

## **Are you ready for Bikini weather?**

There it was, tacked to the telephone pole in front of me at the stop sign. The small hand lettered sign said, "Bikini weather is coming...lose 25 pounds in 6 weeks!" Man, were they hitting too close for comfort or what?

As it happens, I had just visited my doctor a couple days before and he tells me that 15 pounds have to go. And those signs aren't just about women. Think about it...guys have to show up in the same places where the bikini crowd is cavorting about. Even those of us who are happily married and have no tattoos need to look fit in that kind of environment and we're running out of time!

All of us are back to the "count down" for summer mindset and one great diet solution is shifting your substantial meal to breakfast or lunch and finishing your day with a healthy salad that will fill you up without all of the calories and fat. One important reminder is that you can put together a wonderfully healthy salad and then destroy everything with the wrong dressing.

I've experimented with Caesar Salads for over 30 years and gotten some really excellent results according to my "dining" friends in a regular and "low fat" version. We'll look at the latter today and give you some help shaving off that winter insulation!

### **Winedog's Low Fat Caesar Salad**

(makes 4 dinner size salads)

The recipe for our homemade dressing will provide about a quart, which will hold up well in your refrigerator for over a week. I keep mine in a quart size Mason jar. I use approximately one cup for 4 salads but you'll have to adjust based on personal taste.

Assemble in your blender:

- 2 cups well-shaken low-fat buttermilk
- 3 tablespoons low-fat mayonnaise
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup nonfat sour cream
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon dry Coleman's mustard
- 3 or 4 dashes Worcestershire sauce (to taste)
- 3 tablespoons grated Pecorino Romano cheese
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice

Blend all until smooth. Just a reminder...you can control the thickness of your dressing by adjusting the amount of buttermilk up or down. I usually start with 1½ cups in the blender and add as needed. Put your dressing in your container and place in refrigerator until needed.

For your salad:

- 4 heads Romaine hearts, hand torn to bite sized pieces

1 ½ cups seasoned croutons  
1 cup shredded Parmigiano cheese

For great salad it is critical that you assemble it right before serving. Use a large bowl. The best is specifically crafted for Caesars and is made of wood. Place your Romaine lettuce and dressing in to start with and toss until the leaves are evenly covered. Add your croutons and shredded Parmigiano next and toss again. Split the salad between 4 chilled plates and serve.

If you would like to take your Caesar to the next level there are additional toppings that give the salad more substance to handle larger appetites. Marinated and grilled boneless and skinless chicken breasts can be sliced into thin strips and placed on top of the salad. Also, boiled or grilled shrimp is a great topper. You can decide how you want to season your additions depending on your mood. Tex-Mex, Caribbean, Provençal, Thai, and many more seasoning styles work very well and can keep salads fun and interesting.

Here's the recipe for one of my all time favorite marinade recipes for Cuban style chicken or seafood for your topper:

### **Mojo Criollo Marinade**

1 garlic head  
6 ounces orange juice  
2 ounces lemon juice  
2 teaspoons ground cumin  
1 tablespoon chopped oregano leaves  
3 teaspoons salt  
4 ounces water

Peel and crush your garlic in a bowl and add all of your other ingredients. Allow everything to blend together for at least one hour before using it. Mojo is a terrific marinade for fish, seafood, chicken, or pork. It is also the Cuban barbecue sauce that families in the Caribbean use in 50 gallon drums!

Light fare demands a light, flavorful wine and I would point out for you that there really is an assortment of fine quality, well made "blush" or Rosé wines on the market. I've got two for you to think about and either one would be a super wine to have a case or two set aside for summer entertaining.

The 2003 Dancing Coyote White Zinfandel from Clarksburg, California, is fun and easy to enjoy. The zesty, spirited style has flavors of juicy strawberry and watermelon with a touch of tangy citrus on the finish. It is fruity but not over sweet like some of the white Zin's that have created a negative image for the category. This wine has serious character in a not so serious way!

Many of the best Rosé wines I've tasted come from the southern regions of France and Spain, where these light soft wines are critically important to the gatherings of those intent on enjoying their summers eating and drinking with friends.

Last winter I was given a chance to taste the 2003 Coto de Hayas Rosado, which is a blend of 95% Grenache and 5% Tempranillo. The dark red color of a red wine is produced from the skins of the grapes, which are allowed to set in the juice as fermentation begins. At this point color pigmentation is drawn into the liquid from the skins. A rosé or blush wine is one in which the skins are removed before enough red pigmentation is extracted to make the wine a true red wine.

The flavors of this Rosado are dryish red raspberries and strawberries with a hint of herbal spice. This is not a wimpy wine by any means and it provides solid performance all the way through to the finish.

I hope you'll give one or both of these wines a try and we're always available to answer your wine questions at 888-288-0668. Cheers!