

GERVAIS & VINE WINE CLUB'S Holiday "Wine as a Gift" Tips

If you plan on giving the gift of wine, choose something special. It can be a bottle from a producer that you especially enjoy and you want to share that same experience with the receiver, or you can work closely with a wine shop to determine a great bottle based on your recipient's wine interests. If they like Pinot Noirs, try to find a special one from a small producer or that was made in limited quantities OR from a completely different geographic area than they are accustomed to. People who 'know wine' appreciate things they normally wouldn't find stacked to the ceiling at their local grocery store.

If you receive a bottle at your holiday party, it's not necessary to open it at the party...especially if it's a special bottle. Enjoy the wines you already planned for the party and save the bottle for a special occasion. Also, if you bring a bottle to a party, don't expect it to be opened. If you brought a sweater as a gift, would you expect the recipient to take off what they were wearing and don the

Roasted Butternut Squash Soup

This is a great soup to 'dress up' with anything from seared scallops to fresh-roasted chestnuts and/or crème fraiche.

6 cups (about 2 large squash) seeded 2-inch wide chunks butternut squash
Melted butter, for brushing
1 tablespoon kosher salt, plus 1 teaspoon
1 teaspoon freshly ground white pepper, plus 1/2 teaspoon
3 cups chicken or vegetable stock
4 tablespoons honey
1 teaspoon minced ginger
4 ounces heavy cream
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Brush the flesh of the squash with a little butter and season with 1 tablespoon salt and 1 teaspoon freshly ground white pepper. On a sheet pan lay the squash flesh side up. Roast for about 30 to 35 minutes or until the flesh is nice and soft.

Scoop the flesh from the skin into a pot and add the stock, honey, and ginger. Bring to a simmer and puree using a stick blender. Stir in the heavy cream and return to a low simmer. Season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg.

Wild Mushroom-Bacon Blue Cheese Bread Pudding

I featured this recipe on our "Simply Delicious" segment on WLTX. For a video of how to make it, just go to WLTX.com and click on Recipes.

1 1-2oz pkg Dried Mushrooms (porcini, shiitake, mixed)
2 cups very hot Water
1 TB Olive Oil
3-4 Strips of Bacon, diced
2-3 cups Mushrooms, chopped (creminis, button, shiitake or a mix)
1 Medium Onion, diced
1 TB Minced Garlic
6 Eggs
Heavy Cream or Whole Milk
4 cups Stuffing Mix (not cornbread)
Freshly Ground Pepper
1/2 cup chopped Fresh Herbs (rosemary, sage, parsley, oregano...your choice)
2 cups Beef Stock
1-2 cups Gorgonzola Crumbles

Preheat oven to 350. Place dry mushrooms in a bowl. Cover mushrooms with very hot water and cover bowl with plastic wrap. In a mixing bowl, combine the eggs and cream. Whisk well. Reserve.

In a large sauté pan, heat olive oil and add bacon, cooking half way. Add onions and sauté for a minute. Add sliced mushrooms, herbs and garlic and sauté another three minutes. Put the stuffing mix in a very large mixing bowl. Add sauteed mushrooms, onions and bacon, including all pan drippings. Pour egg and cream mixture over and mix well. Add beef stock and the hot water from the reconstituted mushrooms.

Chop dried mushrooms and add. Grind pepper over mixture to taste and mix well. Fold in gorgonzola crumbles. Mixture should be pretty wet. If still dry in places, add some more beef stock or hot water.

Spread mixture in a baking dish of your choice. For the video, we used muffin pans for individual servings, but a cake pan can work



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