

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry

October 2010 – Hungarian Halloween

Every year I have a party on Halloween and make a big pot of soup. This year I wanted to pay homage to my Hungarian mother. In Hungary, the soup or stew is called gulyás. In English, we say goulash. Any way you say it, it is delicious.

A classic Hungarian salad incorporates cucumber, sour cream and dill. I have modified the recipe to make the salad into an appetizer that is easy to pick up with your hands. The bright freshness of the cucumber and dill call out for a wine that has good acidity, plenty of fruit flavor and is not too heavy. Cserszegi Fűszeres is hard to say but easy to drink. It makes a lovely white wine with notes of lychee & lemon curd on the nose and has the right acid and body for the delicate appetizer.

When everyone has come in from the cold business of gathering candy, Goulash Soup is hearty and warming. Add some coarsely chopped tomato and red or green bell peppers with the potatoes if you want to up the veggie portion of the dish. Egri Bikavér is Hungary's most famous red wine. It is a blend of grapes like Kadarka and Kékfrankos. Rich and rustic it will stand up to the big flavors of the soup.

To end the party, each year we open a bottle of Vin du Bugey-Cerdon. It is the perfect wine to pair with the super sweet chocolates and candies that are leftover from the "handout" bowl (my kids won't part with their hoard). It is sweet, pink and sparkling. Each of these wines may take a bit of searching to find but your efforts will be rewarded.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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

Herbed Cucumber Rounds

INGREDIENTS

4 oz cream cheese, softened
2 tablespoons thinly sliced fresh dill
2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh chives
1/2 teaspoon finely grated fresh lemon zest
1/4 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1/8 teaspoon table salt
Pinch of cayenne, or to taste
2 medium seedless cucumber (usually plastic-wrapped)
Extra dill for garnish
Coarse sea salt for sprinkling

DIRECTIONS

Stir together cream cheese, herbs, zest, lemon juice, table salt, and cayenne.

Peel the cucumber and cut into 1/2" rounds. Carefully scoop out the center to form a small indentation in cucumber making a small bowl out of each cylinder. Fill the indentation in each cucumber with 1/2 teaspoon herbed cream cheese. Sprinkle with coarse sea salt, garnish with dill sprig and serve immediately.

Yield: about 48 rounds

Goulash Soup

INGREDIENTS

1 oz. vegetable oil
1 lb. beef cubes
1 lb. coarsely chopped onions
3 large potatoes, bite sized pieces
1 tbsp. tomato puree
1 teaspoon hot Hungarian paprika
1 teaspoon sweet Hungarian paprika
1/2 teaspoon marjoram

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Salt, pepper and caraway seeds

DIRECTIONS

Sauté onions and garlic and add spices. Add meat, stir once, then add tomato puree. Continue stirring until browned.

Cover with water and simmer slowly for 20 minutes. Add potatoes and simmer until potatoes are soft. Adjust seasoning and add a little more water if necessary.

Yield: One big pot of soup