

# HOW TO PAIR WINE WITH FOOD

## Acidity Makes Wines Versatile and “Food Friendly”

- A wine’s body and acidity are as important to matching it with food as its flavor characteristics.
- High-acid wines are easy to pair with a wide variety of foods and will balance and temper a food’s saltiness, richness or smokiness. Champagne pairs well with caviar or smoked salmon; Sauvignon Blanc and Sangiovese are well suited to the high acid of tomato and citrus, respectively.



- High-acidity foods can make tannic wines more astringent and low-acid wines dull.
- Acidity can be a wonderful counterpoint to rich foods, like a Burgundy with roast duck or Chianti with pasta carbonara.

## “Bridge” Ingredients Tie Food Flavors and Wine Together

- Adding crumbled goat cheese to a salad makes it a better match for Sauvignon Blanc because the cheese and wine share similar tangy flavors.
- A sauce with peppercorns would pair well with a peppery wine, such as Syrah.
- A sprinkling of toasted nuts on top of a dish helps bridge it to a toasty, buttery and nutty Chardonnay.

- Mint and Sauvignon Blanc or rosemary and Riesling work well together because of complimentary aromatic compounds.



## Create a Contrast or Mirror Flavors in the Food

- Great food and wine combinations come from contrasting or matching flavors, texture and taste components.
- When wine is used in the dish’s preparation (a marinade or sauce), the wine served with it should mirror the dish.
- Wine can contrast food by type: roast duck and Pinot Noir are fabulous together because duck is succulent and rich while Pinot Noir’s acidity is a great foil to complement those flavors.
- Wine can mirror food by type: oak-aged Chardonnay and cream sauce are each thick, rich, buttery and creamy.
- Bold, full-flavored reds like Cabernet Sauvignon or Zinfandel will overpower light dishes but are excellent paired with rich meats like a roast.
- Delicate wines are unable to stand up to a dramatically spiced dish but go beautifully with refined dishes.

## Consider Complexity

- To best showcase a complex or aged wine, pair it with a simply prepared dish made with high-quality ingredients. A complicated, multi-layered entrée may overwhelm the wine or distract from its subtle and elegant nuances. This is especially true for mature wines.
- For example, a fine Cabernet Sauvignon or top-notch Bordeaux should be paired with a top-quality, but simple dish such as a fine steak or roast. An aged Riesling is an equally great match with steamed prawns or pan-fried brook trout.

## Be Adventurous and Have Fun

- Once you’ve got the food-and-wine basics sorted out and you know the various cuisines you prefer, be creative. Many wine lovers adore Riesling with Chinese and Thai dishes; others like Pinot Noir and sushi.



## Don’t Forget Dessert

- Ruby Port works very well with dark chocolate and Tawny Port is great with crème brûlée.
- Sparkling wines, like a rosé Champagne, a Prosecco or a Cava, can be wonderful with desserts that feature fresh fruits.
- Cabernet Sauvignon and dark chocolate is a pairing that works well.

