



## KAMEN WINE PAIRINGS

### Valley's Delicata Squash with Chile Honey and Cheese

WITH KAMEN SAUVIGNON BLANC

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Quickly becoming a local haunt, Valley is a neighborhood restaurant in downtown Sonoma serving California home cooking. The kitchen is run by the culinary dynamos Emma Lipp and Stephanie Reagor. Enjoy their holiday seasonal twist on squash, sure to become one of your holiday favorites!

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## VALLEY

*Serves 6–8 and is easily scaled up*

#### DELICATA

- 4 delicata squash
- Olive oil
- Salt
- Neutral oil for deep frying, rice bran or Canola
- Crunchy salt for serving
- Aged/hard cheese, for serving

#### BATTER

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups rice flour
- 5 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ tablespoon salt
- 12 oz. vodka
- 18 oz. beer
- 2 tablespoons honey or sugar

#### CHILE HONEY

- 1 cup honey
- ½ cup vinegar, we use Sherry
- 1 teaspoon chile flakes, more to taste

## CHEFS' NOTE

When winter squash is in abundance, we try to utilize it diversely on our small menu. Pureed pumpkin currently laces through our bread pudding for dessert, spiced squash spears mingle with leeks and mushrooms in a dish of breakfast noodles and roasted butternut is served as a savory dinnertime side with Oaxacan-inspired salsa macha. Perhaps the crowd favorite is a snack of fried delicata rings, crisp and indulgent, finished with chile honey and grated cheese. They make a very festive canapé or first course for a dinner party, and could be an excellent way to begin a Thanksgiving or holiday season celebration.

These delectable “doughnuts” could also easily be served as a sweet instead—swap out the cheese for a sprinkling of sugar or a drizzle of cajeta, or serve alongside a bowl of ice cream.

The batter and squash can both be prepared in advance and stored in the fridge. When you are ready to serve, bring both to room temperature before proceeding with the frying steps.

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### DELICATA DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°F.

To prepare the delicata, lay each squash on a cutting board. Trim each end with a knife, leaving the tubular bodies. There is no need to peel the squash, the skin is tender when roasted. Use a spoon to scrape out the seeds and strings from the centers until they are hollow. Cut the delicatas in rings about ½" thick.

Lay the rings on a parchment-lined baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil and a sprinkle of salt. Roast in a 350°F oven until tender, rotating as needed, about 15 minutes. Allow the squash to cool. (Don't worry if some spots get color, but any truly burnt or collapsed pieces should be eaten/discarded.)

### BATTER DIRECTIONS

While your squash is roasting, make your batter. Combine the dry ingredients in a bowl, then add the liquids, whisking together until smooth. The texture should feel silky yet substantial, like pancake batter. Let the batter rest for 30 minutes or more, up to 24 hours.

### CHILE HONEY DIRECTIONS

Make the chile honey. In a bowl, combine the honey, vinegar and chile flakes. (If your honey is very hard, you may need to warm it first over a double-boiler to loosen.) Use a spatula to put into a container for easy use/storage, or to present at the table.

### FRYING DIRECTIONS

When you are ready to serve, heat several inches of frying oil in a heavy-bottomed pot to about 375°F. Use a fry or candy thermometer if you have one, and if not, look for a steady heat shimmer in the oil. Drop squash rings into the batter and turn them with tongs or chopsticks until they are fully coated. Use the same utensil to pull from the batter drop into the oil. Start with one or two pieces to test your temperature—adjust heat as needed. They should take about 4 minutes to cook, you might want to turn them in the oil to get even cooking. They should be golden brown and crispy when you pull from the oil.

Drain onto a paper-towel lined rack or old egg cartons. Salt while hot, preferably with crunchy salt like Maldon.

### TO SERVE

Arrange on a serving dish and drizzle with the chile honey. Grate your cheese on top—make it snow!