

Fresh New Side Dishes and California Chardonnays for Thanksgiving

Stuffing and potatoes are joined by Jerusalem artichoke soup, kale salad and California Chardonnays

Laurie Woolever

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Thanksgiving is less than two weeks away, and while the main event, a roasted (or deep-fried, or [sous-vide cooked](#)) turkey, is not a surprise, there's no reason why some of your side dishes shouldn't be. You need not do away with your traditional stuffing, mashed potatoes or green bean casserole; just supplement with a few new tricks, like the soup and salad recipes below.

We all know that the Thanksgiving table holds a profusion of flavors that can pose a challenge for wine pairing, which is why, for whites, we've chosen a list of recently rated California Chardonnays, priced at \$25 or less, whose fruit-forward flavors and solid structure play well with nearly every element of the meal. Next week, we'll talk turkey, and Pinot Noir.

Jerusalem Artichoke Soup with Caramelized Onions

Jerusalem artichokes (also known as sunchokes) are small, white- or pink-fleshed tubers, members of the sunflower family, that first appear in the fall. Their flavor is delicately nutty and vegetal, and they are delicious roasted, sliced and fried like chips, or pureed, as in this substantial first-course soup. Caramelized onions, with their intense sweetness, add another layer of complexity to the soup's base. This soup looks and tastes best on the day it is made. If serving as leftovers, perk up the color and texture with a scant splash each of heavy cream and lemon juice, or blend any leftover caramelized onions into the reheated soup.

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3 large yellow or white onions, peeled and cut into 1/4-inch-thick half-moons, plus 1 small yellow or white onion, finely chopped
- Salt to taste
- 2 pounds Jerusalem artichokes, scrubbed, peeled (though it is not necessary to remove every last bit of skin) and cut into 1- to 1 1/2-inch chunks
- 1/2 pound baking potatoes, peeled and cut into 1 1/2-inch chunks
- 1 rib celery, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and coarsely chopped
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons white wine or Champagne vinegar
- 4 cups veal stock (may substitute chicken stock or beef broth)
- 1/4 cup finely chopped parsley, for garnish (optional)

1. In a large, heavy-bottomed skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil and all of the butter over medium-low heat until butter foams and subsides. Add the onion half-moons, stirring well to coat with oil and butter. Season lightly with salt and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, until the onions are browned and deeply fragrant, about 20 to 30 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, in a large pot, combine the Jerusalem artichokes and potatoes and cover with cold water. Cook over high heat just until water begins to simmer, then remove from heat, drain, and set the vegetables aside.

3. To the hot pot, add 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and warm over medium heat. Add the finely chopped onion, celery and garlic and season with salt and pepper. Stir to coat with oil and evenly distribute the seasoning, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are fragrant and golden brown, about 8 minutes. Increase the heat to high and stir in the vinegar, scraping the bottom of the pan to dislodge any browned vegetable bits. Once the vinegar has reduced by half and you can no longer smell the "sharp" aroma, stir in the veal stock and return the Jerusalem artichokes and potatoes to the pot. Bring the mixture to a simmer and cook for 15 minutes, until the vegetables are very tender. Season with salt and pepper to taste, then puree the mixture until smooth, using a hand-held blender.

4. Once the onions in the skillet are caramelized, remove from heat and transfer to a clean cutting board and chop them coarsely.

5. To serve, divide the soup among 4 to 6 warmed soup bowls. Garnish each bowl with a portion of the caramelized onions, and parsley, if desired, and serve immediately. *Serves 4 to 6.*

Kale and Radicchio Salad with Ricotta Salata

Kale has a reputation as a tough customer that requires long cooking, but if cut in thin ribbons, it softens up nicely within just 20 minutes of being dressed with a simple vinaigrette. Ricotta salata, as the name suggests, is a salty cheese, so go easy on the salt in the dressing. Unlike most salads, this one will live to see another day, if there are any leftovers. You may also wish to fold the leftovers into a Thanksgiving Friday omelet or toss with some hot pasta.

- 1 bunch kale (preferably the Lacinato variety, which has relatively flat leaves, but any variety will work), tough lower stems removed, cut into very thin strips (but not shredded)
- 1 head radicchio, core removed, cut into very thin strips
- 2 tablespoons best-quality white wine or Champagne vinegar
- 1/3 cup best-quality extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 to 3 ounces ricotta salata cheese, coarsely grated

1. Combine the kale and radicchio in a large salad bowl. In a separate bowl, combine the vinegar, oil and salt and whisk to combine. Drizzle the dressing over the greens, using as much as necessary to coat the salad but not drown it. Toss with tongs to coat leaves evenly. Let sit at room temperature for 20 minutes before serving.

2. To serve, divide the salad among 4 to 6 chilled salad plates, and top each portion with 1/2 ounce of ricotta salata. Serve immediately. *Serves 4 to 6.*

RECOMMENDED CALIFORNIA CHARDONNAYS

Note: The following list is a selection of very good wines from recently rated releases. More California Chardonnays can be found in our [Wine Ratings Search](#).

Bernardus Chardonnay Monterey County 2009 Score: 89 / \$22

This young, pithy wine shows good intensity, focus and purity of flavors build around citrus, green apple and honeydew melon, with light cedary notes. Elegant finish. Drink now through 2016. 24,940 cases made.—*J.L.*

William Hill Chardonnay Napa Valley 2009 Score: 89 / \$25

Openly fruity and friendly, this is creamy, rich and full-bodied, layered with fig, melon, apricot and spice. Holds its focus and ends with a long, pure finish. Drink now through 2015. 15,500 cases made.—*J.L.*

Raymond Chardonnay Napa Valley Reserve Selection 2009 Score: 89 / \$18

A fresh, zesty, lively style, with racy apple, pear, spice and citrus notes that are full-bodied, tight and focused, ending with a pleasant lift. Drink now through 2015. 22,000 cases made.—*J.L.*

Acacia Chardonnay Carneros 2009 Score: 88 / \$23

Clean and crisp, with a creamy edge to the ripe pear, apple and nutmeg scents. Medium-bodied, gaining subtle nuances on the finish. Drink now through 2016. 60,000 cases made.—*J.L.*

Starmont Chardonnay Napa Valley 2009 Score: 88 / \$20

Clean, pure and spicy, with a beam of ripe pear, melon, nutmeg and cedar flavors. Full-bodied and gaining on the finish. Drink now through 2014. 43,400 cases made.—*J.L.*

Bridlewood Chardonnay Monterey County 2009 Score: 87 / \$15

Fresh floral, citrus, peach and nectarine aromas are smooth and easy-drinking in this complex white, which ends with a touch of sweetness. Drink now through 2013. 30,000 cases made.—*J.L.*

De Loach Chardonnay Russian River Valley 2009 Score: 87 / \$18

Clean and pure, with ripe, subtle peach, apricot and honeydew melon flavors that finish with a twinge of citrus bitterness. Drink now through 2016. 11,105 cases made.—*J.L.*

Estancia Chardonnay Monterey County Pinnacles Ranches 2009 Score: 87 / \$12

Firm and intense, with fresh, vibrant peach, pear and light citrus shadings. Full-bodied, deep and persistent, ending with a dash of mineral. Drink now through 2015. 180,000 cases made.—*J.L.*

Franciscan Chardonnay Napa Valley 2009 Score: 87 / \$18

This is clean and well-made if simple, with clean, delicate and modest flavors of pear, melon and citrus. Drink now through 2014. 58,987 cases made.—*J.L.*

Kunde Estate Chardonnay Sonoma Valley 2009 Score: 87 / \$17

Marked by pleasant earthy citrus and green fruit notes, with crisp apple and honeydew melon character, this medium- to full-bodied wine ends with a clean aftertaste. Drink now through 2015. 15,000 cases made.—*J.L.*

Laguna Ranch Chardonnay Russian River Valley Laguna Ranch Vineyard 2009 Score: 87 / \$15

Pure, complex and balanced, with a creamy oak edge to the notes of ripe fig and honeysuckle. Finishes with a touch of smokiness. Drink now through 2016. 20,000 cases made.—*J.L.*

Fess Parker Chardonnay Santa Barbara County 2010 Score: 87 / \$18

Pure, complex and well-made, with spicy, toasty oak, this full-bodied white shows ripe pear, apple and melon flavors. Lingers with a touch of youthful rawness. Drink now through 2017. 18,500 cases made.—*J.L.*