Non-Alcoholic Beverage Food Pairings

Many studies have shown that drinking alcohol while pregnant can lead to detrimental effects. These effects can include medical problems, delays in cognitive development, learning disorders, attachment problems, low birth-weight, damage to the nervous system, and sleeping problems. Due to the alarmingly negative outcomes, women are strongly advised to discontinue alcohol consumption while pregnant. It is however, hard to encourage non-alcoholic drink alternatives when there is a limited amount of availability in the restaurant setting.

Although consumers generally do have access to non-alcoholic beverages with their meals, these options usually consist of water and generic sodas. Most restaurants do not offer non-alcoholic beverages that have been individually paired with meals similar to how wines and other alcoholic beverages are paired to the specific taste of foods. Given that 22.3% of the people that reside in the state of Georgia are women of child bearing age (15-44 years old), it seems imperative that we are able to offer safe and healthy alternatives to alcoholic beverages in restaurants and bars.

Although pairing wines and other alcoholic drinks with certain meals is an old tradition, this new initiative of matching non-alcoholic beverages with specific dishes has been experimented with over the last few years. A pregnant woman may want to drink a non-alcoholic beverage that has been selected to compliment her meal choice but normally, does not have this option. When the only “exciting” drink choice is alcoholic, the patrons, as well as the restaurant, are missing out.

In California and New York City, a few restaurants have been successfully pairing non-alcoholic beverages with their meals much like wine pairing. The chef at the
French Laundry restaurant in California stated that “the diner who chooses not to drink [alcohol] is often left out during a multi-course meal.” He felt it was important to make everyone feel included at his restaurant (NY Times, 2004). A restaurant in Houston, TX has also been offering non-alcoholic beverages that have been matched with specific meals. The owner of the Bistro Calais in Texas found that his patrons “really enjoy something that complements the food,” and that it is a “nice addition to the average check” (Briefing, 2005). By offering unusual non-alcoholic drink pairings these restaurants are allowing their patrons to have a safe and unique dining experience.

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References:


