoes to keep the wraps from becoming soggy, and iceberg is a good choice of lettuce to retain optimal crispness. To transport, individually wrap the sandwiches in foil and unwrap like a burrito to eat. Add your favorite raw vegetable or salty chips to add even more crunch to the experience. This wrap is very versatile and has flavors that will go with just about any beverage. I like the idea of a lighter style, citrusy blonde ale. The slight sweetness of the sun-dried tomatoes will offset any bitterness from the hops, and salty bacon and creamy mayo taste great with just about everything.

Finish with a cookie that is not too sweet and not too savory. A sablé (accented) would be a good choice. A classic shortbread, this cookie gets its name from the French word sable (not accented), which means "sand." The term describes the textural appearance of butter, flour, and sugar when they are perfectly combined. I liked this recipe for its incorporation of saffron. It adds a cozy, earthy note, like sun-warmed hay. Try a slightly sweet, hard cider to wash down these cookies. The cider's sugar is needed to match the sugar level in the cookie and, again, the bubbles will cut through the buttery richness.

So, go on. Pair Up!

Maria Terry is a Certified Sommelier and Wine Educator in the San Francisco Bay Area. www.LaSommelier.com

Pecan-Rosemary-Cheddar Buttons

INGREDIENTS

2 1/2 cups (10 oz.) freshly shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
1/2 cup butter, softened
2 tablespoons half-and-half
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 cups chopped toasted pecans
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh rosemary

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°.

Beat cheese, butter, half-and-half, and salt at medium speed with a heavy-duty electric stand mixer until blended. Gradually add flour, pecans, and rosemary, beating just until combined.

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry

Turn dough out onto a well-floured surface. Divide into 4 equal portions, and flatten each into a disk; roll each disk to 1/8-inch thickness. Cut with a 2-inch round cutter. Place 1-inch apart on parchment paper-lined baking sheets. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until golden; cool on baking sheets on wire racks 30 minutes.

Yield: 6 dozen

BLT Wrap

INGREDIENTS

1 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup dried tomatoes in oil, drained and chopped
8 (10-inch) flour tortillas
1 large head iceberg lettuce, chopped
1 medium onion, thinly sliced (optional)
16 bacon slices, cooked and crumbled
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon pepper

DIRECTIONS

Combine mayonnaise and tomatoes in a small bowl. Spread evenly over 1 side of each tortilla, leaving a 1/2-inch border.

Layer lettuce, onions, and bacon evenly over tortillas; sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Roll up tortillas; cut in half diagonally, and secure with wooden pick.

Yield: 8 wraps

(on website)

Saffron Sablés

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon saffron
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 stick plus 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
3/4 cup sugar

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 325°. In a small bowl, whisk the flour with the baking soda and salt.

In a bowl, crumble the saffron into the vanilla extract. Beat in the butter until creamy. Beat in the sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the flour mixture. Pat the dough into a 6-inch disk. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate until chilled.

On a lightly floured work surface, roll out the dough a scant 3/8 inch thick. Using a floured 2 1/2-inch cookie cutter, stamp out as many cookies as possible. Carefully transfer the cookies to parchment paper-lined baking sheets, leaving 1 inch of space between them. Reroll the scraps, chill and stamp out more cookies. Bake the cookies 1 sheet at a time until lightly browned around the edges, about 16 minutes. Let cool slightly then transfer the cookies to a rack to cool.

Yield: 2 dozen