

Springtime with Riesling

Fruit forward and full of vivacious minerality and acidity, Riesling is one of the world's most aromatic grapes. Cooler climate styles offer zesty citrus notes like lime, Meyer lemon and crisp green apple. Warmer climates typically offer riper fruit notes like pineapple, nectarine and apricot. Riesling also shows unique aromas such as honey, beeswax, ginger, and even a diesel-like aroma for which enthusiasts go crazy.



Though sweetness most likely comes to mind when many think of Riesling, the most distinctive flavor profile of Riesling is its minerality. Riesling suffered a bad rap for a while with a reputation of being cloyingly sweet. Don't forget that a wine can be "fruit forward" without being sweet! The best dry styles retain that fresh fruitiness while presenting a nice, dry palate with a hint to no residual sweetness.

So how do you know which is which? Generally, Rieslings from Alsace, Austria and NY Finger Lakes are dry, but when it comes to other regions, it can get tricky. For German Rieslings, they are mostly sweet or off-dry but look for "Troocken" on the label which means the wine is dry. Keep in mind Prädikat System Germans like Kabinett, Spätlese, Auslese, Beerenauslese and Trockenbeerenauslese (TBA). Prädikat means "predicate," and the terms—ie Kabinett, Spatlese, etc—predicate the wine's level of natural ripeness, not end sweetness.

California and Washington State Rieslings offer slightly sweeter, richer styles. And for Australian Riesling, dry styles are typically from the Clare or Eden Valleys where drier is more prevalent. Other Aussie regions often show sweeter styles.

Both dry and sweet Rieslings are good food matches, but off-dry and sweeter styles go nicely with hard-to-pair spicy dishes such as Szechuan or Thai and highly spiced and aromatic dishes flavored with ginger, turmeric, curry, cayenne or Teriyaki. They are also great partners for salty dishes like those often found on the Easter table.

Due to its natural acidity, Riesling is one of the most age-worthy wines.

** Love Riesling and want to try something new? Similar styles with similar levels of acidity and fruitiness can include Gewürztraminer, Chenin Blanc, Pinot Blanc, Loureiro (Portugal), Torrontes (Argentina), Muscat (Italy) and Malvasia Bianca (Italy).*