

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



March 2018 –Orange You Glad It’s Still Winter?

Although spring is knocking on the door in Northern California, many of winter’s best fruits and vegetables are still plentiful and in-season. Here is a vegetarian meal featuring the best of winter’s orange-colored fruits and vegetables paired with non-alcoholic beverages. After a long winter of heavy comfort foods, this is the perfect meal for those days when you want something a little lighter.

Salads come in many colors and with many different primary ingredients. This Winter Citrus Salad is based on citrus fruits and is refreshingly sweet and sour at the same time. We are fortunate to get blood oranges and pomelos in California. They are supremely delicious. Pair this citrus salad with ice-cold water (still or sparkling) and a touch of citrus. To flavor the water, pick your favorite citrus fruit: lemon, lime, or one from the salad.

A frittata is basically a quiche without a crust. This orange-colored Butternut Squash Frittata is warm and filling. The caramelized butternut squash brings a toothsome texture and a touch of sweetness. The eggs, cheese, and fried sage punch up of the umami. Serve with crusty bread or a side salad made with fresh greens. To pair with this dish, try an herbal-scented water. I like fresh basil, but feel free to experiment with any fresh herb you like. Crush the leaves of the herb before adding it to the water to release the oils for maximum flavor.

Soufflés have the most divine, silky texture. This Sweet Potato and Apple Soufflé continues the orange colored theme and results in a not-too-sweet finish to your meal. Of course, you do have to serve them just after they come out of the oven. To make this easier to accomplish, you can

make the custard up to five hours in advance and put the soufflés in the oven just as you are finishing your main course. The secret is a pinch of cream of tartar or a drop of lemon juice to help stabilize the eggs whites and help them keep their loft. Since the soufflés will still be warm, serve with a hot beverage. This way the temperatures of the beverage and the food won’t clash. Spicy chai tea mimics the allspice in the soufflé, but a simple black tea or Earl Grey would do just fine.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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Winter Citrus Salad

INGREDIENTS

2 blood oranges or tangerines
1 pink grapefruit
1 navel orange
Salt
½ small red onion or 1 shallot, chopped
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon sherry vinegar
½ teaspoon honey
Lime or lemon juice to taste
¼ teaspoon freshly chopped tarragon or a pinch dried

DIRECTIONS

Peel citrus, removing as much pith as possible, and slice into wheels. Remove any pits, layer fruit on a serving dish, sprinkle with salt and garnish with chopped onion.

Whisk together olive oil, vinegar, honey, lime juice and tarragon until well combined;

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taste, adjust seasoning as needed and drizzle over salad.

Yield: 4 servings

Butternut Squash Frittata

INGREDIENTS

8 eggs
½ cup milk
2 cloves garlic
¾ cup freshly grated Parmesan or Pecorino Romano cheese, divided
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
¾ pound butternut squash (1 small or half of a medium butternut), peeled and chopped into ½-inch cubes
¾ cup chopped yellow onion
¾ teaspoon sea salt, divided
Freshly ground black pepper
16 fresh sage leaves (roughly ¼ cup), chopped, fried in 1 to 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit. In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, garlic, ¼ teaspoon salt and several twists of freshly ground black pepper. Whisk in about half of the cheese.

In a 10-inch, well-seasoned cast iron skillet or oven-safe sauté pan, warm 1 tablespoon olive oil over medium heat. Add the chopped onion and stir to coat. Cook for a few minutes, until the onions are starting to turn translucent. Add the squash and ½ teaspoon salt and stir. Cover the pan and reduce heat slightly to avoid burning the contents. Cook until the butternut is tender and cooked through, stirring occasionally, about 8 minutes.

Uncover the pan, raise the heat back to medium. Cook until the excess moisture has evaporated and the butternut squash is starting to turn golden on the edges, about 5 to 10 minutes (add another little splash of olive oil if the squash starts sticking to the pan).

Turn the heat down to low. Arrange the butternut in an even layer in the bottom of the skillet. Whisk the egg mixture one last time and pour it into the pan. Sprinkle the frittata with the remaining cheese. Put the pan in the oven and bake until you can shake the pan (wear oven mitts!) and see that the middle is just barely set, about 14 to 17 minutes.

While the frittata is baking, fry the sage. Heat oil in a large (read: 12 inch) skillet over medium heat. Once the oil is shimmering, add the sage and toss to coat. Let the sage get crispy (but not brown) before transferring it to a plate covered with a paper towel. Sprinkle the fried sage lightly with sea salt and set it aside.

Once the frittata is done, sprinkle fried sage on top and let the frittata rest a few minutes before slicing it into 6 large or 8 smaller wedges.

Yield: 6-8 servings

Sweet Potato Apple Soufflé

INGREDIENTS

1 large sweet potato
1 medium apple, such as Granny Smith
1/8 tsp. salt
½ tsp. ground allspice

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3 tbsp. granulated sugar
1 large egg yolk
4 large egg whites
A pinch of cream of tartar or a drop of
lemon juice
2 tbsp. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. confectioners' sugar

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Place sweet potato on the sheet and cover with foil. Bake 20 minutes. Add apple. Cover and bake until tender, about 20 minutes. Remove from oven, uncover, and transfer to a wire rack. Let cool completely, about 15 minutes. Leave oven on.

Transfer sweet potato and apple to a food processor. Add salt, allspice, and 1 tablespoon granulated sugar; puree. Pulse in 1 to 2 tablespoons water, if needed, to achieve a smooth consistency. Pass through a medium sieve into a medium bowl. Stir in egg yolk and flour; set aside.

Put egg whites in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Beat on medium-high speed until soft peaks form. Gradually add remaining 2 tablespoons granulated sugar, beating until stiff, glossy peaks form. (Do not overbeat.) Whisk one-third of the egg white mixture into the sweet potato mixture. Using a rubber spatula, gently fold in remaining egg white mixture.

Divide among six 6-ounce ramekins. Place on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake until puffed and cooked through, about 14 minutes. Sprinkle with confectioners' sugar and serve immediately.

Yield: 6 servings