



Grapes and gouda: The ultimate wine and cheese pairing guide

We can't think of anything better than a well-paired combination of wine and cheese. However, often we leave the expert coupling up to the professionals, and forget how easy it is to get right at home – with just a little bit of knowledge at hand.

Next time you whip up a striking cheese platter or have guests over for drinks, follow this simple (but really, really useful) guide to wine and cheese pairing – no expertise needed.

It's all about balance

As in the rest of the culinary world, wine and cheese pairing is all about balance. Often, the mistake that many people make is to assume that contrasting flavours and intensities work better. But that's not always true – in fact, you're better off matching wines with cheese of the same intensity. Pungent blue or aged cheeses partner best with the bold, deep and broad wines; while mild and creamy cheeses make a good mate for light whites and gentler grapes.

Some great combos: Pinot Noir with Comté, Merlot with Gouda, Cabernet Franc with Cheddar, Schiava with Gruyère, Chianti with Pecorino, Aglianco with Provolone.

The beauty and the beast

On the other hand, it's worth noting that the weirder, funkier, unusual cheeses (the ones you almost can't believe are yummy) find their best match in the sweet wine aisle. Pair dessert wines and sweeter options with the stinky oddballs of the cheese world, and discover a symphony of flavour quite unlike any other.

Some great combos: Port with Gorgonzola, Vin Santo with Taleggio, Lambrusco Dolce with Stilton.

Match the sparkle with the soft

Cracking open a bottle of champagne for a special occasion? Make sure you have a creamy, bloomy, soft-rind cheese at the ready. The sharper bubbles of a light sparkling wine partner beautifully with creamier sticky cheeses.

Some great combos: Cava with Brie, Crémant with Délice de Bourgogne, Brut with Camembert.

Always have a failsafe option

No matter what wines are on offer, there are a few cheeses that hold their own in varying circumstances. Firmer cheeses with nuttier notes like Gouda, Gruyère and Emmental are great options to keep in the fridge if you're not sure what wines to expect.