

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



November 2017 – Savory Thanksgiving

There are five flavors that human beings can taste: sweet, sour, salty, bitter and umami. Most people immediately understand the first four, but umami is a bit more challenging. Here is an easy way to understand it: umami is “savory,” like the savory flavor of classic Thanksgiving stuffing. Stuffing is what inspired me to write about umami in this Thanksgiving-themed article. So, in honor of umami flavor, here are some recipes that work right into your Thanksgiving dinner plan.

Olives are brimming with umami flavor. They are more than just salty, they are “meaty.” To bring out their umami goodness, try the recipe below. This combination of floral lemon zest, earthy coriander and herbal bay leaf wakes-up your taste buds. Of course, it takes a special wine to stand-up to these pungent flavors. That wine is an Amontillado Sherry. Sherry is not expensive and can be found in just about any store that sells wine. It is light, dry, and a perfect appetizer wine because it goes with a host of flavors. You will love its nutty, slightly salty quality.

If you hadn’t already guessed, the customary umami dish to go with your roast turkey is a Classic Bread Dressing. Dressing is simply stuffing that is baked outside the bird. I choose it because it reduces the potential for cross-contamination from the bird. The eggs in this recipe result in an incredibly moist, quiche-like texture. The umami flavor comes primarily from onions and chicken broth, but sage also adds to it. As for the wine, I love Pinot Noir with roast turkey and dressing. Pinot is lower in tannins than most red wines and has both earthy flavors as well as delicate fruit flavors. The earthy flavors echo the herbs,

and lower tannins result in a softer wine to complement the tender meat.

Why not try something different this year and make a traditional Indian Pudding to end your meal? It gets its umami flavor from the rich caramelized flavor of savory molasses. Furthermore, its classic pumpkin pie spices keep you from missing the ubiquitous pie. Additionally, since it has a lovely texture and is not too sweet, it goes well with wine – pumpkin pie does not go with wine; it is too sweet and too soft. My choice for this dessert: a late harvest Sauvignon Blanc. In general, Sauvignon Blanc has excellent acidity to offset the sugar and results in a delicious late harvest wine. Late harvest Sauvignon Blanc grapes have intense flavors of ripe pineapple and apricot. Slightly spicy and quite sweet, this wine will not be overpowered by the spice in the pudding and has enough sweetness to stand-up to the sugar.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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Marinated Olives

INGREDIENTS

1-pound assorted olives, unpitted (Lucques, Nicoise and Castelvetrano make a great combo)
Zest of one lemon
2 tablespoons whole coriander seeds
1/3 cups extra virgin olive oil
3 dried bay leaves

DIRECTIONS

Combine and drain your olives in whatever proportion you like. Place lemon zest in a

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small pan or pot, and as you add the coriander, slightly crush them with your fingers. Cover with the 1/3 cup of extra virgin olive oil and heat on medium-low heat until it starts to simmer. Remove pan from heat. Pour the oil over the olives and mix together. Let the flavors infuse for at least an hour at room temperature. Cover and refrigerate overnight to up to a month.

Yield: one pound of olives

Classic Bread Dressing

INGREDIENTS

¾ cup (1½ sticks) unsalted butter plus more for baking dish
1 pound good-quality day-old white bread, torn into 1" pieces (about 10 cups)
2½ cups chopped yellow onions
1½ cups ¼" slices celery
½ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage
1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2½ cups low-sodium chicken broth, divided
2 large eggs

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 250°F. Butter a 13x9x2" baking dish and set aside. Scatter bread in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake, stirring occasionally, until dried out, about 1 hour. Let cool; transfer to a very large bowl.

Meanwhile, melt ¾ cup butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat; add onions and celery. Stir often until just beginning to brown, about 10 minutes. Add to bowl with

bread; stir in herbs, salt, and pepper. Drizzle in 1¼ cups broth and toss gently. Let cool.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Whisk 1¼ cups broth and eggs in a small bowl. Add to bread mixture; fold gently until thoroughly combined. Transfer to prepared dish, cover with foil, and bake until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center of dressing registers 160°F, about 40 minutes.

DO AHEAD: Dressing can be made one day ahead. Uncover; let cool. Cover; chill.

Bake dressing, uncovered, until set and top is browned and crisp, 40-45 minutes longer (if chilled, add 10-15 minutes).

Yield: 8-10 servings

Indian Pudding

INGREDIENTS

5½ cups whole milk
1 cup (packed) golden brown sugar
2/3 cup yellow cornmeal
2 tablespoons dark molasses
2 tablespoons ground ginger
2 tablespoons ground cinnamon
½ cup of raisins (opt.)
¼ cup unsalted butter
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
Vanilla ice cream

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 325°F. Butter 13x9x2" glass baking dish. Combine first 6 ingredients in heavy large saucepan. Whisk over medium-high heat until mixture thickens but can still be poured, about 15 minutes. Remove from heat. Whisk in butter and vanilla extract. Stir in raisins if using.

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Transfer pudding mixture to prepared baking dish. Bake pudding until golden brown and center no longer moves when pan is shaken, 1½ to 2 hours. Cool 10 minutes. Scoop pudding into bowls. Top with ice cream.

Yield: 8 servings