

# PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



## *Kid's Comfort*

As we move towards winter and say goodbye to Indian summer, I look forward to classic comfort foods. This month, I have put together some of my favorite recipes that are simple, delicious, and kid-friendly. Of course, that doesn't mean there aren't some fantastic adult beverages that will make them taste even better. Get ready for a wonderful family meal that is sure to please every palate.

Caesar Salad is a staple in my house and my dad makes a terrific dressing that we all love. But, some folks just don't like anchovy coming anywhere near their Caesar. Here is a recipe that has the expected Parmesan, garlic, and lemon combination but without the fish. I like bright, acidic sparkling wine with salad. Blanc de Noir sparkling wine, made from Pinot Noir grapes, is highly suitable because it has bold flavors and even a bit of earthiness to complement the flavor of the Parmesan cheese. In the end, choose your preferred type of sparkling because just about any will work with this salad, even a bit of sweetness if you are inclined.

One of my beloved comfort foods is Shepherd's Pie. I offered up an elaborate recipe some years ago and was educated by Sol Fisher, one of our devoted readers, about the origins of this dish. He explained that Shepherd's Pie is a, "richly filling pudding of mashed potatoes and ground meat, properly named Shepherd's Pie because it was a traditional dish of English shepherds, sustaining them for a whole day out in the country with their sheep." This recipe is simple and easy to adjust to your family's palate. I think it is a great way to sneak in vegetables for kids who usually turn up their noses at anything green. As a bonus, the flavorful ground beef is perfect with a meaty Syrah wine for the adults.

For dessert, I am delighted to share with you this recipe for Death-By-Chocolate Pie. After years of making chocolate cream pies that never set up, this one can happily be removed with a pie server, not a spoon. The recipe is written with a chocolate crust, but feel free to substitute a flour crust if you prefer. As for beverage pairings, this pie is so rich and creamy; I think it is best with water, coffee, or tea. In my opinion, wine is too sour and milk is too rich.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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## **No Anchovy Caesar Salad Dressing**

### **INGREDIENTS**

- 2 tbsp. mayonnaise
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 large garlic cloves, pressed
- ¼ cup fresh squeezed lemon juice
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup mild or extra light olive oil (not extra virgin)
- ½ cup shredded Parmesan cheese

### **DIRECTIONS**

Place first six ingredients in the bowl of a mini food processor. Process until smooth and well blended. Add the olive oil and process until thick and creamy. Add Parmesan cheese and pulse to fully combine.

Yield: 1½ cups

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## Shepherd's Pie

### INGREDIENTS

1-pound ground beef  
1 cup chopped onion (optional)  
2 garlic cloves, chopped/1 tsp. garlic powder  
1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce  
1 tbsp. flour  
2 cups frozen vegetables (green beans, corn, peas, carrots – your choice)  
2 large russet potatoes, cooked and mashed  
2 tbsp. butter  
¼ cup milk, cream, or sour cream  
¼ cup shredded Cheddar cheese

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°. Coat a 2-quart casserole dish or 10" pie pan with cooking spray.

In a large skillet over medium heat, cook the ground beef until it gives off its liquid and fat. Drain any unwanted fat and add onion and garlic. Season generously with salt and pepper and sauté until onion is soft. Sprinkle with flour, cook, and stir for 5 more minutes until beef is fully cooked and flour is fully incorporated. Add the vegetables and just heat through. Taste to adjust seasoning one last time. Transfer beef mixture to prepared dish.

In a mixing bowl, mix together the mashed potatoes, butter, and milk. Season to taste. Spread evenly over meat mixture.

Bake in a preheated oven for 15 to 20 minutes or until potatoes start to brown on top. Sprinkle with cheese and continue cooking for 5 minutes or until cheese melts.

Yield: one pie, 4-6 servings

## Death-By-Chocolate Pie

### INGREDIENTS

24 chocolate sandwich cookies  
1/4 cup butter, softened  
1 cup heavy cream  
1 (12 ounce) package semi-sweet choc chips  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 pinch salt  
2 cups heavy cream  
1/4 cup white sugar  
1 cup heavy cream, chilled  
1/4 cup white sugar

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 9" spring form pan with 2¾" sides or 9" pie pan.

In a food processor, crush cookies and add softened butter or margarine. Press mixture evenly into greased pan. Bake in preheated oven for five minutes and then allow to cool.

Combine one cup cream, chocolate, vanilla extract, and salt in an 8-10 cup, microwave safe bowl. Heat until chocolate starts to melt, about 1-2 minutes. Stir until chocolate has completely combined with cream.

Allow chocolate to cool to room temperature, stirring occasionally.

In a large bowl, beat two cups chilled cream with ¼ cup sugar. Beat until stiff peaks form. Fold whipped cream into cooled chocolate mixture. Pour into cooled crust.

Chill least six hours before serving. Top with remaining one cup cream beaten with 1/4 cup sugar.

Yield: one 9-inch pie