



WINE & FOOD PAIRING: BASIC TASTE COMPONENTS

*To make great wine and food matches, it is critical to understand that the perception of wine flavor is grounded in food's basic tastes. All food flavors within our range of tastes can be described as combinations of the four basic components: **tartness, sweetness, saltiness and bitterness.***

**Also consider fat content, weight & texture of each dish when selecting a wine pairing.*

Tartness

Red or white, any wine that leaves your mouth feeling dry and crisp is called acidic. Acidity in wine affects wine and food pairing in the following ways:

- It penetrates the richness of ingredients or sauces (butter, cream)
- It mirrors tart items such as vinaigrette, lemon, tomatoes ...
- It lightens the flavor of oily fish.
- It brings out flavors in food.

Sweetness

Residual sugar is present in all wines. The perception of sweetness in wines is governed by two factors: residual sugar and level of acidity. A few tips on the effects of sweetness in wines:

- Moderately hot foods can be foiled with sweet wine,
- Slightly sweet wines are a good contrast to the saltiness in most Asian cuisines.
- Very sweet wines may be pleasantly contrasted with salty food, too.

Saltiness

Saltiness is the great craving taste component of the tongue. Most people salt nearly all savory foods. Salt can both cut and accentuate sweetness. When pairing with salty foods, be aware that:

- Acidity in wine cuts saltiness.
- Salt reduces tannins.
- Salt accentuates alcohol.

Bitterness

Though it may sound odd, bitterness in wine is not necessarily unattractive. Bitterness can add balance and appealing flavors. The source of bitterness in a wine is the level of tannins, which are naturally bitter.

- Wines with tannins best match with grilled, charred foods work well.
- The bitter flavors of sautéed broccoli are good for pairing with bitter wines.

PRINCIPLES OF FOOD AND WINE PAIRING

*With so many choices at hand, there is nothing difficult about wine and food pairing. It's mostly a matter of learning your own taste and trusting it. **The two fundamental approaches** to matching wine and food are **mirroring tastes and contrasting tastes**. Wines and foods with **similar tastes** work well together because their flavors and textural components reinforce each other. **Contrasting wines and foods** can also be compatible. Be bold in your choices, and you may create a match made in heaven.*