



Sauce Pairing Basics

During the holidays, cooking and preparing dishes for family and friends often increases. Sauces are key items for pairing with wine, often more important than the main protein/meat or fish. We've created a list of various types and styles of sauces and the best wines to pair with them. Some important wine aspects to keep in mind when pairing: acidity, spice, herbs, thickness and cheese.

Print and keep in your cookbook. Enjoy!

Primavera, Herb & Pesto Sauces

Try crisp style stainless steel fermented whites: Italians, like Vernaccia, Falanghina, Soave, Vermentino or Arneis. From France try Loire Valley Sauvignon Blanc. For reds, pair with higher acid options: French Cotes du Rhone, Chianti or lighter Cabernet Francs, like those from Long Island or upstate New York.

Creamy Sauces

Carbonara or Alfredo sauces with seafood or light meat: pair with whites that have some body, but aren't oaky. Try an Italian Soave, Pinot Bianco or unoaked Chardonnay. For a richer, cream-based dish with heavy meats, pair with Merlot, Dolcetto or Barbera d'Asti.

Tomato-Based Sauces

For fresh tomato sauces with basil, enjoy crisp dry whites: Northern Italian Pinot Grigio, Verdicchio or Orvieto. Reds with acid work great: Sangiovese (Chianti), Nebbiolo and Dolcetto. If you're having a simple tomato sauce with olive oil and garlic, try Montepulciano d'Abruzzo or Nero d'Avola.

Seafood sauce

Red sauce with mussels or clams are best with crisp lighter whites: Vinho Verde, Muscadet, Verdicchio or Picpoul de Pinet. Dry Italian or French rosés also work well. If you're having light butter sauce with lobster or crab, pair with Viognier, Burgundy whites and white Bordeaux.

Meat Sauces

Bolognese, meatball and sausage-based sauces are great with pairings like Sicilian and Puglian reds (especially Primitivo), Tuscan blends, Barolo, Barbaresco and Malbec.

Mushroom Sauces

Enjoy earthy or spicy style wines like Riesling, Gewurztraminer and Chenin Blanc as well as Cabernet Franc, Gamay and Barolo.

Spicy Sauces

A fruity wine is needed to cool down a spice's heat: Like Riesling, Gewürztraminer, Torrontes or reds like Zinfandel and Valpolicella Ripasso. Stay away from high alcohol wines; they will make the dish spicier.

Teriyaki Sauce

Teriyaki sauces can be salty, so try a Pinot Noir or fruity Malbec or Zinfandel. For whites, try Riesling, Pinot Gris or Pinot Blanc from Alsace.

Traditional Brown Gravy

A classic brown gravy pairs well with light reds like Pinot Noir, Cotes du Rhone and even fruity Zinfandels. For whites, try oaky Chardonnay, Italian Gavi di Gavi or even Brut Champagne.