

Food Pairings for Single Malt Scotch

Written by Debbi Covington

Wednesday, 17 February 2010 18:46



Single malt Scotch is a delight usually served after dinner --- and usually paired with a cigar. Pairing Scotch with food is a bit of a challenge! General opinion is that Scotch is too strong in both flavor and alcohol content. Even in Scotland there isn't much of a tradition of drinking Scotch with dinner. But, if you're a Scotch fan, why reserve your favorite whisky (traditionally, whiskies made in Scotland are spelled without the "e") for the end of the meal when you could drink it the whole evening? This week's recipes are perfect for a single malt Scotch tasting dinner party. Lobster Bisque is an excellent first course. The lobster and cream are rich enough to balance the alcohol in the Scotch. Or, you could serve Brie and Pear Soup. Creamy, mature cheeses also go well with single malts. Scotch eggs are a great appetizer and may be served hot or cold. For your fish course serve Salmon with Cream Sauce Dijon. Smoky flavors in the Scotch add another dimension to the richness and flavor of the salmon. Red meats, especially the gamy ones, make great partners with Scotch. So does chocolate. Lamb Chops with Coffee-Chocolate Sauce is the ideal meat course. The dark, rich espresso and chocolate flavors will match with similar flavors in the Scotch. For dessert continue the chocolate-coffee-Scotch combination with delicious Mocha Cake. Buy a bottle of your favorite Scotch and enjoy it throughout the course of your meal. I recommend serving your single malt neat, with the lightest splash of spring water. Toning down the alcohol this way allows the Scotch's aromatic complexities to shine through and makes it easier to achieve a food and Scotch balance.

Lobster Bisque

4 pounds lobster

2 tablespoons olive oil

1/2 cup onion, finely chopped

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1/2 cup carrot, peeled, finely chopped

2 tablespoons tomato paste

1/2 cup celery, finely chopped

1/2 cup fennel, finely chopped

1 bay leaf

1 cup tomato, chopped

3 cloves garlic, finely chopped

1 cup cognac

1 cup dry white wine

2 cups milk or heavy cream

Salt, to taste

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Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

3 tablespoons sherry

2 tablespoons sherry vinegar

Plunge the lobsters into boiling water for 3 to 4 minutes. Take lobsters out of the boiling water and remove the tails. Cut the carcasses into quarters, discarding the sacks. Crack the claws. Remove the meat from the tails and set aside. In a large pot, heat olive oil over medium heat. Saute the lobster shells, onion, carrot, tomato paste and celery. When lightly browned, add fennel, bay leaf, tomato, garlic and cognac. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes then add the white wine. Add enough cold water to cover at least 3 inches over vegetables. Cook for 45 minutes. Remove lobster shells. Carefully puree soup in batches in a blender. Strain pureed soup into another pot with a fine cheesecloth. Add the milk or heavy cream and cook over medium-low heat for 15 minutes. Season, to taste, with salt and pepper. Add the sherry and sherry vinegar and gently stir. Chop the lobster meat into bite-sized pieces. To serve, place lobster meat on the bottom of each soup bowl. Pour the hot soup over the lobster. Serves 4 to 6.

Brie and Pear Soup

2 large, ripe pears (about 1 pound)

2 cups chicken broth

8 ounces double-cream Brie cheese

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Slices almonds, lightly toasted (optional)

Peel the pears. Cut them into thick slices, removing the seeds. Put the chicken broth and pears in a large pot and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes or until the pears are very soft. Transfer the pears and broth to a food processor and process until very smooth. Return to the pot and simmer. Trim the rind from the Brie and cut the cheese into very small pieces. Slowly add the cheese and stir with a wooden spoon until melted. The soup should be creamy and smooth. Garnish with lightly toasted sliced almonds. Serves 4 to 6.

Scotch Eggs

6 hard-cooked eggs, well chilled

1 pound breakfast sausage

1/2 cup flour

2 eggs, beaten

3/4 cup fine bread crumbs

Vegetable oil, for frying

Peel the eggs and set aside. Divide sausage into 6 portions. Roll each egg in flour. Using your hands, press a portion of the sausage around each egg, covering completely. Dip the sausage-wrapped eggs into the beaten eggs and roll in the bread crumbs. Heat vegetable oil to 350 degrees. Fry each egg in oil for about 4 to 5 minutes or until sausage is cooked and browned. Drain on paper towels. Serves 6.

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Salmon with Cream Sauce Dijon

3/4 cup sour cream

Dash white pepper

Dash dried dill weed

1/3 cup Chardonnay wine

3 teaspoons minced dried onion

1 & 1/2 cups heavy cream

1/4 cup all-purpose flour

3 teaspoons Dijon mustard

6 (6-ounce) salmon fillets

In a small bowl, combine first 8 ingredients until well blended. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a medium baking dish. Arrange salmon in baking dish. Pour cream sauce evenly over salmon. Bake, uncovered, for 20 minutes or until fish is easily flaked with a fork. Serves 6.

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Lamb Chops with Coffee-Chocolate Sauce

3/4 cup strong chicken stock

1/4 cup strong espresso

1/4 teaspoon melted dark chocolate

3/4 ounce butter

Salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

4 tablespoons blueberry preserves

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

2 racks lamb, six ribs each

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Heat the chicken stock in a small saucepan over medium heat. Add the espresso and chocolate. Whisk in the butter and season with salt and pepper. In a small bowl, combine blueberry preserved and Dijon mustard. Remove the excess meat from the top of the lamb chops, leaving the bones very clean. Brown the racks of lamb in a hot skillet then baste the racks with the blueberry-mustard mixture. Bake the lamb racks in a preheated 400 degree oven for 5 minutes. To serve, sauce the serving platter and top with the lamb. Serves 4.

Mocha Cake

2 cups sour cream

2 large eggs

1 (18.25-ounce) package chocolate cake mix

1/2 cup coffee liqueur

1/4 cup vegetable oil

2 cups semisweet chocolate morsels

1/2 cup crushed almond toffee bits (optional)

Powdered sugar

1 pint whipping cream

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1/4 cup powdered sugar

Stir together first 5 ingredients in a large bowl; blend well. Stir in morsels and toffee bits. Pour batter into a greased and floured 10-inch Bundt pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 50 to 55 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in pan on a wire rack 10 to 15 minutes; remove from pan, and cool completely on wire rack. Sprinkle with powdered sugar. Beat whipping cream at medium speed with an electric mixer until foamy; gradually add 1/4 cup powdered sugar, beating until soft peaks form. Serve with cake. Serves 10 to 12.

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