

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



July 2017 – Island Dreaming

When summer hits Northern California with the full force of its heat, I like to break out the mocktails and cocktails. They are cool and refreshing in the heat of the summer because they can be taken down to almost freezing. This dinner centers on an island theme, with tropical favorites like coconuts, plantains and papayas. You may even be inspired to get out your hula skirt or don a flower lei.

Start off the evening with Coconut Mojitos made with coconut water, fresh mint, and lime. A bit of sugar in the cocktail offsets the heat in the Spicy Sweet Dipping Sauce for crispy fried plantains. Plantains are a member of the banana family but are often prepared as a savory dish. Although they need to be twice-cooked, the first step can even be done ahead so that all you have left is the final fry just before serving.

Continue the evening's island theme with Seared Tuna Burgers and Hawaiian Cole Slaw. Tuna makes such a beautiful burger with its cool red center and meaty texture. The tuna is seasoned simply with salt and pepper. This allows the garlic-ginger aioli to stand out. Pair with the Cucumber Cocktail, which is delicate in flavor and will be a supportive partner that won't fight for the spotlight. To complete the trio, Hawaiian Cole Slaw has classic bits of pineapple for sweetness and apple cider vinaigrette for punch.

Keep the end of this island meal simple by serving a fresh papaya filled with raspberries for dessert. And, don't forget to squeeze on a bit of lime to bring out the sweetness of the fruit. Furthermore, as a fun, non-alcoholic option at any time during this meal, try a Ginger Rosemary Zinger. The combination of spicy ginger with herbal

rosemary is unexpectedly delicious, and both are known to aid in digestion.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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Coconut Mojito

INGREDIENTS

1 cup packed fresh mint leaves
4 ounces fresh lime juice
4 ounces simple syrup (equal amounts sugar and water heated until sugar dissolves; cool)
16 ounces coconut water, chilled
8 ounces white rum, chilled
Ice

DIRECTIONS

Put the mint, lime juice, and simple syrup in a pitcher. Muddle for a few seconds to release the flavor from the mint. Pour in the coconut water and rum. Add ice to fill a pitcher, and stir to combine and chill.

Yield: 4 servings

Fried Plantains with Spicy Sweet Dipping Sauce

INGREDIENTS

Canola oil, for frying
3 green plantains
¼ cup garlic, minced
Lime juice
Salt and fresh cracked black pepper
1/8 teaspoon red pepper flakes
Dash cayenne pepper

Dipping Sauce

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2 fresh limes
2 tablespoons sweet chili sauce
1 tablespoon sweet hot mustard
1 teaspoon horseradish, prepared
1 tablespoon rice vinegar, natural

DIRECTIONS

In a bowl, combine the juice of 1/2 of lime, sweet chili sauce, mustard, horseradish and vinegar. Set aside.

Heat 1/2" of oil in 12" pan with a heavy bottom.

Cut plantain on diagonal into 1-inch thick pieces; remove peel.

When oil is hot, add the plantains and fry both sides until golden.

Drain on paper bag. Sprinkle with salt and minced garlic while hot. With a flat bottomed, heat proof, glass bowl, smash plantains evenly flat, embedding garlic into them.

Return to hot oil and fry until dark golden brown. Remove, drain again on a paper bag. Season with lime juice, more coarse salt, red pepper flakes, and cayenne pepper.

Serve while hot with dipping sauce.

Yield: 4-6 servings

Cucumber Cocktail

INGREDIENTS

1 cup cucumber vodka
1 cup tonic water
1/2 cup cucumber juice
1/4 cup fresh lime juice

1/4 cup simple syrup (equal amounts sugar and water heated until sugar dissolves; cool)
Handful fresh mint leaves
Ice cubes, for serving

DIRECTIONS

Divide the ingredients in half, add each half to a cocktail shaker and shake to combine. Pour over rocks glasses filled with ice and serve.

Yield: 4 servings

Seared Tuna Burgers with Ginger-Garlic Mayo

INGREDIENTS

4 3/4-inch-thick tuna steaks (each about 5 to 6 ounces)
4 teaspoons olive oil
2 tablespoon minced peeled fresh ginger
2 garlic clove, minced
1/2 cup mayonnaise
2 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
4 oversize sesame-seed sandwich rolls, toasted
1 bunch arugula, stems trimmed

DIRECTIONS

Sprinkle tuna with salt and pepper. Heat olive oil in heavy medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add tuna to skillet and cook until brown outside and just opaque in center, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer tuna to plate.
Add ginger and garlic to same skillet; stir 30 seconds. Scrape into small bowl. Mix in mayonnaise and lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper.

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Spread bottoms of rolls with mayonnaise mixture. Top with tuna, arugula and tops of rolls.

Yield: 4 servings

Hawaiian Coleslaw

INGREDIENTS

1 (8.5 ounce) package coleslaw mix
1 (15 ounce) can crushed pineapple, drained
1/2 cup finely chopped onion
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
2 tablespoons brown sugar
1 teaspoon dried cilantro

DIRECTIONS

Mix coleslaw mix, pineapple, and onion together in a bowl.

Whisk mayonnaise, vinegar, brown sugar, cilantro, salt, and pepper together in a bowl until dressing is smooth. Pour dressing over coleslaw mixture and toss to coat.

Yield: 4-6 servings

Ginger Rosemary Zinger

INGREDIENTS

1-2 tsp. ginger juice (like The Ginger People's Organic Ginger Juice)
Juice of a wedge of lime
Sugar, honey or sweetener to taste
Club soda
Sprigs of rosemary and leaves
Bits of candied ginger

DIRECTIONS

Mix the ginger juice, lime juice, sugar or sweetener, and club soda together. Throw in

some rosemary leaves. Stir. Garnish with a sprig of rosemary stem and bits of candied ginger (FYI: If you are planning on adding bits of candied ginger into the drink, it will become sweeter due to the sugar around the candied ginger).

Yield: 1 serving