

ENTERTAINING IDEAS

Holiday Entertaining With Champagne

(NAPSA)—You know there is a celebration in the air when you hear the pop of a champagne cork. For some, just opening a bottle of champagne can be daunting. Now, just in time for the holidays, Food Network Chef Bob Blumer and Cook's Champagne have developed some tips on how to choose, serve and enjoy champagne, the beverage that makes any occasion special.

The Choice

Selecting champagne can be overwhelming. Three popular styles are brut, extra dry and spumante. Choose a champagne that best meets your tastes. Brut



has the most dry flavor, extra dry is just a little sweeter (don't let the name fool you), and spumante is very fruity. Champagnes can range in price.

Select a champagne that best fits your budget for the occasion. Cook's Champagne is a great choice because it has won numerous awards and it won't break the bank, costing under \$10 a bottle. And if you are looking for a non-alcoholic option, Inglenook St. Regis makes a flavorful alcohol-removed champagne and spumante.

The Chill

Champagne is best served cold. To achieve the ideal temperature of about 45 degrees put a bottle in the refrigerator for about three hours or soak for 20 minutes in an ice bucket filled with one part ice, one part water. Never place champagne in the freezer or shake before opening.

The Pop

Now for the fun part. Loosen the wire hood around the cork. Keep a finger or thumb over the wire hood and cork, as it could pop out on its own. Point the bottle away from you and anyone else. Now grasp the wire hood and cork with a towel and gently turn the bottle in one direction, twisting the bottle, not the cork. The champagne should open with a gentle sigh.

The Twist

Champagne is tasty on its own, but if you want to experience the new trend of champagne cocktails, try some of these luscious cocktails created to honor cities across the country.



America Sparkles lives up to its name. It bubbles inside a tall champagne flute that sparkles at the rim.

San Francisco's Golden Gate

3/4 oz. Grand Marnier
3 oz. Pineapple Juice
3 oz. Cook's Brut Champagne

Detroit's Pink Cadillac

3/4 oz. Triple Sec
1 1/2 oz. Cranberry Juice
1 tsp. freshly squeezed lime juice
3 oz. Cook's Brut Champagne

Garnish by floating cranberries on top. This also makes a wonderful punch. Just multiply by quantities of 10.

America Sparkles

Dip rim of a tall champagne flute into a dish with a small amount of Cointreau, then dip into a dish with blue sugar crystals (found in the cookie decorating aisle).

Then add to the prepared glass:

1 oz. Chambord
1/2 oz. Cointreau

Fill with 5 oz. Cook's Brut Champagne

To try other trendy champagne cocktail recipes such as San Diego Margarita, Florida Citrus, Georgia Peach, Chicago Blues, LA Infusion, or Seattle Mocha Joe, check out cookschampagne.com or surrealgourmet.com.