



SPIRITED COOKING

Margaritas And Seafood: Preparation Tips

(NAPSA)—For an ocean of good taste, the next time you intend to have a margarita, suggests Chef Keith Keogh, pair it with seafood. The lemon and lime juices cleanse your palate with each sip, while the high acidic level of the margarita acts as a natural balance to the seafood.

When preparing a margarita, says Keogh:

1. Chill the glass by rinsing it and placing it stem-side up in a freezer for about 15 minutes. Never place fine crystal in a freezer.

2. Don't over-salt the rim of the glass. Run a quartered lime around the rim. Pour coarse or kosher salt onto a napkin, and lightly touch the glass rim to the salt. Shake off any excess so only a small crust remains.

3. When using fresh limes, roll the whole lime back and forth on a table before cutting it to release more flavor.

4. Don't use too much ice. A large handful will do. Blend for about a minute, until you no longer hear the ice churning. The mixture should be thick and slushy.

5. For thicker margaritas, put the filled blender canister in the freezer for about 10 to 15 minutes before serving.

It also helps to have a world-class recipe. Keogh says you'll need: 1/2 cup fresh lemon juice (4 to 5 lemons), 1/2 cup fresh lime juice (2 to 3 limes), a splash of fresh orange juice (half an orange), 1 cup sugar, 1 1/2 cups tequila, 3/4 cup triple sec, 3 3/4 cups water and ice.



A refreshing margarita can be easy to make and goes swimmingly with fish dishes.

In a pitcher (or blender), combine the sugar and water, stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Add the lemon and lime juices, as well as the splash of orange juice. Mix in the tequila and the triple sec, stirring well. Refrigerate until you're ready to serve.

The restaurant company where Keogh works, Red Lobster, offers new signature margaritas at its more than 660 restaurants. The drinks include a Classic Margarita (prepared on the rocks and with Cuervo Gold Tequila), a Flavored Frozen Margarita (the Classic formula blended with strawberry, raspberry or peach), a Top Shelf Margarita (the Classic Margarita with a sidecar of Grand Marnier) and a Lobsterita (a 24-ounce frozen strawberry or frozen Classic Margarita complete with a string of beads).



Note to Editor: February 22 is National Margarita Day.