

PAIRED PERFECTION:
Pauline's Pumpkin Cheesecake
with dessert wine from Black
Star Farms. Recipe, p.33



Comfort & Joy

What's better than a luscious, lovely Thanksgiving dessert? Pairing it with a glass of Northern Michigan dessert wine. Toast your friends and family with any (or all) of these perfect matches.

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Cardamom Apricots

These look chic and pretty, are a snap to throw together, and are perfect when there's really only room for one more bite. The recipe comes from spice maven Mary Perzigian at Pizelle Gourmet Pantry & Spice in Manistee.

- 1¼ cup water
 - ¾ cup superfine sugar
 - 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
 - 1½ teaspoon cardamom
 - 12 ounces dried apricots
 - 8 ounces mascarpone cheese
 - 1½ cups pistachios, shelled and crushed
- Apricot preserves (optional)*

Bring water, sugar, lemon juice and cardamom to a boil then reduce to simmer. Add the apricots. When the apricots are softened and plump (after about 8 minutes) remove them from the water and cool. Open the apricots and fill with a little mascarpone cheese. Sprinkle the mascarpone with crushed pistachios. Glaze with melted apricot preserves, if desired. Serve chilled.

Pairing: Bowers Harbor Vineyards Ice Gewürztraminer (\$75)

This zesty-sweet dessert wine was made with estate-grown Gewürztraminer grapes plucked in the late fall of 2006—just as the fruit was gilded with frost. It's smooth, lush and complex with soft tropical fruits and Gewürz's trademark flavors of rose petals and spice, which pair perfectly with the aromatic, exotic cardamom in the apricots.





Pineapple Gingerbread Upside-Down Cakes

This sweet update on a classic dish combines two of Grandma's very best recipes.

Topping

- 1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 8-ounce can pineapple tidbits, well drained
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted

Cakes

- 1 1/3 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 1/2 cup hot water
- Butter or Pam spray (for the muffin cups)
- 1 cup heavy cream, whipped (for serving)

Heat oven to 375°F. Combine first three ingredients in small bowl for the topping. Place 1 heaping tablespoon of topping mixture into each greased muffin cup of a deep 12-cup muffin pan. (Note: if your muffin tins are shallow you will have enough topping and batter for about 15 muffins.)

Combine flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt and ginger in medium bowl. In a separate large bowl, combine the oil, brown sugar, egg, and molasses. Beat well with electric mixer until combined. Gradually add the dry ingredients until they are blended. With the mixer set on low speed, beat in the water.

Ladle the batter over the pineapple mixture in muffin cups, filling each cup about two-thirds full. Bake for 18 to 22 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean. Cool 3 minutes, then immediately turn onto serving plate. Serve warm. Top with whipped cream.

Pairing: Shady Lane Cellars Late Harvest Vignoles (\$28)

The grapes were picked when the snow was on the ground, giving it a rich, lush sweetness and aromas of caramel, pineapple, spice and vanilla.



Pairing: Black Star Farms Sirius Maple Dessert Wine (\$22.50)

Black Star's winemaker Lee Lutes just finished a new bottling of this port-style wine in time for Thanksgiving. He presses apple cider, fortifies it with apple brandy, and then sweetens it with maple syrup that he and the winery staff cooked over an open fire last spring. The 18-percent alcohol content makes it a perfect digestif for this dessert—first comes the brandy's gentle warmth, then the distinct, pure maple sweetness that really brings out the tang of the cheesecake.

Pauline's Pumpkin Cheesecake

Even those fiercely loyal to their pumpkin pie will veer from tradition with this silky, spicy cheesecake. It comes from Pauline Marmion, who gathers with her family in Kewadin. She says it's a hybrid of two *Gourmet* magazine recipes with a few tweaks of her own, and that the flavors are even better after several days—so go ahead and cross this one off your holiday baking list first.

Crust:

- 3/4 cup graham cracker crumbs
- 1/2 cup finely chopped pecans, toasted
- 1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted and cooled slightly

Filling:

- 1 1/2 cup canned pumpkin puree
- 3 large eggs at room temperature
- 1 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar

- 1 1/2 pounds cream cheese, softened
- 2 tablespoons heavy cream
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

For garnish, if desired:

- Whipped cream
- Toffee candy, crushed (Pauline uses Heath Bits of Brickle toffee chips)

Preheat oven to 350°F. To make the crust, combine the crust ingredients in a bowl, and then press the mixture onto the bottom of a 10-inch spring-form pan. Freeze the crust for 15 minutes.

To make the filling, whisk the pumpkin, eggs, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, salt and the brown sugar together well.

In another bowl, with an electric mixer cream together the granulated sugar and the cream cheese. Beat in the cream, the cornstarch, and the vanilla. Beat in the pumpkin mixture. Pour the filling into the crust, and bake the cheesecake in the middle of the preheated oven for 45 to 60 minutes, or until the center is set. If it is not quite set after an hour, turn the oven off, crack the door open and leave the cheesecake to set for another several minutes. Let the cheesecake cool on a rack then chill it, covered loosely, overnight. Run a knife around the edge of the pan then remove the side of the pan. Serve at room temperature with the whipped cream and the toffee candy. (You can also sprinkle a little cinnamon sugar over the whipped cream.)

Cinnamon Chocolate Mousse ▶

This light, velvety dark chocolate mousse with the cozy kick of cinnamon slips down nicely after dinner.

- 2 1/2 cups chilled heavy whipping cream, divided
- 1/4 generous teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 8 ounces semisweet chocolate, chopped

Combine 1/2 cup cream and cinnamon in small saucepan; bring to low boil. Remove from heat. Add chocolate and whisk until melted. With spatula, transfer chocolate mixture to large bowl. In another large bowl and using electric mixer, beat remaining 2 cups cream until soft peaks form. Gently fold 1/4 of whipped cream into lukewarm chocolate mixture. Fold remaining whipped cream into chocolate mixture in 3 additions, just until incorporated. Divide mousse among 8 glasses or bowls. Chill until set, about 3 hours. Can

be made a day ahead, just cover tightly and keep chilled. Serves 8.

Pairing: Chateau Chantal Cerise (\$25.99), with a pure tart cherry flavor and just the right boozy glow. **Longview Cherry Port (\$19)**, made with the winery's award-winning cherry wine, fortified with spirits and aged in French oak is another perfect match.

Plum Almond Tart

With its tender shortcrust, layers of sweet-tart plums and frangipane (the irresistible ground almond filling), this showstopper almost trumps the turkey at Thanksgiving dinner.

For the crust:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) chilled butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 tablespoons ice water

For the filling:

- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter, room temperature
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 large egg

- 1/3 cup sliced almonds, finely ground in food processor
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 6 plums

Special equipment: 11-inch tart pan, food processor

Preheat oven to 350°F. For crust, mix the flour, sugar and salt in a bowl then cut in the butter with a pastry cutter until the butter is well incorporated. (The mixture should resemble fine breadcrumbs.) In a small bowl, beat the egg yolk together with the ice-cold water. Pour into the flour mixture. Slowly bring the ingredients together with your hands to form dough, being careful not to overwork it. (You may also do the above in a food processor.) Form the dough into a ball, cover in plastic wrap and chill for a few minutes before rolling. Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface or between two sheets of parchment into a circle slightly bigger than your tart pan. Put it into your pan and press the dough into the corners.

Pierce the tart crust with a fork several times and chill again for a few minutes. Bake it in the preheated oven for 20 minutes. Let the crust cool while you prepare the filling. (Leave the oven on.)

To make the filling, beat the butter and sugar together with an electric mixer until creamy. Beat in the egg, followed by the almonds, flour and extract. Spread evenly in the cooled tart shell. Cut the plums in half and remove the pits. Cut each into thin slices. Arrange the slices, overlapping in concentric circles, leaving a 1/4-inch border around the edge. Bake in the oven for 40 to 45 minutes or until the filling in the middle of the tart is set. Remove from the oven and let cool at room temperature for several hours before slicing. **T**



Pairing: Brys Estate 2007 "Dry Ice" Ice Wine (\$70), an elegant, well-balanced ice wine made with Riesling grapes, with hints of apricot and passion fruit. Or open a bottle of the honey-hued Peninsula Cellars Riesling Ice Wine (\$64.95) with intense tropical fruit flavors and its own gorgeous birch gift box.

Emily Betz Tyra, former associate editor of *Traverse*, wishes you a wonderful Thanksgiving from her new home across the lake in Milwaukee. emilybetztyra@gmail.com

