

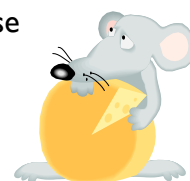


## WINE AND CHEESE GUIDE

By Stephanie Tarry



Trying to make a great cheese and wine pairing can be as difficult as getting your cat to hang out amicably with the neighbor's dog. Never fear -- here are some simple guidelines to make you the "go-to" person in your circle of friends for matching great cheesy comestibles with smashing wines! Generally, these guidelines simply match the dominant flavor of the wine to the dominant flavor of the cheese...but you may sometimes find that it is the contrasting flavors that are most memorable!



GUIDELINE	EXAMPLE
1. Light wines with light cheeses.	Young cow's, goat's or sheep's cheese such as Quark or a young Manchego with Chenin Blanc or Dry Rose.
2. High-acid younger cheeses with high-acid white wines.	Fresh Goat cheese (such as Humboldt Fog), or any Chèvre, with Sauvignon Blanc.
3. Low-acid, more aged cheeses with low-acid white wines.	Aged cow's cheese such as a medium aged Gouda, Gruyere or Swiss cheese with an oaky California Chardonnay.
4. Stronger cheeses with stronger wines.	Aged Cheddar (such as a Vermont White Cheddar) or Dry Jack with Syrah.
5. Creamy, rich cheeses with high tannin wines	Brie, Camembert, or a soft Blue cheese (such as Point Reyes Blue) with Cabernet Sauvignon or Petite Syrah.
6. Strong, salty cheeses with dessert wines or fortified wines.	Aged Blue cheese (such as Stilton) with late harvest Riesling, or aged Manchego with Sherry.
7. Soft-ripened cheeses or blue cheeses with sparkling wines.	Brie, Teleme, Port-Salute or even Stilton with Champagne or other sparkling wines.

Keep in mind that what matters most is that the cheese doesn't overpower the wine and that the wine doesn't overpower the cheese. A happy, somewhat equal union on the palate is generally most pleasing. The last two guidelines may sound a little strange...but you haven't lived until you've had sautéed mushrooms and Teleme on toasted brioche with Champagne, or broiled figs and Stilton with ruby port!



A general rule for a successful wine and cheese party is that if you are only serving one type of wine, try to purchase up to three cheeses which compliment that wine. If you are serving more than one wine, try to get one or two cheeses to compliment each of those wines.

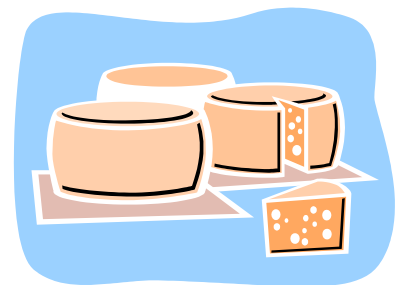


If you are looking for the classic “every-wine cheese” look no further than an Aged Gouda (such as Old Amsterdam) or a Goat Gouda (the Dutch seem to get it right every time). Either of these Goudas seem to go wonderfully with just about every wine I have ever tried. They're even great with beer or sparkling cider!

For an “every-cheese wine”, your best bet is a semi-dry Gewurtztraminer. The spicy semi-dryness of the Gewurtztraminer seems to make everything from a young goat cheese to an aged, earthy cheese such as Dry Jack just sing on the palate. The fruitiness of this wine is what makes it work so well with so many cheeses. This fruitiness can help tame strong cheeses by bringing out their own inherent fruitiness, balancing the more forward earthiness of these stronger cheeses.

Which brings up the true golden rule to this whole game: the pairing is only as good as you perceive it to be. A world-renowned wine and cheese pairer may lay out a spread which you don't like at all. All that matters is what tastes good to you and your guests. So try a new local or imported cheese with your favorite wine before dinner tonight -- you may just come up with the next great thing!

If you are still seeking more information, please check out the [Cheese Primer](#) by Steve Jenkins, [The New American Cheese: Profiles of America's Great Cheesemakers and Recipes for Cooking With Cheese](#) and the [All American Cheese and Wine Book: Pairings, Profiles and Recipes](#) both by Laura Werlin.



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