

# FOOD WINE PAIRING CHART

The following food wine pairing charts are by no means comprehensive, there are just so many great pairings! Think of them more as a jumping off point to help you plan your wine and food menu for your next get together.

## *The Reds*

Consider the following match ups for red wines:

Red Varietal	Appetizers	Main Course	Dessert
Cabernet Sauvignon	Carpaccio, pungent (stinky) cheeses	Beef, duck, lamb, lentils	Dark and bittersweet chocolate
Merlot	Antipasto, aged cheeses	Veal, sausage, salmon, tuna, eggplant	Raspberry, cherry or other dark berry desserts
Zinfandel	Seared Ahi tuna, spicy chicken or beef satay	Barbeque, tomato sauce, spicy sausage, duck and beef	Dark berry desserts, carrot cake
Pinot Noir	Creamy cheeses, pate's, roasted vegetables	Veal, chicken, turkey, lean cuts of beef, lamb	Berry tart, flourless chocolate cake, crème brulee
Syrah	Bruschetta, stuffed mushrooms, tapenade	Ham, lamb, pasta with tomato sauce, pizza, barbeque	Cherry pie, chocolate mousse

## *Whites*

Consider the following match ups for white wines:

White Varietal	Appetizers	Main Course	Dessert
Chardonnay	Scallops, crudite, hummus, mild cheeses	Chicken, cream based sauces, pork and seafood	Cheesecake, poached light fruit
Sauvignon Blanc	Oysters, crab cakes, wild mushroom, and goat cheese bruschetta	Sea bass, lobster, langoustines, chicken, shrimp	Sorbet, key lime pie, lemon meringue pie
Pinot Grigio	Ceviche, ahi tuna tartare, antipasto	Barbeque, tomato sauce, spicy sausage, duck and beef	Petit fours, apple tart
Riesling	Calamari, steamed clams, creamy cheeses	Risotto, grilled chicken, lobster	Light cakes, cream based pie, baked apples
		Roasted chicken, grilled pork, baked ham	

# WINE TASTING DESCRIPTORS

The following is a list of wine tasting descriptors and a common meaning of the terms.

## A-C

**Accessible** A wine that is easy to drink without an overwhelming sense of tannin, acidity or extract.

**Acidic** A wine with a noticeable sense of acidity.

**Aftertaste** A term for the taste left on the palate after wine has been swallowed. "Finish" is a synonym.

**Aggressive** A wine with harsh and pronounced flavors. The opposite of a wine described as "smooth" or "soft"

**Alcoholic** A wine that has an out of balanced presence of too much alcohol.

**Aroma** The smell of a wine. The term is generally applied to younger wines, while the term Bouquet is reserved for more aged wines.

**Astringent** An overly tannic white wine.

**Austere** A wine that is dominated by harsh acidity or tannin and is lacking the fruit needed to balance those components.

**Autolytic** Aroma of "yeasty" or acacia-like floweriness commonly associated with wines that have been aged sur lie.

**Baked** A wine with a high alcohol con-

tent that gives the perception of stewed or baked fruit flavors. May indicate a wine from grapes that were exposed to the heat of the sun after harvesting.

**Balanced** A wine that incorporates all its main components—tannins, acid, sweetness, and alcohol—in a manner where no one single component stands out.

**Big** A wine with intense flavor; or high in alcohol.

**Biscuity** A wine descriptor often associated with Pinot noir dominated-Champagne. It is sense of yeasty or bread dough aroma and flavors.

**Bite** A firm and distinctive perception of tannins or acidity. This can be a positive or negative attribute depending on whether the overall perception of the wine is balanced.

**Bitter** An unpleasant perception of tannins.

**Blowzy** An exaggerated fruity aroma. Commonly associated with lower quality fruit wines.

**Body** The sense of alcohol in the wine and the sense of feeling in the mouth.

**Bouquet** The layers of smells and aromas perceived in a wine.

**Bright** When describing the visual appearance of the wine, it refers to high clarity, very low levels of suspended solids. When describing fruit flavors, it refers to noticeable acidity and vivid intensity.

**Buttery** A wine that has gone through malolactic fermentation and has a rich, creamy mouthfeel with flavors reminiscent of butter.

**Cassis** The French term for the flavors associated with black currant. In wine tasting, the use of cassis over black currant typically denotes a more concentrated, richer flavor.

**Cedarwood** A collective term used to describe the woody aroma of a wine that has been treated with oak.

**Charming** A subjective term used to describe a wine with a range of pleasing properties but nothing that stands out in an obvious fashion.

**Cheesy** An aroma element characteristic of aged Champagne that develops after an extended period of aging. It is associated with the aroma of aged, nutty cheeses such as gouda and is caused by a small amount of butyric acid that is created during fermentation and later develops into an ester known as ethyl butyrate.

**Chewy** The sense of tannins that is not overwhelming. It is not necessarily a negative attribute for wine.

**Chocolaty** A term most often used of rich red wines such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot noir that describes the flavors and mouthfeel associated with chocolate—typically dark.

**Cigar-box** An term used to describe the tobacco aromas derived from oak influence.

**Citrous** A wine with the aromas and flavor from the citrus family of fruits.

**Classic** A subjective term used to denote a wine of exceptional quality that display the typicity of its varietal(s), displays layers of complexity and is very well balanced.

**Clean** A wine that is not demonstrating any obvious faults or unwanted aromas and flavors.

**Clear** A wine with no visible particulate matter.

**Closed** A wine that is not very aromatic.

**Cloves** An aroma associated with oak treatment that gives the perception of cloves. It is caused by the creation of eugenol acid by the toasting of the oak barrels.

**Cloying** A wine with a sticky or sickly sweet character that is not balanced with acidity.

**Coarse'** A term for a wine with a rough texture or mouthfeel. Usually applies the perception of tannins.

**Coconut** Aroma perception of coconut derived from treatment in American oak.

**Compact** Opposite of "open knit". A wine with a dense perception fruit that is balanced by the weight of tannins and acidity.

**Complete** Similar to the description of a "balanced wine" but more encompassing a wine that all the main components-acidity, alcohol, fruit and tannins-in long along with a pleasing mouthfeel and long finish.

**Complex** A wine that gives a perception of being multi-layered in terms of flavors and aromas.

**Concentrated** Intense flavors.

**Concoction** Usually a derogatory term used to refer to a wine that seems to have many different components that are "thrown together" rather than integrating into one cohesive profile.

**Connected** A sense of the wine's ability to relay its place of origin or terroir

**Cooked** A term similar to "bake" where the fruit flavors of the wine seemed like they have been cooked, baked or stewed. It may also indicate that grape concentrate was adding to the must during fermentation.

**Corked** A tasting term for a wine that has cork taint

**Creamy** A term used to describe the perception of a warm, creamy mouthfeel.

In sparkling wines, the sense of creaminess arises from a combination of the finesse of the mousse and the results of malolactic fermentation. The perception of creaminess is generally picked up at the back of the throat and through the finish of the wine.

**Crisp** A pleasing sense of acidity in the wine.

**Crust** Sediment, generally potassium bitartrate, that adheres to the inside of a wine bottle.

## D-H

**Definition** A wine that not only is well balanced but also gives a clear expression of its grape variety or place of origin.

**Delicate** A term used similar to charm but more often relates to the more subtle notes of a wine.

**Depth** A term used to denote a wine with several layers of flavor. An aspect of complexity.

**Dirty** A wine with off flavors and aromas that most likely resulted from poor hygiene during the fermentation or bottling process

**Dried up** A wine that has lost some of its freshness or fruitiness due to extended aging.

**Dry** A wine that is lacking the perception of sweetness.

**Earthy** This can mean a wine with aromas and flavor reminiscent of earth, such as forest floor or mushrooms. It can also refer to the drying impression felt on the palate

caused by high levels of geosmin that occur naturally in grapes.

**Easy** A term that can be synonymous with "approachable" but more commonly refers to a wine that is simple and straightforward without much complexity but still enjoyable to drink.

**Edgy** A wine with a noticeably level of acidity that heightens the flavors on the palate. Maybe synonymous with "nervy"

**Elegant** A term to describe a wine that possess finesse with subtle flavors that are in balance.

**Expansive** A wine that is considered "big" but still accessible.

**Expressive** A wine with clearly projected aromas and flavors.

**Fallen over** A wine that, at a relatively young age, has already gone past its peak (or optimal) drinking period and is rapidly declining in quality is said to have "fallen over".

**Farmyard** A generally more positive term than "Barnyard" used to describe the earthy and vegetal undertones that some Chardonnay and Pinot noir develop after maturing in the bottle. While for some wine drinkers this may not be very appealing, for others this maybe a sign that the wine has entered its peak drinking period.

**Fat** A wine that is full in body and has a sense of viscosity. A wine with too much fat that is not balanced by acidity is said to be "flabby" or "blowzy."

**Feminine** Describes a wine that emphasizes delicate flavors, silky textures and subtle aromas rather than strength, weight and intensity of fruit.

**Finesse** A very subjective term used to describe a wine of high quality that is well balanced.

**Finish** The sense and perception of the wine after swallowing.

**Firm** A stronger sense of tannins.

**Flabby** A lacking sense of acidity.

**Flat** In relation to sparkling wines, flat refers to a wine that has lost its effervescence. In all other wines the term is used interchangeably with "flabby" to denote a wine that is lacking acidity, particularly on the finish.

**Fleshy** A wine with a noticeable perception of fruit and extract.

**Foxy** A tasting term for the musty odor and flavor of wines made from Vitis labrusca grapes native to North America, usually a negative term.

**Fresh** A positive perception of acidity.

**Fruit** The perception of the grape characteristics and sense of body that is unique to the varietal.

**Full** A term usually used in context of wine with heavy weight or body due to its alcohol content. It can also refer to a wine that is full in flavor and extract .

**Grapey** A wine with the aromas and flavors reminiscent of grape flavoring—such as those associated with grape jelly. The Muscat family of grapes often produce wines that are described as “grapey.”

**Grassy** A term used to describe an herbaceous or vegetal element of a wine—ranging from freshly mown lawn grass to lemon grass flavors.

**Green** Overly acidic wine. Typically used to describe a wine made from unripe fruit.

**Gutsy** A wine with noticeable body, extract and fruit.

**Hard** Overly tannic wine.

**Harsh** Similar to “coarse” but usually used in a more derogatory fashion to denote a wine that has unbalanced tannins and acidity.

**Heavy** A wine that is very alcoholic with too much sense of body.

**Herbaceous** The herbal, vegetal aromas and flavors that maybe derived from varietal characteristics or decisions made in the winemaking process—such as harvesting under-ripened grapes or using aggressive extraction techniques for a red wine fermented in stainless steel.

**Hollow** A wine lacking the sense of fruit.

**Hot** Overly alcoholic wine.

## I-P

**Inky** A term that may refer to a wine’s dark coloring and opacity.

**Jammy** A wine that is rich in fruit but maybe lacking in tannins.

**Lean** The sense of acidity in the wine that lacks a perception of fruit.

**Leathery** A red wine high in tannins, with a thick and soft taste.

**Legs** The tracks of liquid that cling to the sides of a glass after the contents have been swirled. Often said to be related to the alcohol or glycerol content of a wine. Also called tears.

**Lemony** A term referring to the tangy acidity of a wine with fruit flavors reminiscent of lemons.

**Lightstruck** A tasting term for a wine that has had long exposure to Ultraviolet light causing “wet cardboard” type aroma and flavor.

**Linalool** The characteristic flowery-peach aroma associated with Muscat and Riesling wines. It derived from the chemical compound linalool.

**Liquorice** A term used to describe the concentrated flavor from rich sweet wines such as those of Monbazillac AOC which are produced by botrytized grapes.

**Liveliness** A term used to describe a wine with slight carbonation and fresh, bright acidity.

**Luscious** Similar to “voluptuous” but more commonly associated with sweet wines that have a rich, concentrated mouthfeel.

**Mature** A wine that has aged to its peak point of quality.

**Mean** A wine without sufficient fruit to balance the tannins and/or acidity of the wine, making it unbalance and unpleasant to drink.

**Meaty** A wine with a rich, full body (and often pronounce tannins and extract) that gives the drinker the impression of being able to “chew” it.

**Mellow** A wine with a soft texture that is nearing the peak of its maturity.

**Midpalate** A tasting term for the feel and taste of a wine when held in the mouth. **Minerality** A sense of mineralness in the wine, flavors of slate, shist, silex, etc.

**Nervy** A wine with a noticeable amount of acidity but is still balanced with the rest of the wine’s components

**Nose** A tasting term for the aroma, smell or bouquet of a wine.

**Oaky** A wine with a noticeable perception of the effects of oak. This can include the sense of vanilla, sweet spices like nutmeg, a creamy body and a smoky or toasted flavor.

**Oily** A generally full bodied wine with a viscous mouthfeel. If the wine is lacking acidity, this term maybe used in conjunction with flabby.

**Opulent** A rich tasting wine with a pleasing texture mouthfeel that is well balanced.

**Oxidized** A generally negative term describing a wine that has experienced too much exposure to oxidation. A wine that has been oxidized, is considered faulty and may exhibit sherry-like odors.

**Oxidative** Unlike “oxidized”, this is generally a more positive term describing a wine that has experienced constrained exposure to oxidation over the course of its aging process. The aromas and flavors that develop as a wine oxidatively matures can range from nuttiness, biscuity and butteriness to more spicy notes.

**Palate** A tasting term for the feel and taste of a wine in the mouth.

**Peak** The point where a wine is at its most ideal drinking conditions for an individual taster. This is a very subjective determination as for some tasters a wine will be at its peak when the fruit is still fresh and young while for some tasters the peak will arrive when a wine has matured in flavor.

**Peppery** A wine with the aromas and flavors reminiscent of the fruit from the Piper family of plants such as black pepper—corn associated with Syrah and Grenache based wine or the aroma of crushed white pepper associated with Gruner Veltliner.

**Perfume** A generally positively used to describe an aspect of a wine’s aroma or bouquet.

**Plummy** A wine with the juicy, fresh fruit flavors of plum

**Polished** A wine that is very smooth to drink, with no roughness in texture and mouthfeel. It is also well balanced.

**Powerful** A wine with a high level of alcohol that is not excessively alcoholic.

**Prickly** A wine with some slight residual carbonic gas, though not necessarily to the point of the wine being considered a sparkling wine. Some very young white wines (such as Vinho Verde) and dry rosé may be described as “prickly.”

## R-Z

**Racy** A wine with noticeable acidity that is well balanced with the other components of the wine.

**Reticent** A wine that is not exhibiting much aroma or bouquet characteristics perhaps due to its youth. It can be described as the sense that a wine is “holding back”.

**Rich** A sense of sweetness in the wine that is not excessively sweet.

**Robust** A term with similar connotations as “aggressive” except that “robust” is more commonly applied to older, mature wines while “aggressive” tends to describe younger wines.

**Round** A wine that has a good sense of body that is not overly tannic.

**Sassy** A wine with bold, brash and audacious flavors.

**Sharp** A term normally used to describe the acidity of a wine though it can refer to the degree of bitterness derived from a wine’s tannin.

**Sherrylike** A term used to describe a non-Sherry wine that exhibits oxidized aromas that may have been caused by excessive amounts of acetaldehyde.

**Short** A wine with well develop aromas and mouthfeel but has a finish that is little to non-existent due to the fruit quickly disappearing after swallowing.

**Smokey** A wine exhibiting the aromas and flavors of the various types of smoke, such as tobacco smoke, roasting fire smoke and a toasty smoke derived from oak influences.

**Smooth** A wine with a pleasing texture. Typically refers to a wine with soft tannins.

**Soft** A wine that is not overly tannic.

**Soy Sauce** A wine exhibiting the aroma of old Soy Sauce. Aged Bordeaux wines often exhibit such aroma.

**Spicy** A wine with aromas and flavors reminiscent of various spices such as black pepper and cinnamon. While this can be a characteristic of the grape varietal, many spicy notes are imparted from oak influences.

**Stalky** A woody, green herbaceous note in a wine.

**Structure** A term used to describe the solid components of a wine—acidity, sugar, density of fruit flavors and phenolic compounds such as tannins in relation to the overall balance and body of the wine.

**Supple** A wine that is not overly tannic.

**Sweet** A wine with a noticeable sense of sugar levels.

**Tannic** A wine with aggressive tannins.

**Tar** A wine with aromas and flavors reminiscent of Tar. Barolo wines often exhibit such characteristic.

**Tart** A wine with high levels of acidity.

**Texture** A tasting term for the mouthfeel of wine on the palate.

**Thin** A wine that is lacking body or fruit

**Tight** A wine with a significant presence of tannins that is restraining the other qualities of the wine, such as fruit and extract, from being more noticeable. A “tight wine” is expected to age well as the tannins soften to reveal these other qualities.

**Toasty** A sense of the charred or smoky taste from an oaked wine.

**Transparency** The ability of a wine to clearly portray all unique aspects of its flavor—fruit, floral, and mineral notes. The opposite would be a wine where flavors are diffused and thoroughly integrated.

**Typicity** A wine tasting term used to describe how much a wine expresses the typical characteristics of the varietal.

**Undertone** The more subtle nuances, aromas and flavors of wine.

**Unoaked** Also known as unwooded, refers to wines that have been matured without contact with wood/oak such as in aging barrels.

**Upfront** A wine with very perceivable characteristics and quality that do not require much thought or effort to discover.

**Vanilla** An oak induced characteristic aroma reminiscent of vanilla.

**Vegetal** A wine with aromas and flavor reminiscent of vegetation as oppose to fruit or floral notes.

**Vivid** A wine with very expressive ripe, fruit flavors.

**Voluptuous** A wine with a full body and rich texture.

**Warm** A wine with noticeable but balanced alcohol as opposed to a wine with excessive alcohol that maybe described as “hot”. It can also refer to a creamy texture derived from oak treatment.

**Watery** A wine that is excessively “thin” in body and fruit.

**Yeasty** Often uses synonymously with “biscuity” and can describe a wine with aromas and flavor reminiscent of bread dough or biscuits.

**Young** Wine that is not matured and usually bottled and sold within a year of its vintage.

**Zesty** A wine with noticeable acidity and usually citrus notes.

**Zippy** A wine with noticeable acidity that is balanced with enough fruit structure so as to not taste overly acidic.