

Many people love a great meal and for some of us, a great meal requires more than a well prepared dish. Food and wine just go hand in hand. You can really turn a nice meal into something spectacular if you make the right pairings. All it takes is a little know-how and some simple general rules to follow.

The process of pairing food and wine isn't as complex as some may believe. Don't think that you have to be a vineyard snob to appreciate a great glass that offers the right bouquet and texture for your meal. When it comes to food and wine, the only real rule is that you consider what you truly like.

It's all about flavor. Stronger flavors in foods require heartier wines to hold up to them. For example, you want to serve food and wine at your next gathering. Why not appeal to flavorful as well as light pallets? This way, you are certain to make a real splash in your presentation.

A classic dish that many of us can't resist is lasagna. Pair this hearty classic with a hearty wine that offers a lot of rich taste as well as a velvety texture. I love to have a nice glass of Cabernet with any pasta dish that has a flavorful red sauce. This food and wine pairing is a winner every time.

Looking for something a little lighter? Maybe you might be in the mood for a grilled salmon with fresh dill. A great food and wine pairing is meaty seafood along with a nice crisp white. I love Riesling to pair with a dish like this but a Chardonnay that has a hint of apple in its flavor is a wonderful pairing for this lighter meal as well.

Don't know which Chardonnays have fruity undertones? Don't fret. You can find out just by looking at the descriptions on the bottle. You can also bet that a Chardonnay from Oregon will have a crisp hint of apple in its flavor. You can make nice food and wine pairings that work with the undertones in the drink.

Considering this, you don't necessarily have to subject yourself to the food and wine rule: reds with red meats, whites with fish and poultry. If you prefer red wine even though you are having fish, then choose red. There are plenty of nice options to consider that have lighter, fruity undertones.

The bottom line: choose what you like. Wine and food work together well and they should be enjoyed. Sure, you can maximize the flavors by making the right pairings but if you find yourself stressing over your choices, you just need to take a step back. You can't go wrong with good food and wine no matter how you match them.