

Chapter 2

Wine With Food



Primary Food and Wine Taste Interactions

When you eat, your taste buds adapt to perceive levels of sugar, salt, acid, etc on what you next differently. For example, the taste of unpleasant taste of orange juice after brushing teeth.

In the food:	Increases in wine	Decreases in wine	Notes
Sweetness	Perception of bitterness, astringency, acidity and alcohol	Perception of body, sweetness and fruitiness	Pair with a wine that has a higher level of sweetness than the dish
Umami	Perception of bitterness, astringency, acidity and alcohol	Perception of body, sweetness and fruitiness	Harder to pair wines with umami food that lack salt (ie, mushrooms, asparagus, eggs). Easier to pair when salt is balanced (ie, parmesan)
Acidity	Perception of body, sweetness and fruitiness	Perception of acidity	Pair with high acid food to enhance the fruit flavours in high acid wine, creating balance.
Salt	Perception of body	Perception of bitterness, astringency, acidity and alcohol	Salt helps to enhance a wine's fruit character and soften astringency
Bitterness	Perception of bitterness		Very difficult to pair, in general don't pair with a bitter wine as it doesn't balance out, but adds, to the bitterness.
Chilli heat	Perception of bitterness, astringency, acidity and alcohol	Perception of body, richness, sweetness and fruitiness	Effect of burning heat made worse by high alcohol wines.

Other considerations;

- **Flavour intensity** - In general, flavour intensity should match wine. Beware of chilli heat, ie, curry - which would be better matched with a low-alcohol, off-dry white.
- **Acid and fat** - Acidic wines and high fat foods are a pleasant pairing, with the high acid cutting through fat.
- **Sweet and salty** - Enjoyable combination to create balance, ie, blue cheese and sweet wine.

Applying the principles

In general, enhanced fruitiness is desirable principle in wines. Some foods fall into high or low-risk categories as they are harder to pair.

	Low risk	High risk
Foods	Anything high in salt or high in acid	Sugar - Pair with wine that has as least as much sugar Umami - Will emphasise bitterness/tannin - Pair with concentrated fruit flavour wines Umami (high levels) - Add salt or acid to the dish to help with wine pairings Bitterness - Pair with white wines or low-tannin reds Chilli heat - Pair with white wines or low tannin reds
Wines	Consider historically successful wine pairings (ie, oysters and Chablis) and why they work to help guide you.	Wines with more structural components make pairing complex. Ie, those with high levels of bitterness and astringency from tannins.

Understanding some alternative food and wine pairing approaches

- **Matching or contrasting flavours**
 - Foods can be mirrored or contrasted by the flavours in a wine to either great success (or failure).
 - Should balance and match structural components.
- **Local with local food**
 - Successful food and wine pairing evolved over time in wine-producing regions
 - Not always accurate as some regions celebrated for food do not grow wines
- **'Red wine with red meat; white wine with fish'**
 - Tannins in red wine bind saliva, softening the the impact of the wine. Similarly, high tannin, alcohol and acid in red help balance the salt of the meat.

- Fish can be lighter and due to its umami - increase astringency in high tannin red wines. In general, making it a safer bet to serve with white wines.
 - **The search for the perfect match**
 - Some tried and tested food and wine pairings are enjoyed by most, ie, olives and Manzanilla
 - No true defined 'perfect pairing' as personal preference causes subjectivity
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Multiple Choice Practice Questions

- 1) Which of the following wine characteristics is most important to pair with high-fat foods?
 - a) High sugar
 - b) High acidity
 - c) High tannin
 - d) Low alcohol

- 2) What is a common pairing principle when considering the intensity of flavours in food and wine?
 - a) Intensity of wine should always be higher than the food
 - b) Intensity of food should always be higher than the wine
 - c) Intensity of food and wine should match
 - d) Intensity is not important in pairing

- 3) Which type of wine is typically a better match for a spicy dish like curry?
 - a) High tannin red wine
 - b) High alcohol dry white wine
 - c) Low-alcohol off-dry white wine
 - d) Sparkling wine

- 4) When pairing wine with blue cheese, which taste interaction is most complementary?
 - a) Sweet and sour
 - b) Sweet and salty
 - c) Bitter and umami
 - d) Acidic and sweet

- 5) What is a potential issue when pairing high tannin red wines with fish?
 - a) The wine may overpower the fish
 - b) The umami in fish can increase the wine's astringency
 - c) The tannins will enhance the fish's flavour
 - d) The acidity in the wine will conflict with the fish

Answers

1. b) High acidity

2. c) Intensity of food and wine should match

3. c) Low-alcohol off-dry white wine

4. b) Sweet and salty

5. b) The umami in fish can increase the wine's astringency