

What wine should I serve for Thanksgiving?

Thanksgiving dinner's the quintessential American holiday meal. But it can be a tough wine pairing assignment. The bird acts mainly as a foil for the more assertive flavors that accompany it. These competing (often conflicting) flavors come in the form of sauces, sides, and gravies, and make the match more challenging: tart cranberry sauce, roasted herbed vegetables, savory stuffings, sweet potatoes, vinegary green beans, and creamy gravy. Is there one wine that works with everything?

The key to a successful wine pairing at Thanksgiving is versatility. Think balanced — low to mid alcohol levels (11-13.5 percent), good acidity but not too ripe or too green, and a lighter style body with low level of tannins.

Reds

Lighter reds with a bit of acid and some fruitiness are good choices.

Zinfandel: Fruity Zinfandel shows many personalities; it's also an American original, and so a fitting choice for America's favorite feast. Choose a lighter style that's not booming with alcohol.

Pinot Noir: Earthy, fruity Pinots often work well with the meal's variety of flavors. Low-alcohol Pinot Noirs are a great match – light body, subtle flavors and low tannins.

Italian Reds: Like Pinot Noir, Chianti and Sangiovese can have an earthy quality and a good amount of food-friendly acidity, which makes it a terrific Thanksgiving wine. The same goes for Barbera.

Whites

Chardonnay: The Thanksgiving table is loaded with rich food. It's the right time to break out a rich, round California Chardonnay with ripe fruit backed out by refreshing acidity. Avoid heavy oak style chards.

Dry Riesling: This is a tremendous, often overlooked food wine. With all the flavors competing for attention, dry Riesling's acidity and slight touch of sweetness complements them all. Low alcohol and balanced acidity are key.

Champagne/Sparkling wine: Champagne and sparkling wines can be a fun alternative for dinner. You might pop a bottle before dinner and find that you're enjoying it clear through to dessert. Try a fruity rosé sparkling wine.

Sauvignon Blanc: This wine's lively acidity and herbal characteristics make it a great choice for Thanksgiving dinner.

Red or White? Why Not Both?

For traditional thanksgiving meals, it need not be an either/or situation. Sometimes the best choice is to offer both red and white and let the guests choose for themselves. Sometimes it pays to place a couple glasses at each guest's table setting. He or she can try a splash of white here, a sip of red there, comparing and contrasting before settling on a favorite. Offering a few choices can also make for fun conversation. And, of course, if you have a favorite wine, by all means break it out. There is no right or wrong, just what tastes good and makes you happy.

For more information:

<http://allrecipes.com/HowTo/Perfect-Pairs/Detail.aspx>

[http://wine.lovetoknow.com/wiki/Thanksgiving Dinner Wine Pairings](http://wine.lovetoknow.com/wiki/Thanksgiving_Dinner_Wine_Pairings)

Have a wine-related question?

Please submit to:

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