

# Wine with Food



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著者:Simon, Joanna

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What wine complements Thai food? How about sushi or chili? Can I serve red wine with chicken? A simple formula -- white with fish and chicken, red with meat -- once dictated all wine and food pairing, but times have changed. Rules like this don't fit the way

people are eating today. Indeed, it is not unusual to find Mexican cuisine mixed with a hint of north Indian or French with some German influence. For the marriage of taste that we expect from food and wine, today's global village cuisine requires the fresh approach found in "Wine with Food." In this beautifully illustrated book, Joanna Simon explores the relationship between wine and food with her hallmark unstuffy expertise. Rules can be followed for perfect partnerships, but they should occasionally be bent or broken. For instance, follow the rule of matching the weight of wine to the weight of food and you might serve a steamed chicken breast with a Sauvignon Blanc, but a dark coq au vin -- also chicken but very different -- calls for a full red Burgundy. An exception to that rule involves the intensity of flavor: fatty rich foods are best paired not with a heavy wine but with a light, crisp one that provides contrast. Wines should not be matched to ingredients alone, however, and so Simon explains the impact of various cooking methods and sauces on the character of foods and recommends the consequent wine choices. A steamed salmon steak has a much more delicate flavor than one that is charbroiled, and the difference suggests a Chablis with the former but a Pinot Noir with the latter. Tomato sauce requires a wine like Sauvignon Blanc to stand up to its acidity, but if the sauce has meat in it, a full fruity red will be a better match. Simon conveys the logic of food and wine marriages, combining authoritative knowledge of wine with commonsense observations. In a worldwide overview of each type of grape, from Chardonnay to Syrah, she includes an evocative description of the wines produced from that grape and suggests foods that are wonderful companions. Then she explores the classic combinations the world around and shows us, for instance, that the same quality that makes a Chilean Merlot such a perfect complement to local empanadas is also found in Australian Shiraz. A cold ratatouille is well partnered with local Provence whites, she points out, but the lively herbal qualities of those wines can also be found in California Sauvignons. Finally "Wine with Food" includes a convenient quick-reference section that summarizes food-to-wine and wine-to-food matches. With Joanna Simon's wisdom, wit, and style, "Wine with Food" is the ultimate guide to today's most delicious wine and food combinations.

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