

# Wines for Hearty Holiday Meals (Part 1/2)

With the holiday season up on us, our tables will be amply adorned with an array of hearty holiday dishes that beckon for the perfect wine pairing. While traditional choices like robust reds—especially in cooler climes—may be the natural choice, I'd like to propose an alternative approach: the harmonious marriage of bright, refreshing high-acid white wines and low-tannin, high-acid, chill-able red wines with your holiday feast.

My thinking is based on what I like to call 'Wine Pairing 101' which is basically to choose wines that either compliment or contrast the general weight and taste of the dish. Of course, this is for sure a bit rudimentary, given how many flavor factors come into play in a single recipe, it's a good starting point. Therefore, if big, hearty whites and reds are where you might naturally lean with hearty fare, that would be complimentary. For this column, I'd like to propose that we lean in the opposite direction, to contrast all that richness on the plate with higher-acid wines. Think of it like squeezing lemon over grilled meats to lift and brighten everything. Make sense? Below I'll talk about contrasting wine and food flavors. Next blog, I'll write about complementing them.

## High-Acid White Wines

Imagine the crisp snap of a chilled Sauvignon Blanc or the zesty allure of an Albariño cutting through the richness of roasted turkey or honey-glazed ham. High-acid white wines act as palate cleansers, refreshing the taste buds between bites and enhancing the overall taste experience. Their vibrant acidity creates a mouthwatering contrast to the savory and succulent flavors of holiday classics.

### Suggested Pairings

#### Riesling

There's a joke we use in the wine world to answer the question, "How do you spell sommelier?" The cheeky reply is "R-I-E-S-L-I-N-G!" We say this because Riesling, though often derided as "too sweet" is actually one of the most versatile wines to pair with food because it can be made in styles that range from bone-dry to very sweet. Net-Net: It can pair with everything from veggies to seafood, game birds and beyond.

Look for:

**Van Volxem "VV" Riesling 2021 \$18**

**Albert Boxler Riesling Alsace France 2019 \$53**

**Van Volxem Toschiefer Riesling Kabinett 2021 \$22**

## Chill-able Reds

While the sound of chillable, high-acid red wines might conjure thoughts of balmy summer nights, these wines possess lower tannins (bitterness/chalkiness) and refreshing acidity; they're perfect companions for heartier fare, adding a touch of vibrancy without overwhelming the palate.

### Suggested Pairings

#### Pinot Noir

Opt for a slightly chilled Pinot Noir to accompany dishes like roasted duck or mushroom-based entrées. Its silky texture and red berry notes provide a gentle contrast to the richness of these dishes. Pinot Noirs come in styles from very light and bright to sturdy and medium-bodied. The former go with just about everything, while the latter can stand up to all sorts of red meats.

Look for:

**Ponzi Vineyards Laurelwood Pinot Noir 2021**

**Gary Farrell Vineyards Russian River Pinot Noir 2021**

**Matthew Bruno 'Sun Chase' Vineyard Pinot Noir Napa Valley California 2021 \$70**