

FOOD & WINE

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SPECIAL WINE ISSUE

THE BEST CALIFORNIA WINES & RECIPES

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California Cabernet
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dishes from
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California wine country*



GOLDEN SEMOLINA-
QUINOA-SPINACH CAKES



MARIA HELM SINSEY ON QUINOA

“I add quinoa to make these semolina cakes a little fluffier and healthier. I love to serve them topped with a poached egg.”

Golden Semolina-Quinoa-Spinach Cakes

TOTAL: 1 HR PLUS 4 HR CHILLING
MAKES 12 CAKES

- ½ cup quinoa
- ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon minced shallot
- 10 ounces baby spinach
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 cup low-fat milk
- ¾ cup finely ground semolina
- ¼ cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 1½ cups *panko* (Japanese bread crumbs)
- 3 large egg whites

WELL-BEING >> PAIRINGS

Wine-Friendly Superfoods Tannins bump up the health benefits of wine—and food, too. A chef translates this into great pairings.

RECIPES BY MARIA HELM SINSEY FOOD PHOTOGRAPHS BY JONNY VALIANT

BY NOW EVERYONE KNOWS THAT RED WINE, in moderation, is good for your heart, but not everyone knows that one reason is the antioxidant-rich tannins in grape skins, seeds and stems. I recently realized that some of the world's healthiest foods, like walnuts and spinach, are high in tannins, too. For help on finding fun new ways to add these foods to my diet, I reached out to the one person who would be as remotely interested in the challenge as I was: Maria Helm Sinskey, an F&W Best New Chef 1996 and the culinary director of Robert Sinskey Vineyards. Sinskey created extremely delicious and complex-tasting dishes featuring tannic ingredients, adding a small amount of fat to soften the tannic edge. Here, her amazing recipes and wine pairings. —*Kristin Donnelly*

1. In a small saucepan, combine the quinoa with 1 cup of water and bring to a boil. Cover and cook over low heat until the water has been absorbed, about 15 minutes. Lightly fluff the quinoa with a fork and cover it again.
2. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil. Add the shallot and cook over moderate heat, stirring, until softened, about 1 minute. Add the spinach and cook until most of the liquid has evaporated,

FOOD STYLIST: SIMON ANDREWS; PROP STYLIST: ALISTAIR TURNBULL; PHOTOGRAPH: ROBERT SINSEY (SINSEY)



PORK WITH GRAPES
AND TARRAGON

about 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer the spinach to a strainer and let cool slightly; press out any remaining liquid and finely chop the spinach.

3. In a large saucepan, combine the milk, 1½ cups of water, 1 tablespoon of the olive oil and 2 teaspoons of salt and bring to a boil. Remove the pan from the heat and gradually whisk in the semolina until very smooth. Cook over moderate heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the semolina is thick enough to hold soft peaks when the spoon is lifted, about 7 minutes. Remove the semolina from the heat and stir in the quinoa and Parmigiano. Season with salt and pepper and let cool for 15 minutes.

4. Stir the beaten whole egg and spinach into the quinoa mixture and spread in an ungreased 7-by-11-inch pan; it will be about 2 inches thick. Let cool at room temperature, then cover loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight.

5. Preheat the oven to 250°. Cut the chilled semolina mixture into 12 squares. Put the *panko* in a shallow dish and season with 1 teaspoon of salt. In another shallow dish, whisk the egg whites with ½ teaspoon of salt and 1 tablespoon of water. Dip the cakes into the whites and turn to coat, letting the excess drip off. Coat the cakes in the *panko* and shake off excess crumbs. Transfer to a clean baking sheet.

6. In a large skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil. Add half of the cakes and cook over moderately high heat until golden on both sides and on the edges, about 6 minutes; adjust the heat as necessary to prevent the cakes from burning. Drain the cakes on a paper towel-lined plate, then transfer to a baking sheet and keep warm in the oven. Wipe out the skillet and cook the remaining cakes in the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Serve hot. —*Maria Helm Sinskey*

ONE CAKE 167 cal, 9 gm fat, 1.6 gm sat fat, 18 gm carb, 2 gm fiber, 5 gm protein.

WINE *Zesty Sauvignon Blanc: 2010 Voss.*

Pork with Grapes and Tarragon

TOTAL: 30 MIN • 8 SERVINGS

This dish tastes surprisingly rich for something so low in fat, thanks in part to the tannins in black and red grapes. "If you make the sauce with less tannic green grapes, it just won't have the same texture," says Maria Helm Sinskey. When she can find them, Sinskey uses fragrant black muscat grapes here.

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Eight 4-ounce boneless pork loin chops
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper

2 cups black or red seedless grapes
(12 ounces), halved

2 tablespoons minced shallots

1 tablespoon sugar

1 tablespoon red wine vinegar

½ cup dry, fruity red wine

1 cup chicken stock

or low-sodium broth

2 teaspoons chopped tarragon

1. In a very large skillet, heat the olive oil until shimmering. Season the pork with salt and pepper and add the chops to the skillet. Cook over moderately high heat, turning once, until lightly browned and nearly cooked through, about 6 minutes. Transfer the pork to a platter, cover loosely and keep warm.

2. Add the grapes to the skillet and cook until lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Add the shallots and sugar and cook, stirring, until the sugar dissolves, about 1 minute. Add the vinegar and cook until nearly evaporated, about 1 minute. Add the wine and boil over high heat until reduced by half, about 3 minutes. Add the stock and boil until reduced by half, about 4 minutes.

3. Return the pork and any juices to the skillet and simmer until the chops are just cooked, about 2 minutes. Transfer the pork to plates. Boil the sauce until thick and glossy, about 2 minutes. Stir in the tarragon and pour the sauce over the pork. Serve right away.

SERVE WITH Brown rice or roasted potatoes.

ONE SERVING 236 cal, 8 gm fat, 1.8 gm sat fat, 11 gm carb, 0 gm fiber, 25 gm protein.

WINE *Round, berry-rich Merlot from Sonoma: 2007 Medlock Ames.*

Whole-Wheat Linguine with Walnuts, Orange and Chile

TOTAL: 25 MIN

4 FIRST-COURSE SERVINGS

Sinskey loves the fruity, spicy flavor of Calabrian chiles in this earthy pasta dish; they usually come lightly brined and packed in oil and are available at Italian markets and from dipaloselects.com. If you can't find them, substitute any chile packed in oil or just crushed red pepper.

½ cup walnuts (2 ounces)

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 large garlic clove, minced

¾ teaspoon finely grated orange zest

1 tablespoon seeded and chopped
Calabrian chiles

Salt

¼ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley

½ pound whole-wheat linguine

2 tablespoons freshly grated
Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

1. Preheat the oven to 350°. Spread the walnuts in a pie plate and toast for about 8 minutes, until fragrant. Let cool, then chop.

2. In a large skillet, heat the oil. Add the garlic, orange zest, chiles and toasted walnuts and cook over low heat until fragrant, 2 minutes. Season with salt and stir in the parsley.

3. In a pot of boiling salted water, cook the linguine until al dente. Reserve ½ cup of the cooking water and drain the pasta. Add the linguine and reserved water to the skillet and simmer until the liquid is just absorbed, 2 minutes. Transfer the pasta to a bowl and sprinkle with the cheese. Toss and serve.

ONE SERVING 225 cal, 24 gm fat, 3 gm sat fat, 2 gm carb, 1 gm fiber, 3 gm protein.

WINE *Rich, citrusy Pinot Gris: 2010 Los Carneros Robert Sinskey Vineyards.* ●