

Food and Wine Pairing

When it comes to deciding what wine to pair with a meal, most of us often don't have time to fret over it. Whether you're in a rush, or simply don't know and need help determining what wine to pair with a meal, a few simple guidelines can help you make a decision more quickly.

These are not rules, and we are firm believers in drinking what you like, but it's true that certain flavors in wine and food pair better together than others. The idea of pairing wine and food is balance and for the two to complement each other.

Match Food Weight with Wine Weight

If you're preparing, or buying, a heavy dish (ie., lasagna) then you want to choose a wine of equal weight and body (ie. something full). You don't want to select a wine that is light in body because it won't stand up to the weight of the food. Remember, lighter foods with lighter bodied wines and heavier foods with more full bodied wines.



Consider Food Preparation and Flavor Profiles

Delicately prepared/flavored foods (ie., steamed, poached) pair best with more delicate wines, and the reverse holds true. Sauces and accompaniments are just as, or even more, important than the actual main component. A dish's dominant flavor or sauce should match the wine. (For example, if you're having turkey with a dried cherry sauce, the sauce is more important to pair with the wine than the turkey itself.)

Match Sweetness

When pairing sweet dishes with wine, remember that the wine needs to be as sweet as or sweeter than the dish. If it isn't, then the food can make the wine taste less fruity and astringent. So while you may love chocolate and Sauvignon Blanc, the two together do not mesh.

Balance Acidity

Foods or dishes that are high in acid (ie., tomato-based dishes) pair best with wines of equal acidity. Like sweetness above, the wine may taste bitter if the wine has less acid than the dish.

Consider Flavor Opposites

If you have a spicy dish, often occurring in Asian or Indian cuisine, consider pairing it with a wine that is sweet. The sweetness of the wine will cool the dish's spiciness. You can match a spicy dish with a spicy wine (ie., Syrah) but the spice in the wine will accentuate the spice in the dish. If you like that combination, then go for it.

As we always say, don't fret over pairings. It should be fun, but understanding some tips can make a difference. Wine alone will taste different then when paired with food.

Have fun!