

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



January 2013 – Winter in Argentina

It's cold outside, but if you can find a dry place to do some grilling, here is a menu of Argentinian foods that features grilled foods paired with smoky beverages from different parts of the world. This is definitely a meal that will warm you up on a cold, Northern hemisphere, winter night.

Start off with Grilled Provolone Cheese paired with a dry stout beer. Dry stout is stout beer in its purest form. It is dark black with a roasted coffee-like taste. Most dry stouts are brewed in Ireland and not necessarily high in alcohol content. One of the most well-known brands of stout beer is Guinness Stout. Other popular brands are Murphy's Irish Stout and Beamish. Beer is a great beverage to drink while tending the grill and it will complement the tangy provolone cheese that has picked-up the smoke from the grill.

Argentina is known for its top quality beef. Choose your favorite cut and make it Argentinian by topping it with a Chimichurri Sauce. Chimichurri is bright green and super garlicky. Add roasted potatoes and Brussels sprouts and you have a complete plate. You could even toss the sprouts with cumin and chili powder before roasting to give them a smoky flavor like the grilled meat. Of course, a bold red wine is needed to stand up to the strong flavors of this meal.

Argentinian Malbec is perfect. The high altitude vineyards of the Andes Mountains allow the grapes to ripen fully while maintaining a fine quality to the tannins. These wines can be inexpensive and offer great value.

If you want to really finish off the meal with a true Argentinian dessert, Pasta Frola (full recipe at www.LaSommeliere.com) is a wonderful dessert made with a cookie-like shortbread crust and dulce de membrillo

(quince paste) filling. Pasta Frola is an example of the influence of Italian food on Argentinian cuisine - pasta frola (with the extra "l") is Italian for shortbread crust. As a beverage pairing, look for a coffee with bright fruity notes to echo the fruit filling. Kenyan coffees are known for their fruity, red wine character.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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Grilled Provolone Cheese on Toasted Bread

INGREDIENTS

4 3/4-inch thick slices of provolone cheese
1/4 cup olive oil
1 teaspoon oregano
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)
1 teaspoon kosher salt
8 thick slices of bread

DIRECTIONS

Place the cheese slices in a shallow dish and drizzle with olive oil. Turn the slices so that each side is coated with oil. Sprinkle the cheese with the salt and the oregano (and red pepper flakes if desired). Place the cheese in the freezer while you prepare the grill.

The cheese should be cooked quickly over fairly high heat so that the outside browns before the inside melts too much and starts oozing down into the coals. Brush the grill with a generous amount of olive oil to help prevent sticking.

When the grill is ready, place the cheese slices directly on the grill, and cook for

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about 2 minutes on each side, or until cheese is hot, slightly browned, but still holding its shape.

Remove cheese to a plate. Brush bread slices with any remaining olive oil left in the dish that had the cheese. Grill bread slices until slightly toasted. (If your grill is large enough you can grill the cheese and bread simultaneously). Serve cheese on bread to eat.

Yield: 6 servings

Chimichurri Sauce

INGREDIENTS

1 cup (packed) fresh Italian parsley
1/2 cup olive oil
1/3 cup red wine vinegar
1/4 cup (packed) fresh cilantro
2 garlic cloves, peeled
3/4 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon salt

DIRECTIONS

Puree all ingredients in processor. Transfer to bowl. (Can be made 2 hours ahead. Cover and let stand at room temperature.)

Yield: 1 cup

(on website)

Pasta Frola de Dulce de Membrillo - Quince Tart

INGREDIENTS

2 cups flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup sugar
1 stick butter, chilled

1 teaspoon vanilla
1 egg
1 egg yolk
2 tablespoons milk
1 cup dulce de membrillo (quince paste), homemade or store-bought
1/4 cup pineapple preserves (optional)
1/4 cup seedless raspberry jam (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Mix the dry ingredients (flour, salt, baking powder, and sugar) together in a medium bowl. Cut the butter into pieces, and mix butter into dry ingredients using a pastry cutter or 2 knives, until well blended.

Stir egg, egg yolk and milk together and add to flour mixture, blending gently with a fork until dough comes together. Knead a couple of times to just barely mix the dough, which should not be too crumbly nor too wet. If needed, add an extra tablespoon or so of flour or milk. Wrap dough in plastic wrap and chill for at least 30 minutes.

Add dulce de membrillo (and pineapple preserves and raspberry jam, if using) to a small pot, with 1-2 tablespoons of water. Heat over low heat, stirring frequently, until mixture has melted enough to be smooth and have a spreadable consistency. (Add a little more water if necessary.) Remove from heat and let cool slightly.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter a 9" tart pan with a removable bottom. Roll out about 3/4 of the dough on a floured surface in a circle large enough to line the bottom and sides of the tart pan. Place the dough in the pan. Spread the filling evenly over the dough.

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Roll the remaining dough into a circle, and cut thin strips of dough, using them to make a lattice pattern over the top of the tart.

Brush the tart lightly with an egg wash (1 egg thinned with 1 tablespoon water), and bake until golden brown (about 30 minutes).

Sprinkle with powdered sugar. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Yield: 6 servings