

5 Best Food and Drink Pairings

5: Red Wine with Beef



Pairing wine with [food](#) is all about finding one of the four basic tastes -- sweet, [salty](#), sour or bitter -- in a dish and finding a wine that fits with it, either by having similar qualities or by contrasting them properly. Red wine is commonly paired with beef, and for a good reason. Cabernet sauvignon, for example, is a very bold wine with flavors of black currant, plum, cherry and spice. The boldness of the cabernet pairs perfectly with rich, dark meats.

For a winning pairing, try a flavorful cabernet with some braised beef short ribs and grilled vegetables. In fact, you can even use cabernet in your short rib recipe for the ultimate pairing experience. If you're not a fan of the cabernet sauvignon, you might also try a merlot or pinot noir with your beef dish.

4: Wine and Cheese



Wine and [cheese](#) is a classic combo for parties, [picnics](#) and intimate gatherings. A good cheese pairing is known to smooth out the wine and actually enhance its flavor. There are thousands of cheeses and wines, leading to a seemingly limitless number of potential combinations. To avoid being intimidated by this notion, learn just a couple of basics and then explore some tastes on your own.

Red wine generally matches well with hard cheese, while white does well with the soft ones. But there are many exceptions here -- cabernet with brie is a nice match, as is chardonnay with mild cheddar. Try some different pairings to see what satisfies your taste buds. Also, if you're still not sure where to start, you might look for free wine and cheese pairing classes at your local wine shop or cooking supply store.

3: White Wine and Seafood



While white wine has undergone some innovative changes when it comes to pairing in recent years, it has traditionally been paired with fish and other kinds of seafood. Chardonnay is a popular white wine that comes in a variety of different flavor profiles. It's typically a little sweeter than a dry pinot grigio, for instance, and tastes excellent with seafood.

For a great menu to go with your chardonnay, pair it with a mild [cheddar](#) for a light first bite. Crab cakes or oysters make a great appetizer pairing, and you can follow that with a main course of fish or shrimp. [Pasta](#) with a light cream sauce can be served as a side dish or as part of the main entrée. If you're not a fan of chardonnay, a light sauvignon blanc or a dry riesling also would match well with seafood dishes.

2: Beer and Any Food



Pairing spirits with food isn't limited to wine. There's also a movement in which great chefs are pairing some of their menu items with micro-brewed [beers](#). Much like wine, craft beers are often known for their complex and bold flavors. The craft brewers use everything from fruit to [chocolate](#) and coffee in their recipes, and these flavors can match well with the right food.

Almost any kind of ale, from ambers to porters, is great with most beef recipes. Pilsners and lagers are typically paired with pork and poultry. A wide range, from light pilsners to wheat beers and even dark stouts, can be paired with seafood.

1: Dessert and Wine



Most folks know a little bit about pairing their favorite entrées with the right variety of red or white wine, but they might be a little more in the dark when the dessert menu rolls around. [Chocolate](#) desserts are a staple for many and the flavor can be enhanced if you pair it with a vintage port wine. Cognac (a spirit made from distilled wine) and bordeaux also taste good with chocolate recipes. Dark chocolates go well with the softer flavor of a merlot, and desserts combining chocolate with berries can be paired with the rich, deep flavors of a cabernet sauvignon.

Cheesecake is a tough match, but your best bet is a dry or sweet riesling. This is also a good wine to pair with any kind of fruit tart, pie or turnover. When in doubt, serve some [champagne](#) or sparkling wine -- they should go with most any dessert recipe.



Gin

Notes

Citrusy, hints of juniper.

Enhancer

Palate cleansing salads, fried, or baked appetisers.

Cocktail

Gin Herb
Tea Cooler

Pairing

Burrata salad or chicken wings.

Vodka

Notes

Relatively non-distinctive.

Enhancer

Slightly sweet, or salted foods, fatty foods.

Cocktail

Cold Brew
Negroni

Pairing

Fish and chips or cumin scented falafel

WINE CHARACTERISTICS

VERY SWEET

High residual sugar content

🍷 Moscato

🍷 Asti Spumante

FOOD PAIRING



Spicy foods and dessert pair well with light, sweet wines

SWEETNESS

NOT SWEET

Dry wine

Sauvignon Blanc 🍷

Brut Champagne 🍷

FOOD PAIRING



Tart dressings and sauces pair well with dry wines

LESS ACIDIC

Rich and round

🍷 California Pinot Noir

FOOD PAIRING



Foods with garlic, basil and avocado pair well with low acidic wines

ACIDITY

HIGH ACIDITY

Strong alcohol taste, lighter feel

Gewurztraminer 🍷

FOOD PAIRING



Very salty foods pair well with high acidic wines

HIGH TANNIN

Dry and bitter

🍷 Nebbiolo

🍷 Burgundy

FOOD PAIRING



Fatty foods and smokey grilled foods pair well with high tannin wines

TANNIN

LOW TANNIN

Pinot Noir 🍷

Merlot 🍷

FOOD PAIRING



Light meats and foods like bruschetta pair well with low tannin wines

LIGHT BODIED

Light, subtle, watery

🍷 Moscato d'Asti

🍷 Vinho Verde

🍷 Beaujolais from Burgundy

FOOD PAIRING

BODY

High alcohol level, rich, complex taste

Chardonnay, 🍷

Sauternes 🍷

Cabernet 🍷

FOOD PAIRING