Little Black Dress WiNE PAiRiNG RECiPES

Tamale Pie

2 T. vegetable oil
2 cups chopped onion
2 T. chopped garlic
1 medium poblano pepper; cored, seeded, and chopped
1 1/4 pounds ground beef
1 t. ground cumin
1/2 t. red chile flakes
1 t. oregano, preferably Mexican
1 cup canned crushed tomatoes
Salt
1/2 cup red wine such as Little Black Dress Cabernet Sauvignon
4 T. butter
2 1/4 cups coarse cornmeal
1 cup grated pepper jack or parmesan cheese

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onions, garlic, pepper and cook, stirring often, until softened and just beginning to brown, 7–8 minutes. Increase heat to medium-high; add beef, cumin, chile flakes and oregano and cook until meat is no longer pink, about 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, wine and salt to taste and cook until most of the liquid has evaporated, 6-8 minutes.

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 350°. Rub a 2 1/2-quart casserole dish with 1 Tablespoon butter; set aside. In a deep saucepan add 1 quart water and 2 teaspoons salt and bring to a boil. Gradually add cornmeal, whisking vigorously. Reduce heat to low and cook, stirring often, until thick, 6 - 8 minutes. Add remaining 3 Tablespoons butter and stir until combined. Spoon half the cornmeal mixture into the prepared dish. Spread out with the back of a wet spoon to cover the bottom and up the sides. Set aside.

Spoon filling into casserole, then top with remaining cornmeal mixture, spreading it out with the back of a wet spoon to cover the filling. Sprinkle the cheese over the top and bake until top is browned and sides are bubbling, 25 – 30 minutes.

PERFECT PAIRING: Little Black Dress Cabernet Sauvignon

Fried Mozzarella Balls

4 cups or so oil for frying, such as canola
12 ounces cherry size marinated fresh mozzarella balls known as cillegini
2 large eggs beaten with 1 Tablespoon water
2 cups dry bread crumbs such as panko
Salt and freshly ground pepper
Homemade or store bought spicy tomato sauce

Heat about 1-1/2 inches oil to 375°F in a 3 1/2-to 4-quart heavy saucepan.

Meanwhile pat mozzarella balls dry and double coat them by dipping in eggs, then in bread crumbs, and repeating. Transfer to a baking sheet lined with plastic.

Working in batches of 8 or so, lower balls into oil with a slotted spoon and fry, turning occasionally, until golden brown, about 2 minutes per batch. Transfer to paper towels to drain and season with salt and pepper. (Return oil to 375°F between batches.)
Serve with spicy tomato sauce.

PERFECT PAIRING: Little Black Dress Pinot Grigio

Spiced Wine

This is a simple riff on mulled wine to which you could also add other fresh fruits. Easy to make and perfect for chilly holiday evenings.

1 750-ml bottle medium-bodied red wine such as Little Black Dress Merlot
1/2 cup sugar, or to taste
6 whole cloves
1 small lemon cut into wedges
4 4-inch cinnamon sticks

Bring ingredients to a boil, stirring occasionally, in a 4-qt. saucepan and remove from heat. Strain, discarding cloves but saving lemon and cinnamon.

Ladle wine into 4 glasses and garnish each with a cinnamon stick and a lemon wedge.

Serve hot.

Grilled Coconut Chicken

This is a recipe from Thailand that brings together the 4 flavor gods of Thai cooking: Sweet, Sour, Salty and Hot. Adjust each of these to your own taste.

1 can (13 ½ ounces) coconut milk
3 T. chile garlic sauce, preferably Lee Kum Kee bran
3 T. toasted sesame oil
1/4 cup each chopped cilantro, Thai purple or regular basil, green onions
1/4 cup finely chopped ginger or galangal
1/4 cup each Asian fish sauce and brown sugar
Juice and grated zest (use a microplane) of 4 large limes
1 large chicken (4-pounds or so), split with back bone removed

Combine all ingredients except chicken in a large, food storage bag. Add the chicken pieces; seal bag. Turn to coat chicken on all sides. Marinate the chicken refrigerated for at least 4 hours or overnight, turning a couple of times.

Prepare a grill for medium heat. Remove the chicken from the marinade; grill on an oiled rack, covered, until the juices run clear and a thermometer inserted in thickest piece reads 165 degrees, about 45 minutes. Alternately you can bake on a rack in a 375 degree oven for an hour or so. Allow to rest for a few minutes before cutting up and serving.

PERFECT PAIRING: Little Black Dress Chardonnay

Enjoy!

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