

Pampered Pinay: Peace, Joy & Pomegranates

BY FRANCINE MAIGUE

Maligayang Pasko, ang mga minamahal kong kaibigan! I wish you and your loved ones the Merriest Christmas! Faith, hope and love abound. Whatever the challenges of this year, I pray that all in our community experience a safe, peaceful and joyous holiday—rejuvenated and perpetually inspired by the true spirit of the season.

My favorite part of Christmas is the gathering of people—the chance to break bread with one another and share peace & stories. Folks hosting Christmas parties have asked me how to help make their

shindig's feast stand out from the rest. Those attending Christmas parties have asked for easy, festive potluck recipes. 'Tis the season for extra yummy eats! To me, nothing says, "This dish is winter holiday fancy," more than the addition of pomegranate seeds. The color is gorgeous and the flavor and pop wake up countless recipes. Here are some of my family's favorites...

Appetizers: Pomegranate Salsa & Guacamole
Simply add pomegranate seeds to your favorite salsa and guacamole recipes. Grab a bag of your favorite tortilla chips and you have an easily portable, potluck-

friendly contribution to a festive feast.

***Pro Tip-Guac:** Chop all your ingredients (save for the unopened avocados and pomegranate seeds), and prepare your guac on-site, if a long transport is involved. This helps prevent browning. (No one likes guac that looks like brown mush.) And don't forget your lime or lemon juice!

***Pro Tip-Salsa:** Mango salsa + pomegranate seeds = HEAVEN!

Salad: Winter Fruit Salad

Toss sliced pears, orange segments, diced apples, sliced kiwi and pomegranate seeds with honey and lime juice. Refrigerate before serving, so the flavors have a chance to meld and bloom. So easy, so fresh, so healthy and so colorful!

***Pro Tip:** Serve with vanilla ice cream for a simple, but very tasty and photogenic dessert. The mix is also great for an "after opening presents on Christmas morning" brunch served with Greek yogurt and granola or even on top of waffles. (Add sliced bananas for the breakfast versions!)

Side Dish: Stuffing

Instead of raisins or cranberries, choose pomegranate seeds for your stuffing's pop of color and sweet/tangy goodness.

***Pro Tip:** The combo of pomegranate seeds and diced pears is delightful in "stuffing," whether inside the turkey or out.

Cheese Platter | Charcuterie Board: Pomegranate Goat Cheese

Alongside your fave cured meats, nuts, olives and crackers, serve an array of cheeses, including goat cheese mixed with or rolled in



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Enjoy your pomegranate as fruit, juice, in salad, baking now-thru Feb.

pomegranate seeds.

***Pro Tip:** The combo of goat cheese and pomegranate seeds also livens up a simple spinach salad dressed with balsamic vinegar and a bit of black pepper. Brussels sprouts roasted in salt/pepper/garlic powder/olive oil/balsamic vinegar then topped with crumbled goat cheese and pomegranate seeds is also beautiful and yummy. (So many delicious options!)

Dessert: Chocolate & Pomegranate (Mmm...)

Simply melt dark (or your preferred) chocolate over a double boiler or in the microwave. (I just microwave dark chocolate chips.) Spoon melted chocolate onto wax paper (making small circles) and sprinkle with pomegranate seeds. Chill in the fridge before serving. Yay for anti-oxidants!

***Pro Tip:** Before the chocolate hardens, add a lollipop, popsicle (or even BBQ) stick, then present it as a bouquet.

Drinks:

Pomegranate Punch

Mix pomegranate juice, lemon-lime soda, diced pineapple, sliced oranges and pomegranate seeds (all chilled) for a festive beverage everyone can enjoy.

***Pro Tip:** For those who want to add alcohol, opt for sparkling white wine instead of the soda. If serving both alcoholic and non-alcoholic versions, add some fresh mint leaves to the one with wine, so non-drinkers (especially kiddos) know to stay away.

Filipino Holiday Kick Off delivers the goods of merry making & fun



FILIPINO

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owned restaurant that has a 232 capacity and offers authentic filipino cuisines, a private function room for up to 50 people, provides nightly entertainment from Tuesday thru Saturday with accoustics or live band. For entertainment schedules, visit their website at <https://gerrysgrill.com> or call (619)464-3779.

Pilipino Women's Club president Regina Agarma and Vickie Lagula and showcased traditional filipiniana attires while Jean Pioso, fashion designer provided a sampler of her collections and art inspired bags and accessories. The event concluded with community dancing, caroling/singing and closing remarks. It was a remarkable way to kickstart our holiday festivities through dancing, singing, culture and community. Filipinos were able to share the same



joyous holiday spirit with the rest of National City.

The Filipino Holiday Kick Off was brought to the community by The Filipino Press, Westfield Plaza Bonita Mall and Gerry's Grill Restaurant and community partners who demonstrated the bayanihan spirit, hospitality and the zest and vigor of our young once and young ones who participated with gusto on various activities during the event.

Community partners to the event includes support from UP Alumni Association, Silayan Association Fil-



Am Chamber of Commerce Greater San Diego, Sweetwater Rotary of San Diego, Pilipino Nurses Association, House of the Philippines, Project heart to Heart, CTFLC, Annette, Boogie Arce, Club, Zen Ply, Joy Hackett and CJ, Luz Mercer, Samahan Rondalla Ensemble, Chuck Currie, Cherilyn Mallari, Mallwalkers Club, Jun Guzman, emcee, Shonee Henry, Rose, Lorna, Juvy, Marissa, Cheryl and Rico and Sofia, Veeya, Cat and



Jessica of Westfield Plaza Bonita Mall and Gerry's Grill Management's Noli Angorin, Grace, Mike and Mariel for their collaboration in ensuring that the event becomes an experience to remember by the attendees. Maraming maraming Salamat po! Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to everyone! See you again next year! (Susan delos Santos, event organizer) & The Filipino Press Newspaper

