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he holidays are the perfect time to gather with your nearest and dearest to create lasting memories. But who says you have to follow the same traditions as in years past? For a fresh take on the holidays, celebrate with a Spanish-inspired feast of seafood.

Seafood is a culinary mainstay in various parts of Spain, and it's a big part of Nochebuena celebrations. Nochebuena is the name Spaniards give to Christmas Eve, but you can enjoy a Nochebuenastyle dinner any time during the holidays with these delicious recipes from Martîn Cüdax Winery in Rias Baixas, Spain. Here's how:

• Start off with a beautiful Lobster Salad with Asparagus Herb Mayonnaise. It's easier than you think to season your favorite mayonnaise and use it to top steamed lobster, and it's an impressive way to start a

• Serve this simple, yet elegant, Pan-Seared Cod Fish on top of Crispy Bacon Mashed Potatoes, then top it all off with a savory White Bean and Olive

These dishes are perfect to pair with an AlbariOo, like the one from Martîn Cüdax, a crisp, elegant and dry white wine that is often dubbed the "wine of the sea," due to its natural complement to seafood. Learn more at www.martincodaxwines.com.

# **Lobster Salad With Asparagus Herb Mayonnaise**

- 1/2 pound thin asparagus, tough stems removed 1/4 cup chopped mixed fresh herbs, such as chervil, parsley, tarragon or chives
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise 2 tablespoons champagne or sherry vinegar 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons walnut or hazelnut oil
- 2 1 1/4-pound lobsters, steamed, tail and claw meat removed from shell 4 cups mixed baby lettuce

Juice of 1 lemon

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Prepare large bowl of ice water, and set aside. Bring shallow pan of salted water to a boil. Add asparagus and blanch until bright green and just tender, about 2 minutes. Remove and plunge into ice water bath to stop cooking, reserving asparagus water. Once asparagus is chilled, remove from ice water bath, pat dry and set aside.

Place herbs into blender and puree with 2 to 3 tablespoons reserved asparagus water until smooth. Whisk mayonnaise with pureed herbs and 1/2 the lemon juice. Then season with salt and freshly ground pepper to taste.

Whisk vinegar, mustard and remaining half of lemon juice together in large bowl. Slowly whisk in walnut or hazelnut oil until smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and set aside.

Slice lobster tail into 1-inch pieces. Cut asparagus in half on diagonal. Add sliced lobster, asparagus and baby lettuces to dressing and toss gently to coat.

Spoon herb mayonnaise onto 4 plates in a circular pattern. Divide lobster evenly over plates. Place asparagus around it; mound salad greens in center of each, and top each with lobster claw.

# **Pan-Seared Cod Fish**

Yield: 4 servings

- 4 6-ounce filets black cod, skin on
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme, roughly chopped 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil Kosher salt

Pinch of cayenne pepper

Pat fish dry with paper towels and season on both sides with thyme, 1/2 teaspoon salt and pinch of cayenne. Heat butter and olive oil in large nonstick skillet over medium high heat. When butter is melted, add fish, skin side down, and cook until skin begins to get crispy and golden, about 5 minutes. Turn fish and cook until golden and firm, about 3 to 5 minutes, spooning some of the butter over filets to keep moist.

To serve: Mound mashed potatoes onto four serving plates. Place fish diagonally over mashed potatoes. Spoon tapenade over fish and top each with a

# **White Bean and Olive Tapenade**

- Yield: 4 servings 1/4 cup thinly sliced red onion 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 14-ounce can white beans, drained and

rinsed 1 anchovy, optional

1/3 cup oil cured black olives, roughly chopped

1 small orange or lemon, 2 tablespoons juice, 1 teaspoon zest

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper

Soak onions in cold water. Heat olive oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium to high heat. Add beans and anchovy, and cook without stirring until beans begin to fry, about 5 minutes. Add olives, juice and zest. Stir and continue to cook until beans become golden and slightly crispy, about 5 more minutes. Drain onions and squeeze dry. Turn off heat, stir in onions and parsley and season with salt and freshly ground pepper to taste. Set aside until ready

# **Crispy Bacon Mashed Potatoes**

Yield: 4 servings

1 pound Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and quartered

4 slices bacon

1/2 cup half and half, warmed

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted Freshly grated nutmeg

Kosher salt and freshly ground white pepper Place potatoes in large pot of cold salted water. Bring to a boil over high heat; reduce heat to medium and continue to boil until potatoes are fork tender, about 15 minutes. Turn off heat and let pota-

toes rest in hot water for 5 minutes. Drain, reserving

1 cup of the starchy water. Meanwhile, place bacon in large cold skillet. Turn on heat and cook until crispy, turning once, about 7

minutes. Drain bacon on paper towels, reserving bacon fat.

Warm half and half slightly over medium heat in the same pot potatoes were boiling in. Add potatoes and 1 tablespoon reserved bacon fat. Using potato masher, mash potatoes until smooth. Add melted butter and season with a pinch of nutmeg, salt and freshly ground white pepper to taste. Cover to keep warm while fish cooks.

# celebrate the holidays with





# **DNA Code Of The Christmas** Tree Finally Being Revealed

NEW YORK (AP) — To millions of people, the Christmas tree is a cheerful sight. To scientists who decipher the DNA codes of

We're talking about the conifer, the umbrella term for cone-bearing trees like the spruce, fir, pine, cypress and cedar. Apart from their Yuletide popularity, they play big roles in the lumber in-

dustry and in healthy forest ecosystems.

Scientists would love to identify the billions of building blocks that make up the DNA of a conifer. That's called sequencing its genome. Such analysis is a standard tool of biology, and doing it for conifers could reveal genetic secrets useful for basic science, breeding and forest management.

But the conifer genome is dauntingly huge. And like a big price tag on a wished-for present, that has put it out of reach.

Now, as Christmas approaches, it appears the conifer's role as

a genetic Grinch may be ending.
In recent months, scientific teams in the United States and Canada have released preliminary, patchy descriptions of conifer genomes. And a Swedish team plans to follow suit soon in its

"The world changed for conifer genetics," said David Neale of the University of California, Davis. It's "entering the modern era."



quest for the Norway spruce.

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