

# PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



## March 2013 – Spring into Green

Spring has arrived in Northern California! I was so inspired by the beautiful green hills, I put together a menu with bright green ingredients and paired them with “green” beverages.

Cocktails are a festive way to start any evening. The Green and Gold cocktail recipe is based on verjuice, the non-alcoholic juice from the green harvest of grapes. A green harvest is performed when the winemaker chooses to reduce his crop mid-way through the season by removing some grape clusters from each vine. The grapes which remain receive all the energy of the plant and their flavor is intensified. If desired, the unripe grapes can be pressed into a non-alcoholic juice and used in recipes place of vinegar or in cocktails like the Green and Gold. Asian flavors pair well with this cocktail because of its sweet and sour profile. I like it with Concord Costco’s, CJ Foods, Chicken Cilantro Won Tons. They fry up in eight minutes and are perfect with the Sweet and Sour Dipping Sauce. The chicken is light and the herbal flavor of the cilantro gives them a fresh flavor. The sweetness of the dipping sauce offsets the tart beverage.

Verde means green in many languages. Vinho Verde literally means green wine. It is made in Portugal, is slightly effervescent and comes in red, white or rosé. The white wines are light yellow or slightly peachy in color, around 8.5 to 11% alcohol, and are made from local grape varieties. Pair the white variety with an entrée salad like a Prawn Salad with Cilantro Vinaigrette for a light, springtime meal. If you can’t find a Vinho Verde, Sauvignon Blanc will substitute nicely.

The greenest beverage I have ever seen is Absinthe, an anise-flavored spirit which contains trace amounts of thujone, once

thought to have effects on the human brain similar to THC. For this reason, Absinthe was banned for many years. However, the hallucinogenic properties associated with it were proven false and it is now readily available. For fun, I found a unique recipe for a Fennel Cake with Anise Syrup. It has an almost pudding-like texture and I found it interesting to experience different mediums delivering similar flavors.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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## Green and Gold

### INGREDIENTS

1 750ml bottle Verjus  
2 cups brandy  
40 oz. ginger beer  
2 fresh limes sliced

### DIRECTIONS

Mix verjuice, brandy and ginger ale in large pitcher. Pour over glasses filled with ice and add two slices of lime to each glass and serve.

Yield: 8 servings

## Sweet and Sour Dipping Sauce

### INGREDIENTS

2 cloves garlic, minced  
2 tablespoons sugar  
2 tablespoons rice vinegar  
2 tablespoons soy sauce  
2 tablespoons safflower oil  
2 teaspoons sesame oil  
½-1 teaspoons chili garlic sauce (to taste)

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## DIRECTIONS

Warm ingredient in small sauce pan until combined.

Yield: ¼ cup

## Prawn Salad with Cilantro Vinaigrette

### INGREDIENTS

#### Salad

8 large, cleaned, chilled prawns  
1 avocado, sliced  
1-2 slices of red onion, separated into rings  
1 large tomato, cut into 1/8 wedges

#### Dressing

1/2 cup of buttermilk  
1/4 cup of olive oil mayonnaise  
1/4 cup of sour cream  
1/4 cup of fresh cilantro, chopped  
1 small jalapeno, seeds removed & chopped  
1 green onion, chopped  
1 clove of garlic, minced  
Juice from 1/2 a lime  
1/4 tsp. cumin  
1/4 tsp. oregano  
Sea salt and freshly cracked pepper, to taste

### DIRECTIONS

Blend together the buttermilk, mayonnaise, sour cream, cilantro, jalapeno, green onion, minced garlic, lime juice, cumin, oregano, sea salt, and freshly cracked pepper, to taste, using an immersion blender until well combined and creamy. Set aside to let the flavors mingle.

Place some chopped romaine in a serving bowl. Toss the lettuces with the dressing.

Arrange avocado, tomato and prawns artfully on top and drizzle on a bit more dressing overall.

Yield: 4 servings plus extra dressing

## Fennel Cake with Anise Syrup

### INGREDIENTS

#### Cake

1 tablespoon fennel seeds  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter  
1 fennel bulb (8 ounces)—halved, cored and thinly sliced  
1 cup whole blanched almonds, coarsely chopped  
1 cup shelled unsalted pistachios  
6 large eggs, separated  
1 cup sugar

#### Syrup

4 star anise pods  
1 teaspoon fennel seeds  
1/2 teaspoon anise seeds  
1 cup water  
1/2 cup sugar  
1 small fennel bulb—halved, cored and thinly sliced

Unsweetened whipped cream, for serving

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350°. Butter a 10 1/2-inch spring form pan. Line the bottom of the pan with parchment paper and butter the paper. In a medium skillet, toast the fennel seeds until fragrant, about 3 minutes. Transfer to a plate to cool. Melt the butter in the skillet. Add the fennel and cook over moderate heat until tender and golden brown, about 10 minutes. Let cool.

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In a food processor, pulse the almonds until finely ground. Transfer to a small bowl. Repeat with the pistachios, adding them to the almonds. In a large bowl, using a handheld mixer, beat the egg yolks with the sugar at high speed until light in color, about 2 minutes. At low speed, blend in the toasted fennel seeds and the ground nuts. Stir in the cooked fennel.

In a large, stainless steel bowl, beat the egg whites to firm peaks. Fold one-third of the beaten whites into the cake batter to lighten it, then fold in the remaining whites until no streaks of whites remain. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan, and bake for about 40 minutes, or until the cake is just set. Transfer the cake to a rack and let cool for 20 minutes.

In a small skillet, toast the star anise, fennel and anise seeds over moderate heat until fragrant, about 3 minutes. Add the water and sugar and bring to a boil. Add the sliced fennel, cover and simmer over low heat until translucent, about 20 minutes. Let cool until warm.

Remove the sides of the springform pan. Transfer the cake to a platter and cut it into wedges. Place a slice of cake on each plate, drizzle some syrup on the side and dollop whipped cream on top.

The cake can be kept at room temperature overnight. The syrup can be refrigerated overnight; bring to room temperature before serving.

Yield: 8 servings