



WINE CLUB MAY

Paella

Serves four.

If you don't have a paella pan, use a 13-inch or larger skillet, or divide the ingredients between two medium skillets. Stainless-steel or anodized-aluminum skillets work best. Don't use cast iron or nonstick. Spain's best-known red, Rioja, made from the tempranillo grape, is a great choice for a paella with sausage and red meat. It will also highlight the big, rich flavor, caramelized onion, and browned chicken in the recipe here.

Wine Pairing: 2005 Parador Tempranillo, Rancho Chimiles Vineyard, Napa Valley, California

3-1/2 cups homemade or low-salt chicken broth; more as needed

Pinch of saffron (8 to 10 threads)

Salt to taste

About 1/4 cup olive oil; more if needed

4 skinless chicken thighs, chopped in half and seasoned with salt and pepper

1 small head garlic (remove excess papery skins, trim the top, and make a shallow cut around its equator to speed cooking), plus 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

1 medium red bell pepper, cored, seeded, and cut into 1-inch wide strips

3 artichokes

3 oz. green beans (about 16), trimmed

1 small onion, grated on the largest holes of a box grater

1 ripe tomato, halved horizontally and grated on the largest holes of a box grater (discard the skin)

1-1/2 cups medium-grain rice

1 sprig fresh rosemary

2 lemons, cut in wedges for garnish

In a saucepan, bring the broth to a boil; reduce the heat to a simmer and cover. Put the saffron on a 3-inch-wide strip of aluminum foil, fold up the foil to make a square packet, and set the foil directly on the lid of the simmering broth for about 15 minutes. Unfold the packet, transfer the saffron to a mortar (or a small bowl), add a pinch of salt, and use the pestle (or the back of spoon) to crush the saffron. Add about 1/2 cup of the hot broth to the saffron and let the saffron steep for about 15 minutes. Add the saffron-infused liquid back to the broth. Taste; the broth should be well seasoned, so add more salt if



WINE CLUB MAY

necessary. Remove from the heat until ready to add to the rice.

Set a 14-inch paella pan over medium-high heat and add the olive oil. When the oil is hot, add the chicken and the head of garlic; sauté until the chicken is golden, 10 to 15 minutes. The oil may splatter, and you may need to turn down the heat. Transfer the partially cooked chicken to a platter. The head of garlic stays in the pan.

Reduce the heat to medium low. In the same pan, sauté the red pepper slices slowly until they're very limp, 20 to 25 minutes, adding more oil if necessary; they shouldn't brown too much. Meanwhile, prepare the artichokes. Cut off the upper two-thirds of the leaves and the stem. Pare away the remaining tough outer leaves. Scrape out the choke fibers and cut the hearts into quarters (or eighths, if large).

When the pepper is done, transfer the pieces to a plate, cover with foil, and set aside. Slowly sauté the artichokes and green beans in the same pan, still on medium low, until the artichokes are golden and tender and the beans are soft and slightly wrinkled, 15 to 25 minutes. Meanwhile, when the pepper pieces are cool enough to handle, peel off and discard the skin. When the artichokes and green beans are done, push them to the perimeter of the pan where there's less heat (or transfer them to the platter with the chicken.)

If there's more than 1 Tbs. of oil in the pan, pour out the excess. Increase the heat to medium and sauté the grated onion and sliced garlic until the onion is soft (it's all right if it gets slightly brown), about 5 minutes. Add the grated tomato. Season well with salt and sauté until the water from the tomato has cooked out and the mixture, called a *sofrito*, has darkened to a burgundy color and is a very thick purée, 5 to 10 minutes. If you're not cooking the rice immediately, remove the pan from the heat.

About half an hour before you're ready to eat, bring the broth back to a simmer and set the pan with the sofrito over your largest burner (or over two burners) on medium heat, noticing if the pan sits level. (If not, choose another burner or try to create a level surface.) When the sofrito is hot, add the rice, stirring until it's translucent, 1 to 2 minutes.

Spread out the rice (it should just blanket the bottom of the pan), distribute the green beans and artichokes evenly, and arrange the chicken in the pan. Increase the heat to medium high and pour in 3 cups of the simmering broth (reserving 1/2 cup). As the broth comes to a boil, lay the peppers in the pan, starburst-like, and push the head of garlic to the center. Cook until the rice begins to appear above the liquid, 6 to 8 minutes, rotating the pan over one and two burners as necessary to distribute the heat to all areas. Add



WINE CLUB MAY

the sprig of rosemary and reduce the heat to medium low. Continue to simmer, rotating

the pan as necessary, until the liquid has been absorbed and the rice is al dente, another 8 to 10 minutes. To check for doneness, taste a grain just below the top layer of rice—there should be a very tiny white dot in the center. If the liquid is absorbed but the rice is not done, add a bit more hot broth or water to the pan and cook a few minutes more. Cover the pan with foil and cook gently for another 2 minutes, which will help to ensure that the top layer of rice is evenly cooked. With the foil still in place, increase the heat to medium high and, turning the pan, cook until the bottom layer of rice starts to caramelize, creating the socarrat, 1 to 2 minutes. You may hear the rice crackling, which is fine, but if it starts burning, remove the pan from the heat immediately. To check for socarrat, peel back the foil and use a spoon to feel for a slight crust on the bottom of the pan.

Remove the pan from the heat and let the paella rest, still covered, 5 to 10 minutes. Sit everyone down at a round or square table, if possible. Remove the foil, and invite people to eat directly from the pan, starting at the perimeter and working toward the center, squeezing lemon over their section if they like.

Variations

Sausage and chickpea paella: Try using chorizo sausage, red peppers, a whole head of garlic, and cooked chickpeas (use the cooking liquid for stock, or combine it with a meat stock). Make a sofrito of garlic, tomato, and paprika and add the chickpeas with the rice.

—Norbert Jorge, *Fine Cooking* 33, pp. 46-51



WINE CLUB MAY

Poached Flounder with Mint Beurre Blanc

Serves four.

This classic shallow-poached fish is served with a minty French butter sauce. It's delicious with a simple rice pilaf and tender green spring vegetables like peas or baby spinach.

Wine Pairing: 2008 Cucao PX, Elqui Valley, Chile

skinless flounder fillets (1-1/2 lb. total)

1/2 tsp. ground ginger

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

3-1/2 Tbs. coarsely chopped fresh spearmint or ginger mint leaves

1/4 cup minced shallots

1/4 cup dry white wine

2 Tbs. heavy cream

2 oz. (4 Tbs.) cold unsalted butter, cut into 8 slices

1 Tbs. thinly sliced chives

Lay the fish fillets skinned side up on a cutting board. Slice each fillet in half lengthwise to make 12 strips. In a small bowl mix the ginger, 1/4 tsp. salt, and 1/4 tsp. pepper. Sprinkle the spice mixture evenly over all the fish and then sprinkle with 2 Tbs. of the chopped mint. Roll each strip into a coil, starting with the fatter end and aligning the roll along the cut edge. Secure with a toothpick, pushing it into the thin end and through the other side.

Sprinkle the shallots over the bottom of a 10-inch straight-sided sauté pan. Arrange the fish coils cut edge down in the pan. Pour in the wine and 1/3 cup water. Turn the heat to medium high and bring the liquid to a simmer. Adjust the heat to maintain a gentle simmer, cover, and poach the fish until cooked through, 4 to 8 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the fish to a warm plate. Tent with foil while finishing the sauce.

Increase the heat to high and boil the liquid until it's reduced to about 3 Tbs. (It should



WINE CLUB MAY

just barely cover the bottom of the pan.) Add the cream and boil for 30 seconds. Reduce the heat to low and whisk in 2 slices of the cold butter, the remaining 1-1/2 Tbs. mint, and the chives. When the butter is almost melted, add another slice and whisk until mostly melted. Repeat with the remaining butter, 1 slice at a time. (Take care not to

overheat the sauce or it will separate.) Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Remove the toothpicks from each piece of fish. Serve the fish (3 pieces per serving) drizzled with the sauce.

—*Jessica Bard, Fine Cooking 98, pp. 45*



WINE CLUB MAY

Chicken Breasts with Spiced Tomato, Caper & Olive Sauce

Serves two to three.

The inspiration for this recipe was Cuban picadillo, a meat dish usually seasoned with tomatoes, onions, garlic, and fragrant spices like cinnamon and cloves. Pour a wine with both fruity and herbal qualities and light tannins.

Wine Pairing: 2005 Chateau Galtier, Coteaux du Languedoc, France

1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (about 3)

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1-1/2 tsp. ground cumin

1/2 tsp. dried oregano

1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon

Tiny pinch each of ground cloves, ground nutmeg, and cayenne

1 large clove garlic, minced

3 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil

1/2 small onion, finely diced (about 1/3 cup)

1 Tbs. tomato paste

1/3 cup dry red wine

14-1/2-ounce can diced tomatoes, with their juices

1 Tbs. light or dark brown sugar

16 pimento-stuffed green olives, sliced crosswise into thirds

1 Tbs. drained capers, rinsed

1 Tbs. chopped fresh basil

Trim the chicken, removing the tenders, and slice on an angle into 3/4- inch-thick pieces and season generously with salt and pepper. In a small bowl, combine the cumin, oregano, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, and cayenne. Put the garlic on top of the spices



WINE CLUB MAY

and set aside.

In a 10-inch straight-sided sauté pan, heat 2 Tbs. of the oil over medium-high heat until the oil is hot enough to shimmer. Add half of the chicken and cook, flipping once, until lightly browned and just barely cooked through, 1 to 2 minutes per side. Transfer the chicken to a plate; repeat with the remaining chicken. Cover with foil to keep warm.

Return the pan to medium heat. Add the remaining 1 Tbs. oil and then the onion.

Sauté, stirring almost constantly with a wooden spoon, until the onion is softened and browned, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the spices and garlic, and cook, stirring constantly, for about 20 seconds. Add the tomato paste and cook, smearing the paste around the pan with the back of the spoon, for about 30 seconds. Pour in the wine and scrape the pan with the spoon to loosen any browned bits. Let the wine simmer until the mixture looks like a coarse, wet paste, 1 to 2 minutes.

Stir in the tomatoes with their juices, the brown sugar, and 1/4 tsp. salt. Adjust the heat as needed to bring the mixture to a simmer. Cover and simmer for 5 minutes. Stir in the olives and capers. Simmer gently uncovered for another 5 minutes. Taste the sauce; add salt and pepper as needed. Add the chicken and any accumulated juices to the sauce and turn to coat with the sauce. Serve immediately, sprinkled with the basil.

Serving suggestions:

Serve on a bed of white or brown rice

— *Jennifer Armentrout Fine Cooking 63, pp. 40*



WINE CLUB MAY

Spring Vegetable Ragout with Fresh Pasta

Serves four

This quick pasta is spring incarnate: fresh baby vegetables and their tender shoots, delicate pasta, and a light, brothy sauce

Wine Pairing: 2007 Oscar Sturm Sauvignon Blanc, Collio, Friuli, Italy

Kosher salt

3/4 lb. fresh pasta sheets

1 small clove garlic, minced

Freshly ground black pepper

3 cups mixed spring vegetables (such as medium-thick asparagus, baby carrots, baby turnips, spring onions, and sugar snap peas), trimmed and cut into 1- to 3-inch long by 1/2- to 3/4-inch-wide pieces

1/2 cup shelled peas or peeled fava beans

1/3 cup loosely packed pea shoots or watercress sprigs; more for garnish

1/4 cup loosely packed chopped mixed fresh herbs, such as basil, chervil, mint, parsley, and/or tarragon; more for garnish

4 Tbs. cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces

1-1/2 tsp. freshly grated lemon zest

Freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano for garnish (optional)

Tip: To peel fava beans, shuck them and cook them in boiling salted water until tender, 1 to 2 minutes, then rinse them with cold water and peel off the skin.

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil. With a pizza cutter or chef's knife, cut the pasta sheets into rustic strips about 1/2 inch wide.



WINE CLUB MAY

In a 10- to 11-inch straight-sided sauté pan, bring 2-1/2 cups water, the garlic, 1 tsp. salt, and 1/4 tsp. pepper to a simmer over high heat. Add the mixed vegetables and simmer briskly, adjusting the heat as necessary, until just crisp-tender, 3 to 4 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer to a large plate. If using peas, simmer them until barely tender, about 2 minutes, and transfer to the plate with the slotted spoon. (If using favas, skip this step.) Raise the heat to high and boil the liquid until reduced to 1 cup, 3 to 4 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook the pasta in the boiling water until barely al dente, 2 to 4 minutes. Drain.

Add the cooked pasta, vegetables, favas (if using), pea shoots or watercress, herbs, butter, and lemon zest to the broth. Toss over medium-high heat until the butter is melted, about 1 minute.

Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve garnished with pea shoots or watercress, fresh herbs, and Parmigiano (if using).

— *Allison Ehri Kreitler, Fine Cooking 98, pp. 7*



WINE CLUB MAY