

Perfect Pairings To Make Party Planning A Snap

(NAPSA)—Perfect food and drink pairings are main ingredients in planning gatherings of any size. The art of combining cool cocktails with amazing appetizers that create a symphony of flavors as they mix and mingle in your mouth...it's like a party for your palate. With the following tips, you'll have everything you need to impress the most discerning guests.

- **Create a theme:** Incorporate versatile ingredients, such as cranberries, into multiple courses to create a theme that will surprise and delight guests.

- **Think through the meal:** For the menu, weigh how the different colors, textures, flavors and temperatures of the dishes will combine, keeping in mind their presentation on the plate.

- **Balance flavors:** Consider mixing and matching opposing tastes to create uniquely balanced flavor profiles, such as salty with sweet. Cut the richness of a pastry or dessert with the refreshing crispness of a sparkling cocktail or mocktail.

- **Remember presentation:** When setting the table, pairing casual and formal arrangements will blend sophistication with personalization. Showcase homemade centerpieces and the children's crafts among your finest silver and dinnerware for a true representation of your home.

Perfect Pairing Suggestions

- Kick off the evening with Cranberry Shrimp Cocktail paired with the Cranberry Gin Fizz.

- Go full on flavor with Beef Empanadas with Cranberries paired with Cranberry Lime Sparklers.

- Round out the final course with Outrageous Chocolate Cran-



Treat guests to a perfect pairing of a Cosmopolitan joined with Sizzling Bacon-Wrapped Apricots with Cranberry Glaze.

berry Fudge Cake paired with Cranberry Mimosas.

For more party-planning tips, perfect pairings and recipe demos, just visit www.oceanspray.com, www.facebook.com/oceanspray, www.twitter.com/oceansprayinc and www.youtube.com/oceanspray or call Ocean Spray's Consumer Help Line at (800) 662-3263.

Sizzling Bacon-Wrapped Apricots with Cranberry Glaze (Makes 24 appetizers)

Ingredients:

- 1½ cups Ocean Spray® 100% Juice Cranberry Blend
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch mixed with 2 teaspoons water
- ¾ teaspoon whole-grain mustard
- 1½ teaspoons packed brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg

- 12 slices maple-cured bacon, halved crosswise
- 24 dried apricots

Directions:

Boil cranberry juice in medium saucepan over high heat until reduced to 1 cup. Whisk in cornstarch, mustard, brown sugar and nutmeg. Bring to a boil over medium heat and boil 1 minute until thickened. Cool to room temperature. Reserve ½ cup of the glaze.

Meanwhile, line rimmed baking sheet with foil; set wire rack over foil and spray with cooking spray. Wrap bacon halves around apricots and secure with wooden pick. Brush with glaze and place on wire rack.

Broil 3 to 7 minutes or until bacon is browned, turning once. Serve warm with reserved glaze.