



The Casual Vineyard Table, From Wente Vineyards

Recipes by Carolyn Wente and Kimball Jones

Cantaloupe and Shrimp Salad

Try this recipe chilled on a warm sunny day. In fact, by refrigerating before serving, the flavors marry, making the salad's sweet-sour contrast even better. This particular medley of tastes (the cantaloupe-vinegar-lime juice and the mint-ginger-basil) comes together in a dish that a number of wines will enhance. Crisp white wines and dry Rosés are among my favorites to serve with it.

1/3 cup freshly squeezed lime juice (about 4 limes)
2 tablespoons rice wine vinegar
1 large cantaloupe, cut into 1/3-inch dice (about 4 cups)
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon minced peeled fresh ginger
1/4 cup minced red onion
1/4 cup coarsely chopped fresh basil
1/4 cup coarsely chopped fresh mint
1-pound medium (31 to 35 count) shrimp, peeled, deveined, and cooked
1/2 cup pecans, toasted and chopped
1 cup seedless red flame grapes, halved
2 ripe avocados, pitted and halved
Juice and finely grated zest of 1 lemon
2 to 3 tablespoons aioli

In a small bowl, stir together the lime juice and vinegar. In a large bowl, combine the cantaloupe, salt, pepper, ginger, onion, basil, and mint. Toss gently. Add the shrimp, pecans, grapes, and lime juice mixture and toss again. Taste and adjust the seasonings if necessary. Cover and refrigerate for at least 20 minutes or up to 2 hours.

To serve, peel an avocado half and cut lengthwise into 1/4 inch slices. Fan the slices on a plate. Repeat with the remaining avocado halves. Squeeze lemon juice over the avocados to prevent them from browning, and garnish with lemon zest. Using a slotted spoon, divide the melon and shrimp among the 4 plates, placing a scoop at the base of each avocado fan. Garnish with aioli and serve immediately.



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Thyme-Barbecued New York Steak with Corn and Blue Cheese Pudding

When I put meals together, there are certain combinations that I like to experiment with. Combining sweet flavors with acidity and salt is one of these. In this pudding, the juxtaposition of sweet corn and salty, acidic blue cheese holds its own against the hearty barbecued steak. The easiest way to cut the corn off the cob is to place it root side down in a mixing bowl. Hold the tip of the cob with one hand and cut the kernels off into the bowl. This well-balanced meat dish is wonderful with hearty red wines such as Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, and Cabernet as well as white wines that are of equal weight and body. Accompany this dish with a lightly dressed green salad.

- 1 cup puréed corn kernels (about 4 ears)**
- ½ cup corn kernels (about 1 ear)**
- 3 eggs**
- 1/3 cup milk**
- ½ cup sour cream**
- 1 jalapeno chile, seeds removed, finely minced**
- ¼ cup crumbled mild blue cheese, such as Maytag Blue**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 (12-ounce) New York steaks, about 1 ½ inches thick**
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme, stems reserved**

Prepare a small fire in a charcoal grill or preheat a gas grill to medium-low. Preheat the oven to 350° F.

Lightly butter a 2-quart baking dish. In a bowl, combine the puréed corn, corn kernels, eggs, milk, sour cream, jalapeno, and cheese and mix thoroughly. Season with salt and pepper. Pour into the prepared baking dish and bake for about 1 hour, until the top is golden brown and the pudding is set throughout.

Season the steaks with salt and pepper and press the thyme onto both sides. Add the thyme stems to the fire. Place the steaks on the grill rack and cover. Cook, turning every 5 minutes, until the internal temperature registers to 120° F on an instant-read thermometer, about 15 minutes for rare. Transfer to a plate and lightly cover with aluminum foil. Let rest for 10 minutes.

To serve, slice the meat on the diagonal against the grain. Arrange one-fourth of the slices on each plate, and place a spoonful of the pudding alongside. Serve immediately.



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Peach-Berry Cobbler with Meyer Lemon Crust

My grandmother taught me this recipe. We would make it together when there was an abundance of Babcock or white peaches in her orchard and blackberries along the creekside. At my house today, we have numerous Meyer lemon trees that provide citrus nearly year-round. I have incorporated the Meyer lemon into Grandmother's crust, which is almost cookie-like when baked. If you don't have Meyer lemons, Eureka or other lemon varieties can be substituted. A scoop of vanilla ice cream or Kimball's Late Harvest Riesling ice cream is superb with the cobbler. I also enjoy serving this dish with a glass of port or Late Harvest Riesling.

Filling

5 to 6 firm, ripe peaches, peeled, pitted and cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wedges (5 to 6 cups)

3 cups blackberries

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar

1 tablespoon cornstarch

Crust

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon baking powder

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar

1 egg, beaten

1 tablespoon freshly squeezed Meyer lemon juice

2 teaspoons grated Meyer lemon zest

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Preheat the oven to 375°F and place a rack in the center position. Butter a shallow 2-quart casserole.

To make the filling, combine the peaches, blackberries, sugar, and cornstarch in a bowl and set aside for 5 to 10 minutes. Stir a couple of times to make sure the sugar dissolves.

To make the crust, combine the flour, baking powder, and salt in a small bowl. In a stand mixer or food processor, cream together the butter and sugar until smooth. Beat in the egg, lemon juice, lemon zest, and vanilla. Slowly add the flour mixture and blend until the dough becomes consistently moist throughout, about 2 minutes.

Pour the fruit into the casserole and spoon dollops of the crust on top, spacing the dough evenly as it will spread as it bakes. Bake for about 45 minutes, until the juices are bubbling, the crust is golden brown, and the fruit is tender when pierced with a fork. Allow to cool slightly. Divide among 6 bowls and serve.