

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



May 2019 – Warm Memories

For many of us, significant foods from childhood bring back warm memories. Since my mom loved to cook, it would take a great deal of space to talk about all the wonderful things she made for our family. I settled on these three recipes that come together as a cohesive menu. Each is paired with a substantially different beverage—a blonde ale, a red wine, and a sweet sparkling wine. Because of this diversity, I hope each of you finds something appealing.

Start your evening with a time-honored party snack, the Classic Chex Mix. This crunchy snack brings back fond memories of picking through my haul for my favorite squares and gets its savory goodness from Worcestershire, butter, garlic, and onion. Plus, it has the one-two punch of salt and fat that makes it work with just about any alcoholic beverage. I think a blonde ale is a great choice because it is subtle and refreshing. Blonde ale is not particularly malty or hoppy and offers a bit of fruit flavor—like green apple, berries, or pear. Most importantly, the lack of hops makes it less bitter than other beers like IPAs or stouts. Since bitter drinks accentuate the bitterness in foods, without the hops, the slightly bitter Worcestershire stays in balance.

Stuffed Peppers is a main dish that has attractive, pre-measured servings. Since I didn't like bell peppers as a child, my mom thoughtfully kept some of the mixture separate and made little meatballs that she cooked in the sauce. Now I love the sweet/bitter combination of the pepper and, as a bonus, the peppers make this dish the perfect companion for a rich Cabernet Sauvignon. You see, the flavor of bell pepper comes from a chemical called pyrazine. Cabernet Sauvignon happens to

have large quantities of this chemical. Furthermore, Cabernet is great with all kinds of beef dishes because the fat from the beef smooths out the substantial tannins in the Cab.

For dessert, my mom let the special person of the day choose what we were having. If I got to choose, it was always the Fruit Basket Cake from the Home Bakery in Vallejo. Alas, that bakery has closed, but I found a recipe that has the strawberry, banana, and pineapple combination that I love. If you are inclined to pair this cake with wine, make it sweet and festive, like a sparkling Prosecco from Italy.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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Chex Mix

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups Corn Chex™ cereal
- 3 cups Rice Chex™ cereal
- 3 cups Wheat Chex™ cereal
- 1 cup mixed nuts
- 1 cup bite-size pretzels
- 1 cup garlic flavored bite-size bagel chips or regular sized bagel chips, broken into 1-inch pieces
- 6 Tablespoons butter or margarine
- 2 Tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1½ teaspoons seasoned salt
- ¾ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon onion powder

DIRECTIONS

In a large microwavable bowl, mix cereals, nuts, pretzels, and bagel chips; set aside. In a small microwavable bowl, microwave butter

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uncovered on high, about 40 seconds or until melted. Stir in seasonings. Pour over cereal mixture; stir until evenly coated.

Microwave uncovered on high, 5 to 6 minutes, thoroughly stirring every 2 minutes. Spread on paper towels to cool. Store in airtight container.

Yield: about 10 cups

Ground Beef Stuffed Peppers

INGREDIENTS

6 large green peppers, tops cut off to make hollow. Chop up tops to make ¼ cup
1 lb. beef, ground
½ cup onion, chopped
1 16-ounce can tomato, diced
1½ cups long grain rice, cooked
1 cup water
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded, divided
4 cups marinara sauce, homemade or your favorite

DIRECTIONS

Cook the whole green peppers uncovered in boiling water for about 5 minutes. Invert to drain well. Sprinkle inside lightly with salt.

In a skillet, cook ground beef, onion, and ¼ cup chopped pepper till meat is browned and vegetables are tender. Remove from heat and drain off excess fat. Add drained tomatoes, salt, Worcestershire, and a dash of pepper. Add rice and one cup of cheese. Stuff peppers with meat mixture. Pour two cups of marinara sauce into an 11X9 baking dish and place peppers on top of sauce. Pour remaining sauce all over tops of peppers.

Bake, covered, in a 350-degree oven for 25 minutes. Remove cover, top with remaining cup of cheese, and bake five more minutes until cheese is melted.

Yield: 3-4 servings

Fruit Basket Cake

INGREDIENTS

Cake:

1 package white, yellow, or vanilla cake mix
1 cup strawberries, sliced
1 cup crushed canned pineapple, drained
1 large banana, sliced thin

Custard:

1 cup milk
2 extra large egg yolks
½ cup sugar
¼ cup flour
½ Tablespoon butter

Frosting:

2 cups heavy cream
2 Tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla.

DIRECTIONS

Cake:

Prepare cake batter as directed on the box. Divide batter into two 9-inch rounds. Bake and cool completely. Carefully slice each cake round in half to create four even rounds.

Custard:

Bring milk to a boil in a saucepan. Pour in a bowl and add egg yolks. Add sugar and cream until the mixture is pale yellow. Beat in flour.

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Slowly add boiled milk to the egg mixture. When well combined, return it to the saucepan. Bring to a boil while whisking the entire time. Remove from heat and whisk in butter and vanilla extract. Cool completely.

Frosting:

Beat heavy cream, sugar, and vanilla on high until stiff peaks are formed.

Assembly:

Place the first round, cut-side down, onto a cake plate. Add two heaping tablespoons of custard to the center of the cake and spread the custard evenly. Reserve $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch of space from the edge. (Due to the weight of the cake, the filling will spread out to the edge when stacked). Evenly arrange crushed pineapple on top of custard. Repeat with remaining layers, a different fruit for each layer, always cut-side down.

Using an offset spatula, spread frosting over the cake and cover completely. Keep refrigerated until serving.

Yield: 8 servings