

# LAYTONS

A Guide to Food and Wine Matching



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# A guide to food and wine matching

To achieve the best match it is necessary to analyse the basic components in both the wine and the food. The principal is to try to balance them so that neither the food nor the wine overpowers the other.

The main elements of food and wine matching to consider are:

- Weight
- Flavour Intensity and Characteristics
- Acidity
- Salt
- Tannin
- Sweetness

## Weight

Try to match the weight of the food with the weight of the wine:

Rich, heavyweight foods, like red meat casseroles need full-bodied wines. Normally it is powerful Red wines that are the favoured choice but it is the weight of the wine, not the colour or flavour, which is the most important consideration.

- Hence a full-bodied White wine is usually a better match with meat than a light-styled Red
- Lightweight food like poultry and fish are complemented by more delicate wines.
- Whilst a White wine is the instinctive choice light, low-tannin Reds also work.

## Flavour Intensity and Character

Flavour Intensity – match full flavours together, like Sauvignon Blanc and asparagus, mild flavours like Muscadet and oysters. Flavour intensity, although similar to weight, is not the same thing.

A big bowl of boiled pasta or potatoes without a dressing or sauce is heavy in weight but light in flavour. As opposed to red or green bell peppers which are lightweight but very flavoursome.

- The same goes for wines; the Riesling variety makes lightweight, intensely flavoured wines
- Whilst Chardonnay makes heavy (full-bodied) wines that are lightly flavoured.

Quite often it is not the main ingredient in a dish that provides the dominant flavour: In a creamy chicken curry, the sauce will be heavier and more robustly flavoured than the chicken. In this instance you need to match the wine to the sauce.

The flavour characteristics of some foods and wines are very similar and consequently they make good combinations:

- Light fruit-based desserts can be matched with the “grapey” flavour of the Muscat variety.
- Spicy dishes can be matched with Gewurztraminer, a variety often described as spicy or Gruner Veltiner. (Spicy wines may have white or black pepper, cloves, ginger, allspice aromas and flavours for example.)
- Cream or butter sauces go well with wines that have been fermented or aged in new oak barrels. Oak imparts vanilla-scented, buttery, creamy flavours to the wine.
- Delicately flavoured wines like Italian whites (Vementino, Pinot Grigio, Gavi, Soave, Verdicchio, Orvieto) and Loire Muscadet complement shellfish and seafood.

## Acidity

High acid wines complement fatty foods in the same way that lemon cuts through the greasiness of smoked salmon. Food and wine can both have acidity. Tomatoes, citrus and green apples are highacid foods. Certain grape varieties naturally produce high-acid wines, Muscadet for example. Wines from cool climates will have more acidity than those from hot climates.

- When vinegar or lemon juice is used as a condiment you will need to find a high- acid wine to complement it.
- A classic example is Champagne served with smoked salmon and a squeeze of lemon.
- High-acid wines are also used to cleanse the palate when eating oily food.
- Even without the lemon, smoked salmon is made more palatable when the Champagne cuts through the natural oiliness of the fish.

In Italy where many dishes are made with lots of olive oil you will find the majority of Italian Red wines have noticeable acidity and so complement the regional dishes perfectly:

- Think of Barbera, Chianti, Montepulciano, Brunello di Montalcino, Valpolicella, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

In the wines above, their natural acidity matches the acid characteristic also found in the tomato sauce whilst cutting through the olive oil.

### Salt

Salty foods are enhanced and balanced by a hint of sweetness:

- Parma Ham and Melon is a classic example.
- The same thing can be achieved with wine:
- Sauternes, a lusciously sweet wine from the Bordeaux region, is a famous match with salty, Roquefort cheese.
- Whilst salt clashes with tannin (it makes tannin seem more bitter), it works miracles with acidity:
- An example of this would be salty nibbles served with Champagne before a meal.

For a dry wine to work with salty food it should have low tannins and noticeable acidity. It is easier to find White wines with these characteristics than Reds, but there are some Red wines to fit the bill, Beaujolais is a perfect example.

### Tannin

The more textured the food (e.g. fatty – like duck, chewy - like steak) the more tannin you need in the wine.

Tannins cause your gums to pucker and dry when you drink wine. Typically detected in Red wines (tannin comes from the grape skins and stalks used in red wine-making).

Grape varieties vary enormously in tannin content:

- Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Tannat all have very thick skin and so it can make deeply coloured, high-tannin wines.

Wine tannins are attracted to fatty proteins:

- Your saliva is full of protein molecules and this is why your gums pucker and dry when drinking tannic wines.
- Lamb is a good example of a food with a high-fatty protein content which when eaten coats the mouth with fat.

- If you then drink a tannic Red wine the tannin molecules attach themselves to the protein molecules and strip them from your mouth, leaving it feeling refreshed and cleansed and ready for the next mouthful.

### Sweetness

The wine should always be sweeter than the food. Sweetness in wine also acts as a foil to rich foods.

Sweet foods make dry wines seem over-acidic and tart.

The general rule of thumb is to serve a wine at least as sweet or sweeter than the food being served.

Sweet wines with a good level of acidity, such as Sauternes, Barsac and Coteaux du Layon are a perfect match for rich foods like pâté, foie gras.

- The acidity will cut through the fat in the pâté and the wine's sweetness will complement the richness of this food.
- Sweetness also balances salt and so sweet wines are classic companions of blue cheeses e.g. Port with Stilton.

### Is there such a thing as a safe bet food and wine pairing?

Some food and wine combinations work so well that they are truly marriages made in heaven. For example:

Asparagus	Sauvignon Blanc
Christmas Pudding	Liqueur Muscat
Consommé	Fino Sherry or Manzanilla
Foie Gras	Sauternes & Barsac
Fruits de Mers	Muscadet & Albarino
Goat's Cheese	Sancerre or Pouilly Fume
Oysters	Champagne
Parma Ham and Melon	Italian Pinot Grigio
Roast Lamb	Red Bordeaux
Roast Pork	Beaujolais, Rioja
Roquefort	Sauternes
Stilton	Port & Madeira
Strawberries and Cream	Sweet Vouvray
Sushi	Riesling

### Are there foods that are impossible to match with wine?

Listed below are foods which are very difficult to match well with wine. In these instances all you can do is find the best possible match, or better still limit the amount of that particular food. For example, horseradish spoils the flavour of wine so take a small serving rather than great dollops of horseradish sauce with your Roast Beef.

Artichokes	Horseradish
Capers	Olives
Chilli	Spinach
Eggs	Truffles
Fennel	Yoghurt



# Matching wine grapes to food

## Chardonnay

### Key Flavours:

Lemon, melon, pineapple, butter and vanilla (when oaked).

### Key Regions:

Chardonnay's home is Burgundy, where it used to make the world's finest white wines, including Chablis. For the best New World Chardonnays look for top Californian producers such as Au Bon Climat or top Kiwi producers like Felton Road.

### Key Food Matches:

Most Chardonnays are very food friendly wines and are excellent with poultry, pork, rich shellfish and white fish.

## Chenin Blanc

### Key Flavours:

Wet wool, beeswax, honey, apple and almond.

### Key Regions:

In France's Loire Valley glorious Vouvray and hedonistic Coteaux du Layons are produced. From the New World it's hard to beat South Africa

### Key Food Matches:

Dry style: Simply prepared fish and salads. Medium style: Fish in rich sauces. Sweet style: Fruit tarts and almond based pastries.

## Gewurztraminer

### Key Flavours:

Lychee, rose petal, white peach and spice.

### Key Regions:

The Alsace wines are undoubtedly the best, and producers Hugel and Zind-Humbrecht consistently produce the finest examples.

### Key Food Matches:

Dry style: Smoked salmon, spicy Thai dishes, pâtés. Sweet style: Foie Gras, fruitbased puddings.

## Grüner Veltliner

### Key Flavours:

Citrus and peach flavours are especially prominent with spicy notes of pepper and a whiff of smoke with vivid minerality and bright acidity

### Key Regions:

Grown primarily in Austria (signature grape) and Slovakia

### Key Food Matches:

Grüner Veltliner's vivid acidity and appealing spicy quality pair it very well with all types of food: pork (especially roast loin), sweetbreads, veal (especially roasted), Wiener Schnitzel ,

Vietnamese or Thai spicy dishes, steamed lobster, grilled scallops or shrimps, sushi, bitter greens like brussel sprouts and artichoke

## Pinot Gris (aka Tokay Pinot Gris in Alsace and Pinot Grigio in Italy)

### Key Flavours:

Pear, honey, apple and citrus.

### Key Regions:

Alsace's clay-rich soils bring out the grape's honey characteristics, while from Italy's Friuli-Venezia Giulia region marvellously rounded, elegant and mineral-laden examples are produced.

### Key Food Matches:

Dry style: Pork, creamy pasta dishes. Sweet style: Rich pâtés, fruit-based puddings.

## Riesling

### Key Flavours:

Lime, green apple, petrol and honey.

### Key Regions:

Germany for its nervy, mineral-laden dry wines and exotic sweeties, and Alsace where the grape produces earthier and weightier dry wines aswell as some of the greatest sweet wines in the world.

### Key Food Matches:

Dry style: Duck and goose, wild boar. Sweet style: apple puddings, fruit desserts

## Sauvignon Blanc

### Key Flavours:

Gooseberry, cat's pee, asparagus, grass, elderflower. Highly aromatic, strongly flavoured, grassy wines.

### Key Regions:

In Bordeaux it is blended with Sémillon to produce prestigious white Graves and great sweet Sauternes. It performs exceptionally well on the Loire's chalk and flint soils of Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé. Sauvignon Blanc is also responsible for New Zealand's most famous wine: Cloudy Bay, but Chile and South Africa are also making very good quality, rounded, fruit-driven Sauvignon Blancs.

### Key Food Matches:

Asparagus, green salad, fish and shellfish, Thai green curry.

## Viognier

### Key Flavours:

Apricot, peach, pear and nutmeg.

### Key Regions:

Viognier is most famous for the Rhône's white Condrieu wines, but increasingly the Languedoc is producing some excellent examples; Domaine Vins de Vienne's Viogniers are outstanding.

### Key Food Matches:

Rich shellfish, roast pork and savoury dishes with apricots in them.

## Cabernet Sauvignon

### Key Flavours:

Blackcurrant, chocolate, tobacco and mint.

### Key Regions:

Bordeaux's Left Bank is the variety's home, where it is blended with Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Producers like Frog's Leap Winery in California make powerfully fruity, oaky reds, while Italy produces Super-Tuscans like Sassicaia and Solaja. It also enjoys particular success in the Languedoc, Australia, Chile and South Africa.

### Key Food Matches:

Red meat and hard cheese.

## Grenache

### Key Flavours:

Raspberry, white pepper and smoke.

### Key Regions:

Grenache is the major stakeholder in most red blends in the Southern Rhône, including Châteauneuf-du-Pape. It is the most extensively grown grape in Spain, (aka Garnacha Tinta) esp. in Rioja (blended with Tempranillo), but the very best Garnacha wines come from Priorato (blend it with small quantities of Cabernet Sauvignon). Grenache is undergoing a revival in Australia's Barossa Valley

### Key Food Matches:

Hearty casserole, lamb, venison and game.

## Merlot

### Key Flavours:

Plum, black cherry, pepper and coffee.

### Key Regions:

Merlot is the most widely-planted grape in Bordeaux. It thrives on the clay rich soils of the Right Bank (Pomerol and St Emilion). It enjoys success in California, Argentina and Chile too.

### Key Food Matches:

Beef, lamb and calves liver.

## Nebbiolo

### Key Flavours:

Leather, prune, chocolate and licorice.

### Key Regions:

Nebbiolo is hardly ever seen outside the confines of Italy's Piedmont (the great Barolos and Barbarescos) although there has been some experimentation with the grape in California but with little success to date.

### Key Food Matches:

Beef, offal, rich casserole, wild mushroom and game.

## **Pinot Noir**

### **Key Flavours:**

Raspberry, cherry, violet and farmyard (aged wines).

### **Key Regions:**

Burgundy's Côte d'Or is the best region for Pinot Noir. New Zealand and California vie for position of best New World region; For sparkling wines look no further than Champagne where the variety is used by the top Houses in the prestige cuvées to add body and elegance to their wines.

### **Key Food Matches:**

Sparkling: Smoked salmon, oysters, shellfish. Still: Poultry, light game, salmon, tuna and charcuterie.

## **Shiraz/Syrah**

### **Key Flavours:**

Blueberry, blackberry, black pepper and chocolate.

### **Key Regions:**

The great Northern Rhônes are made entirely with Syrah. In Southern Rhone it is blended with Grenache. The Barossa Valley is home to the greatest Aussie Shiraz wines with

Penfold's Grange being the most famous. South Africa is also making some exceptional Syrahs.

### **Key Food Matches:**

Beef casserole, rare steak, barbecued red meat and hard cheese.

## **Tempranillo**

### **Key Flavours:**

Strawberry, tobacco and vanilla (from the oak).

### **Key Regions:**

Tempranillo's spiritual home is Spain's Rioja and Navarra regions and is almost always aged in oak. In Ribera del Duero it generally sees less oak. Outside of Spain it can be found in Portugal where it appears in Port blends and Douro table wines, and in Australia.

### **Key Food Matches:**

Lamb, boar, beef, wild mushroom and mature hard cheese.



# Food and wine matching

## Beef

### Cottage pie:

Beaujolais or fruity Vin de Pays Reds. Cottage Pie needs a low tannin Red wine with little or no oak influence.

### Chilli con carne:

Zinfandel For chilli-dishes select a ripe, lush wine like a Zinfandel to stand up to the spiciness of the dish.

### Beef bourguignon:

Red Burgundy or Merlot Red Burgundy is the traditional match for Beef Bourguignon, Merlot dominated blends from both Australia and Bordeaux.

### Steak and kidney pie:

Cabernet-Sauvignon based wines Red Bordeaux in particular, can be enjoyed more fully. A weighty Pinot Noir or a robust Ribera del Duero Tempranillo wine is also fine.

### Beefburgers:

Everyday Southern French Reds A Gigondas / Vacqueyras from the Southern Rhone or a rich, peppery red wine like a Zinfandel.

### Meatballs in tomato sauce:

Dolcetto and Barbera in particular, or any medium-bodied Italian red wines with soft tannins.

### Beef en croute roast beef:

Mature Red Bordeaux The rule is : avoid wines high in tannin. Any mature Red which has shed the tannins of its youth will suffice.

### Steak and rare roast beef:

Big Red Bordeaux or Red Rhône These dishes are some of the few food opportunities for drinking a tannic, powerful wine. The chewy texture of the meat makes tannins more supple, so this is the occasion to have a big Red Bordeaux (esp. Pauillac, St Estephe) or Red Rhône (Chateaufort-du-Pape, Cote-Rotie, Gigondas).

## Lamb

### Roast lamb, kleftiko, lamb casserole, Irish stew:

- Big Reds from Pauillac, Haut Médoc and Médoc
- Petits chateaux and Crus Bourgeois
- or Rioja or New World Bordeaux equivalents would also work, like Cabernet SauvignonMerlot blends from : Argentina, Chile, South Africa and Australia

### Lamb kebab or grilled lamb chops:

New Zealand Pinot Noir or Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon. Lighter dishes like Lamb Kebab or Grilled Lamb Chops would work well with fruitier New World wines.

### Lancashire hotpot:

Lightly oaked whites from Italy or the South-West of France Lancashire Hotpot is actually quite light-weight for a meat-dish; try it with a lightly oaked, wine like an Italian Chardonnay or similar dry white wine from South-West of France.

### Shepherd's pie:

Beaujolais or fruity Vin de Pays Red wines Shepherd's pie needs a low tannin Red wine with little or no oak influence.

### Lamb kidneys:

Barolo, Barbaresco

### Lambs liver:

Australian or Chilean Shiraz

### Sweetbreads:

Chardonnay When simply sautéed in butter require a light White wine like Italian Chardonnay. But if they are to be served in a cream sauce then go for more body in the wine: Chilean Chardonnay or a White Burgundy.

## **Pork**

### **Roast pork, pork pie, garlic sausage, salami:**

A low tannin Red often works best with Pork as it is usually quite fatty, because tannin clashes with fat. Also fatty foods need wines with noticeable acidity to help cleanse the palate.

- Beaujolais Villages
- A light Bourgogne Rouge, Bourgogne Passtoutgrains, or Cote de Beaune
- Rhône Whites such as White Chateauneuf or Condrieu, particularly if the pork has been flavoured with herbs.

### **Cassoulet:**

Beaujolais Cru An intensely fruity Beaujolais Cru like a Morgon to stand up to the flavours of Cassoulet.

### **Pork sausages:**

Australian Shiraz or a Zinfandel. Sausages can cope with Red wines that have a bit more tannin and body, as the aforementioned.

For a white wine choice, Chablis goes unexpectedly well.

### **Dried or cured hams, cooked ham:**

Beaujolais, Chablis. Especially when eaten warm, all go really well with Beaujolais. If you prefer Whites, stay with a lighter, unoaked wine such as a simple Chablis.

### **Dried ham:**

Beaujolais, Barbera, or Pinot Grigio. Any medium- fruited, lightly oaked red or crisp, unoaked white wine can go well.

### **Casseroles:**

When selecting a wine for Casseroles, as always you should consider the sauce first:

Onion, tomato sauce: Ribera del Duero, Rioja Reserva.  
White wine-based sauce: dry Alsace Pinot Gri

### **Choucroute:**

Choucroute requires an aromatic, crisp White such as an Alsace Riesling or Pinot Blanc.

## **Chicken**

### **Roast chicken, barbecued chicken, chicken fricassée:**

Unoaked or lightly oaked, fragrant Whites go best with everyday Chicken dishes and a simple Chardonnay is a safe bet with most. If you don't fancy a Chardonnay try dry White Bordeaux. For Roast Chicken with all the trimmings a mature Red Bordeaux is an alternative.

### **Chicken Kiev:**

Chablis or White Rioja. Because Chicken Kiev is quite a greasy dish it will need a wine with noticeable acidity, so select wines from cooler climates. Chablis would be an excellent choice or to compete with all that garlic a White Rioja would also be good.

### **Chicken pie:**

New World Chardonnay. Chicken Pie is quite likely to contain a creamy sauce which will need acidity but also cope with richer wines like warm climate Chardonnays such as those from Australia or North America.

### **Chicken chasseur, chicken casseroles/stews:**

- Tuscany Reds (Chianti, Rosso di Montalcino),
- Sicilian Reds,
- Light-bodied Merlot,
- Vin du Pays Red or White

High-acid wines are needed if tomatoes feature heavily in the sauce and an Italian Red is probably the most tomato-friendly wine. To match the gaminess of the mushrooms in Chicken Chasseur choose a light-bodied Merlot.

### **Coq-au-vin:**

Red Burgundy, Beaujolais Cru, New Zealand Pinot Noir. The rule for Coq-au-Vin is cook with the best wine you can afford and then drink the same, and this would be a Red Burgundy traditionally. Alternatively a chunkier Beaujolais or New World Pinot Noirs such as those from New Zealand and Australia should also work well.

## **Duck, Goose and Poultry**

Duck, Goose, Quail, Guinea Fowl and Turkey are all quite flavoursome for farmed fowl and can cope with more powerfully flavoured wines than those chosen to complement chicken. A Pinot Noir, especially from Burgundy, will match the slight gaminess of these birds.

### **Foie gras, duck pâté:**

Sauternes, Barsac, Sweet Loire Wines. Whether Duck or Goose liver, is an incredibly rich and luxurious dish. To balance both the richness and high-fat content a very sweet wine with marked acidity is required.

- Sauternes or Barsac wines are the usual partner to this dish, whether it is served cold as Pâté de Foie Gras or hot as Pan-Fried Foie Gras.
- However any other cool-climate, good-quality sweet White would also be good; Tokaji, or a Monbazillac for example.

Duck Pâté is not quite as rich and so a slightly less unctuous wine is required. An Alsace Pinot Gris would be delicious, as would a sweet White Loire (Vouvray, Coteaux du Layon, Bonnezeaux, Quarts de Chaume)

### **Roast duck:**

Light Pinot Noir. The perfect wine with Roast Duck is a light-styled Red Burgundy (also Passetoutegrains red) with the raspberry/cherry fruit flavours of these wines complementing the duck's flavour. If the dish is to be accompanied by a fruit sauce such as orange or cherry, the wine should be chosen to complement the sauce. Roast Duck with Orange Sauce: Australian Chardonnay, off-dry Vouvray With an orange sauce try a ripe Australian Chardonnay or better still an off-dry Vouvray wine; the slight sweetness will balance the fattiness of the duck.

Roast Duck with Cherry Sauce: Riesling Spälese, Beaujolais Cru. Cherry sauce will match both Red and White wines. For White try a German Riesling Spätlese or if you prefer drier wines, then a Red Beaujolais Cru will have sufficiently low tannins so as not to clash with the duck.

### **Confit de canard:**

Alsace Pinot Gris, Marsanne, Rousanne. Preserved in its own fat, Confit de Canard is best with an off-dry, aromatic variety that will cope with the greasiness of the dish. An Alsace Pinot Gris is a sensational match. Again for those with a not-so-sweet tooth try varieties indigenous to the South of France like Picpoul or Marsanne or Roussanne. Reds also work; try a light-styled Red Burgundy, or if the Confit is served with that other Dordogne speciality Ceps, select a Cahors or a top Californian Merlot.

### **Pan-fried duck breast:**

Light Burgundy Pinot Noir. With pan-fried duck breast we return to our banker wine the light-styled Red Burgundy. This would be especially delicious if a simple sauce is made by deglazing the pan with a splash of raspberry vinegar.

### **Roast goose:**

Mature Burgundy Pinot Noir or Claret. Even if you prick the skin of your goose to let the fat run out as it roasts, goose is still the richest and fattiest of meats. It is expensive and hard to find nowadays and so Roast Goose is a real luxury that deserves a top quality Red Burgundy or a mature Claret.

### **Confit d'oie:**

Red Bordeaux. For Confit d'Oie select the same wines as for Confit de Canard, or tradeup to a mature Red Bordeaux.

### **Cassoulet:**

Cahors, Beaujolais. Cassoulet is a big, hearty dish which needs an intensely fruity Red like a Cahors, (Malbec-based), a robust Madiran, a rich Syrah from the Southern Rhone or a Beaujolais Cru like a Morgon.

### **Guinea fowl:**

White Burgundy, Beaujolais. The meat of Guinea Fowl is darker and more flavoursome than chicken, with a gamey nuance, but it is more overwhelmed by wine than duck or goose. A buttery (oaked) White Burgundy is probably the best match, with practically all Reds being too tannic except a Beaujolais. If served with a sauce this will dominate the meat and so match the wine to complement the sauce.

### **Quail & turkey:**

Rich Chardonnays. Quail and Turkey are also light-flavoured, albeit more fuller flavoured than chicken. In both cases tannic wines should be avoided at all cost, with full-bodied Chardonnays being the most reliable partner.

If you really want a Red then you must buy a mature wine to ensure the tannins have softened adequately. A mature Claret (Pomerol, St Estephe, Margaux, St Julien) will fit the bill.



## **Barbecues**

### **Sausages, hamburgers and steaks or chops:**

Red Vin de Pays or New World wines such as Australian

Shiraz and Zinfandel. Seared, juicy and unadorned barbecued meats, like Sausages, Hamburgers and Steaks or Chops, are complemented by full-flavoured, fruity Red Vin de Pays or New World wines such as:

- Australian Shiraz and North American Zinfandel. These two wines are perfect with Barbecue Sauce too. The rich, caramelised, smoky, spicy flavours of char-grilled meat are best matched by wines from hot climates, which tend to be fuller flavoured and sweeter.
- BBQ Chicken: Warm-climate Chardonnay e.g. from Chile, California or Australia. Chicken could be matched with warm-climate Chardonnays from California or Australia. If you prefer a more refreshing style of white wine try a Picpoul de Pinet, or an Assyrtiko.

These two would also be a marvellous match for oily fish like Sardines as the wines' natural acidity will cut through the fish's oiliness and leave the palate cleansed and refreshed, ready for the next mouthful.

### **Grilled prawns or other shellfish:**

Chablis, unoaked Chardonnay, Picpoul Grilled Vegetables:

- Red Peppers : Tempranillo-based wines or dry, Australian Semillon
- Courgette, Mushroom, Onion and Tomato brochettes: low-tannin, light-flavoured Reds or medium to full-bodied, dry Whites

The intensified, sweet flavour of grilled or roasted vegetables requires full-flavoured and sometimes fairly full-bodied wines. For example, roasted aubergines or red peppers, cooked with olive oil, have a rich, deep flavour that warmly embraces a Rioja or other Spanish Tempranillo. The tannin balances the oil.

### **Salad tomatoes, asparagus:**

Sauvignon Blanc. Salad tomatoes, fresh, tangy asparagus favours a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc.

### **Grilled tomatoes:**

Barberas and other big Italian Reds. These take on a richer flavour that brings deeper reds into play, such as Italian Barberas, Montepulciano d' Abruzzo which also have quite high acidity.

### **Oriental flavoured BBQs:**

Sauvignon Blanc or creamy Chardonnays. The varietal characteristics of Sauvignon Blanc are lovely with lemongrass, lime-Leaf and coriander and match the lively, fresh qualities of Thai food. Nutty, spicy satay works well with creamy Chardonnays from either Australia or North America

### **Tandoori flavoured BBQs:**

Loire Reds, big, oaky Chardonnays from Australia. Tandoori is also popular as a marinade/sauce for a barbecue. This is not an easy flavour to match with wine, but Loire Reds and big, oaky Chardonnays from Australia work fine too.

### **Mediterranean flavoured BBQs:**

Languedoc-Roussillon and Vin de Pays Whites, Reds or Rosés

Flavours of the Mediterranean are quite common place at barbecues. Herbs such as thyme and rosemary, and garlic, lemon and olive oil are perfect for barbecued foods, evoking memories of holiday lunches in beach bars. For red meat dishes, match garlic, thyme and rosemary with herby reds from the Rhone, Provence, Languedoc Rousillon.

### **Grilled or barbecued halloumi cheese, feta cheese:**

Alsace Riesling, S. Rhone or Southern French Whites. Grilled or barbecued Halloumi Cheese needs a high-acid wine; Southern French Whites have sufficient acid and body to cope. Alternatively you could balance the cheese's saltiness with an aromatic Alsace Riesling. These wines could also accompany Feta Cheese. A refreshing glass of White wine is a must on a hot, sunny day, and fruity Whites from Languedoc-Roussillon fit the bill perfectly.

Be adventurous and try a little-known variety from this region like Picpoul from Coteaux du Languedoc.

# A quick guide to wines for BBQs

Grapes grown in hot climates (Mediterranean, Australia, Chile and California) ripen easily and the wines made from them are full-flavoured and taste sweeter/riper (think about strawberries and how the ripest berries are the sweetest). Often there is more residual sugar in a hot climate wine than a cool-climate wine, hence they seemingly taste 'sweeter'. These characteristics match those found in barbecued food.

The ripeness or sweetness in some wines also will balance the flavour of smoke and any heat and spice (just as sweet chutney balances hot curry).

## **Chicken:**

Vin de Pays, Californian or Australian Chardonnay

## **Lemon flavoured poultry or fish:**

Crisp Chardonnay

## **Sausages, hamburgers, steaks and chops:**

Australian Shiraz or Californian Zinfandel

## **Herby, garlicky white or red meat:**

Vin de Pays d'Oc white or red

## **Sardines and oily fish:**

Southern French white or Albariño

## **Shellfish:**

Chablis or Southern French rosé

## **Halloumi and feta cheese:**

Vin de Pays d'Oc Chardonnay or dry Sémillon/Sauvignon Blanc blend

## **Grilled red pepper:**

Spanish Tempranillo like Rioja

## **Indian flavours:**

Oaked full-bodied Chardonnay (poultry, fish) or Red Loire, Australian Shiraz (red meats)

## **Thai flavours:**

Sauvignon Blanc



# Food and wine matching

## Game Birds

### Grouse:

Hermitage, Crozes-Hermitage, Côte Rotie, Saint-Joseph, Châteauneuf du Pape, or mature Red Burgundy. Grouse is a very strong, gamey-flavoured bird that can cope with a full-flavoured Red wine. However like all poultry you need to beware of tannin and select wines that are not heavily tannic. The perfect wines with Roast Grouse are either a Red Northern Rhône or a top-class mature Red Burgundy.

### Roast woodcock:

Red Northern Rhône or mature Claret. Wood Pigeon Casserole: Oregon and

Californian Pinot Noir, big Australian Shiraz. As with all casseroles, if a wine has been used in the dish itself, drink the same wine. For Wood Pigeon Casserole, which is not all that dissimilar to Coq au Vin, fruity Reds such as North American Pinot Noirs or bigger Australian Cabernet/Shiraz work well.

### Roast wood pigeon:

Mature Red Bordeaux, Reserva / Gran Reserva Rioja. Roast Wood Pigeon needs a mature but full-flavoured Red like a Red Bordeaux or a Rioja. Pigeon Breasts served warm with a green-leaf salad need wines that will complement the salad dressing rather than the pigeon.

### Game dishes:

Sauces and Dressings. The sweetness of balsamic vinegar is far easier to match than harsher wine vinegars. Match the sweetness of the vinegar with a fruity Beaujolais Cru or Australian Merlot.

### Wild duck:

Red Northern Rhône or Australian Shiraz. Wild Duck such as Mallard has far more flavour than its domestic cousins and so correspondingly needs a more flavoursome wine to match. A Red Northern Rhône would be perfect as would an Australian Shiraz.

### Roast partridge:

Fruity Syrah (e.g. Vin de Pays) Roast Partridge can be easily over-powered by a tannic wine. Syrah is the best variety to choose from, but the best match would be a not-too-fullbodied version like a Vin de Pays Syrah. or from the Languedoc.

### Partridge with cabbage (Perdrix aux Choux):

Unoaked Chardonnay. The classic French dish Partridge with Cabbage (Perdrix aux Choux) which is flavoured with juniper and of course cabbage will pair with both Reds and Whites. For the White select an unoaked Chardonnay or a White Rhône.

### Pheasant Normande:

Dry Pinot Gris. Another classic French dish is Pheasant Normande made with apples and cream. Whites are best here, especially a dry Pinot Gris as this aromatic variety will complement the sweetness of the apples in the dish.

### Roast pheasant:

Light Pinot Noir. Roast Pheasant works very well with light, fruity varieties like Pinot Noir, especially those from North America or New Zealand.

## Game Meat

### Venison:

Pinot Noir. Venison is rich, has a gamey flavour and is very lean. All this makes it quite hard to match with wines and it is Pinot Noir wines that cope with it best of all.

- Roast venison does not like too much tannin, and so select a mature red Burgundy to go with it. Pinot Noirs from New Zealand, Australia and North America make be good second choices. If you do not like Pinot Noir then an alternative would be a Côtes du Rhône.
- Casseroled venison widens your choice of wine. Cooked in red wine with herbs, onions and pot-vegetables means you can select more full-bodied wines like Cabernet Sauvignon/Syrah blends or Zinfandels.

### Hare:

Amarone, Côtes du Rhône, Beaujolais. Hare is another dark, gamey meat which is hard to match without a sauce.

- Fortunately it is most likely to be served as jugged hare and with this dish a rich Amarone works very well. For a lighter-styled wine choose a Côtes du Rhône.
- Hare casserole or stew cooked with the usual red wine, onions and herbs would work with Côtes du Rhône, North American Merlots or even a very fruity Beaujolais Crus.

### Wild boar:

Pinot Noir, Beaujolais Crus, Southern Rhône Whites. Wild Boar is similar, albeit stronger flavoured, to Pork.

- For reds you will still need to avoid too much tannin so Beaujolais Crus would work very well.
- An alternative red would be a light Pinot Noir.
- For white wines look to the Southern Rhône.



## **Fish**

### **Overall best match:**

Italian White Wines or White Burgundy. Fish dishes are usually light-flavoured, so it is the way in which it has been cooked that should determine your choice of wine. So here are two "overall winners" - an Italian White for simply prepared fish, or a White Burgundy for richer dishes.

### **Fish cakes, fritto misto di mare, whitebait:**

Chablis, Pinot Grigio, Assyrtiko. To cut through the oiliness of fried fish a crisp White wine is required. Furthermore the fish itself is likely to have a delicate flavour so avoid oaked wines and those made from powerfully flavoured grape varieties. Fish Cakes go well with a steely Chablis.

### **Fritto misto or whitebait:**

Italian Pinot Grigio, you can't go wrong with a dry Italian White wine or similarly crisp French dry Whites like Muscadet, Picpoul.

### **Cod, plaice:**

Pinot Grigio, lightly oaked Chardonnay. Simple white fish such as Cod and Plaice fried in batter go well with Italian Whites. Or if served plainly grilled a lighter styled Chardonnay is a better match.

### **Dover sole:**

Maconnais White, California Chardonnay, White Bordeaux. Firmer-fleshed Dover Sole would cope with a White Burgundy or a North American Chardonnay or alternatively, serve with a soft White Bordeaux.

### **Skate:**

Sauvignon Blanc, White Bordeaux, Alsace Riesling. Most Sauvignon based wines go well with meatier Skate and so will an Alsace Riesling.

### **Turbot:**

White Burgundy, Condrieu. Turbot deserves a fine dry wine like White Burgundy or even an aromatic White Rhône like Condrieu.

### **John dory, mackerel, sardines:**

Muscadet, Pinot Grigio, White Bordeaux. Oily fish like Mackerel and Sardines are best with fresh Whites, try Muscadet, an Italian White or an inexpensive White

Bordeaux. Of course Sardines eaten al fresco with crisp Rosé is a lovely way to enjoy a summers day.

### **Salmon, tuna:**

New World Chardonnay. Salmon and Tuna are strongly flavoured fish that will stand up to bigger White wines like Australian Chardonnays. But if the Salmon is to be accompanied by a butter or cream sauce then buttery White Burgundy is a better match.

### **Red mullet:**

Light Rosé wines or light Chardonnay. It might cope with a New Zealand Pinot Noir too, but a safer bet is a crisp Rosé or a fresh Chardonnay.

### **Swordfish and monkfish:**

Californian Chardonnays or dry Australian Semillons. These both work with bigger Whites like Californian Chardonnays or dry Australian Semillons.

### **Bouillabaisse:**

Full-bodied Rosé, southern French White. Bouillabaisse is delicious with a medium to full-bodied Rosé, or a southern French White.

### **Fish pie:**

Lightly-oaked Chardonnay. The creamy sauce of Fish Pie is the dominant flavour in this dish and it should be matched with a lightly-oaked Chardonnay.

### **Kedgeriee, smoked haddock:**

White Graves, Californian, South African or Macon Chardonnay. It needs something to stand up to its big flavours whilst cutting through the creaminess of the dish, a Macon or South Africa Chardonnay should do the trick. To match the smokiness of Smoked Haddock select an oak-matured white such as a White Graves or good-quality Californian Chardonnay or New Zealand Chardonnay.

**Caviar:**

Champagne. If you are going to splash out on Caviar you may as well go the whole hog and serve it with Champagne, or better still a vintage Champagne.

**Ceviche:**

Chilean or New Zealand Sauvignon, Muscadet. The extremely fresh flavours of Ceviche should be matched with fresh-flavoured wines like New Zealand and Loire Sauvignon Blancs, or if you want a less aromatic wine then a Muscadet would also work.

**Crab:**

Albarino

**Gravad lax:**

Champagne, Dry Pinot Blanc. Gravad Lax is delicious with Blanc de Blancs Champagne or a dry Alsace, as is Smoked Salmon. Smoked Salmon, Smoked Salmon with Scrambled Eggs: Champagne or a dry Australian Semillon

**Sushi:**

Riesling Kabinett. Sushi is sensational with an off-dry German Riesling Kabinett, and a Gewurztraminer if you order spicy sushi.



## Shellfish

Like many fish dishes, most shellfish is light-flavoured, so it is the way in which it has been cooked that should determine your choice of wine. So here are two “overall winners” - a White Graves,

Chablis or Muscadet for simply prepared fish, or a White Burgundy and Champagne for richer dishes.

### Crab:

Viognier or White Graves. Crab has a distinctive, powerful flavour which requires a fruity, weighty wine such as a Viognier, Southern French white blend of Roussanne, Marsanne or a White Graves.

### Langoustines and prawns:

White Burgundy, Italian Whites. You could match the creamy-chewy flesh of Langoustines and Prawns with a White Burgundy or contrast it with an Italian Pinot Gris,

Garganega (Soave), Trebbiano (Frascati). Vermentino is a great match: widely planted in northern Sardinia but also found in Tuscan and Ligurian coasts. Its wines are particularly popular to accompany fish and seafood.

### Lobster:

Champagne or Chablis. Lobster Mayonnaise is sublime with White Burgundy (Pouilly-Fuisse, Puligny, Meursault), New Zealand Chardonnay a mature dry White Graves, but if you plan to serve it plain then Champagne or Chablis are great choices.

### Oysters:

Muscadet, dry Champagne, Chablis. The briny, salty, steely flavours of oysters require crispy, dry, stony, minerally or flinty wines such as Muscadet de Sevre et Maine, Champagne and Chablis. Also worth trying the Languedoc's perfect oyster match: Picpoul de Pinet.

### Scallops:

Grüner Veltliner or a Chilean Sauvignon Blanc. Grüner Veltliner has the spice intensity to stand up to complex flavours in dishes like scallops with chilli and garlic. Albarino could also be a match.

### Moules Marinieres:

Muscadet, White Graves. Moules Mariniere is perfect with a Muscadet that has been aged on its lees or a White Graves.



## Vegetarian

### Insalata tricolore:

Light Chablis or New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc. The avocados, tomatoes and mozzarella in Insalata Tricolore are not a wine-friendly mix, but a light Chablis or Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand would be a good enough match.

### Salade niçoise or Greek salad:

Muscadet or White Burgundy from Mâcon. Dry white wines with noticeable acidity are probably the best partners for these salads; try a Muscadet or a crisp White Burgundy from Mâcon. Similar wines also work well with Caesar Salad or you could also try an Italian White.

### Tomato or goats' cheese salads:

New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc. Tomato salads are very difficult to pair with wine. The grassy and herby notes in Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand work best, as they do with Goats' Cheese Salad.

### Asparagus:

Sauvignon Blanc. The herbaceous flavours of Sauvignon Blanc work well with those of asparagus, although if it is to be served with a buttery sauce like hollandaise you should match the wine to the sauce, a rich White Burgundy in this case.

### Pasta with pesto:

Savennières or unoaked Chardonnay. The rich flavours in pesto are a great match for full bodied Savennières or unoaked Chardonnay.

### Meat-free pizza:

Barbera or Dolcetto. The tomato based sauce of pizza works best with Italian reds such as Barbera or Dolcetto

### Onion tart:

Alsace Pinot Gris. The sweetness of the caramelised onions in Onion Tart requires a ripe, aromatic white like Alsace Pinot Gris or New World Sauvignons and Chardonnays, and these same wines will work well with Quiches too.

### Nut roast:

Cabernet-Shiraz or Chilean Merlot. A 'meatier' dish such as Nut Roast could take a fleshy Red such as a Cabernet-Shiraz or Chilean Merlot.

### Ratatouille:

New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc. Full-flavoured Ratatouilles go surprisingly well with aromatic New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs.

### Roasted red peppers:

Tempranillo. These are intensely flavoured and go particularly well with Tempranillo-based wines. Alternatively, for a White choose an Australian Semillon or German Riesling Spatlese.

### Mushrooms:

Châteauneuf-du-Pape. This is another 'meaty' vegetable and goes best with fullflavoured Reds. Try a New World Merlot or a Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

### Risotto al funghi:

Italian White or Alsace Pinot Blanc. Risotto al funghi has too many conflicting ingredients to find a perfect match but Italian Whites, Alsace Pinot Blanc and White Rioja all work quite well.



# Cheese and wine matching

## Cheese

### Best match:

Full-Bodied Chardonnay. A cheese board is a complete minefield where wine is concerned but White wines generally fare better than reds. There is no real sure fire winner here but a rich full-bodied Chardonnay will go with more types of cheeses than most wines. It is actually much better to serve just one or two great cheeses with a well-matched wine than a big cheese selection.

### Roquefort:

Sauternes or Barsac & Stilton: Port. These are two of the food and wine matches made in heaven.

### Gorgonzola:

Bual Madeira. Gorgonzola is not easy to match but a Bual Madeira or an aged Tawny port would be ok.

### Cambozola:

Tokaji Aszú. Mild creamy cheeses like Cambozola work quite well with a Tokaji Aszú or other sweet wines.

### Dolcelatte:

Rioja. Dolcelatte being that bit stronger would work with aged Spanish Red from Rioja, Navarra or Ribera del Duero.

### Goats' cheese:

Sancerre. Goats' Cheese has a real affinity with Sauvignon Blanc. Sancerre or Pouilly Fumé are perfect or a New Zealand Sauvignon nearly as good.

### Cheddar, red Leicester, gruyere, parmesan and manchego:

Medium to Full-Bodied Dry Reds. Hard cheeses probably fare better with Red wines than any other type of cheese. For cheddar, red Leicester, gruyere, parmesan and manchego, medium to full-bodied dry reds like mature Red Bordeaux or even a mature Rioja work as would a rich, full-bodied Chardonnay such as white Burgundy. Mimolette is the perfect partner to red Bordeaux.

### Smoked cheese:

Alsace Gewurztraminer. Smoked cheese is very difficult to match, try an Alsace Gewurztraminer.

### Camembert or chaumes:

Red Burgundy. Mouth-coating soft cheeses are very problematical with Red wines. However both Camembert and Chaumes work fine with a red Burgundy or a ripe Pomerol or St. Emilion wines.

### Brie:

White Burgundy. For brie choose a rich white Burgundy and a steely Chablis for Chaource.



# Pudding and wine matching

## Puddings

### Milk chocolate:

Sweet Muscat, Tawny Port, Sweet Olorosso, Madeira. Try pairing with oxidative, fortified styles, whose nutty complexity both complements and cuts through the richness of milk chocolate. Think of a Muscat de Rivesaltes, a Tawny Port, a sweet Olorosso Sherry, a medium-sweet Bual & Terrantez Madeira or a lusciously sweet Malvasia Madeira (Malmsey)

### Dark chocolate:

Sweet Muscat, Tawny Port, Sweet Olorosso, Madeira. Look for a dry red soft and fruity wine with a rich, chocolate texture and flavour like Malbec, Carmenere, Amarone della Valpolicella, or a fortified sweet wine like Pedro Ximenez Sherry. The King's Ginger liqueur also makes for a brilliant match, or else try a Malt Whisky.

### White chocolate:

Muscat, Prosecco. White is the most difficult chocolate to match. Try light, frothy wines with floral notes like Prosecco, or wines with the grapey freshness of the Muscat grape such as Muscat de Beaumes de Venise, Moscato d'Asti, Recioto di Soave. Muscat's apricot and white peach notes with citric hints and a whiff of mandarins make it a wonderfully refreshing combination with pure white chocolate.

### Profiteroles/chocolate ice cream:

Muscat. Profiteroles with lots of cream and chocolate sauce, or Chocolate Ice Cream would match with a rich, sweet Muscat like Rutherglen Muscat, Muscat de Beaumes de Venise.

### Death by chocolate:

Liqueur Muscat. The really rich, heavy chocolate dishes, like Death by

Chocolate, need an extremely sweet Liqueur Muscat, Pedro Ximenez Sherry or even a Tawny Port.

### Crème brûlée/creme caramel:

Sauternes, Barsac. A Sauternes / Barsac or botrytised Semillon would be delicious with both Crème Brûlée and Cream Caramel.

### Vanilla ice cream:

PX Sherry or Liqueur Muscat. Served alone, Vanilla Ice Cream is sublime with PX Sherry or a liqueur Muscat, in fact you could just pour these wines over the ice cream as a sauce!

### Custard:

Sweet Riesling or Muscat. Custard made at home properly is lovely with sweet Rieslings and Muscats.

### Treacle tart/pecan pie:

Liqueur Muscat. For very sweet Treacle Tart and Pecan Pie try a liqueur Muscat or a Tokaji Aszú.

### Bakewell pudding:

Sauternes. Bakewell Pudding is lighter and so look to unfortified-wines like Sauternes.

### Apple pie/apple tart:

Côteaux du Layon. Apple Pie or Apple Tart is perfect with Côteaux du Layon or a very sweet German wine, as is a Fruit Tart.

### Lemon tart/lemon meringue pie:

Eiswein. Both Lemon Tart and Lemon Meringue Pie work with young Sauternes / Barsac or Eiswein Riesling wines.

### Fruit salad/strawberries:

Moscato d'Asti. Fruit Salad or Strawberries are frivolous with a light sparkling wine like Moscato d'Asti or if you like lashings of sugar and cream try a German Auslese and Beerenauslese as well as a Sélection de Grains Nobles from Alsace

### Raspberries/summer pudding:

German Auslese, Beerenauslese. Raspberries or Summer Pudding would also work with the German Auslese and Beerenauslese, and maybe even a chilled, youthful Beaujolais Villages.

### Tarte tatin:

Sauternes. Sauternes / Barsac and Tarte Tatin is a delicious combination.

### Banoffee pie:

Muscat de Beaumes de Venise. For an incredibly sweet Banoffee Pie try a Muscat de Beaumes de Venise or a Tokaji Aszu.



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