

USES OF WINES AND HERBS IN COOKING



Use of wine in cooking :

Cooking with wine can be a pleasure and an enhancement to good food and a fine meal!

When wine is heated, the alcoholic content as well as sulfites disappears, leaving only the essence imparting a subtle flavor.

Wine Selection:

The first and most important rule: Use only wines in your cooking that you would drink. Never, never use any wine that you WOULD NOT DRINK! If you do not like the taste of a wine, you will not like the dish you choose to use it in.

Do not use the so-called "cooking wines!" These wine are typically salty and include other additives that may affect the taste of your chosen dish and menu. The process of cooking/reducing will bring out the worst in an inferior wine. Please promise yourself never, never to stoop to such a product! rule of thumb is: do not cook with something which you will not drink.

An expensive wine is not necessary, although a cheap wine will not bring out the best characteristics of your dish. A good quality wine, that you enjoy, will provide the same flavor to a dish as a premium wine. Save the premium wine to serve with the meal.

How To Cook With Wine:

Wine has three main uses in the kitchen - as a marinade ingredient, as a cooking liquid, and as a flavoring in a finished dish.

The function of wine in cooking is to intensify, enhance, and accent the flavor and aroma of food - not to mask the flavor of what you are cooking but rather to fortify it.

As with any seasoning used in cooking, care should be taken in the amount of wine used - too little is inconsequential and too much will be overpowering. Neither extreme is desirable. A small quantity of wine will enhance the flavor of the dish.

The alcohol in the wine evaporates while the food is cooking, and only the flavor remains. Boiling down wine concentrates the flavor, including acidity and sweetness. Be careful not to use too much wine as the flavor could overpower your dish.

For best results, wine should not be added to a dish just before serving. The wine should simmer with the food, or sauce, to enhance the flavour.

It should simmer with the food or in the sauce while it is being cooked; as the wine cooks, it reduces and becomes an extract which flavors. Wine added too late in the preparation will give a harsh quality to the dish. A wine needs time to impart its flavor in your dish. Wait 10 minutes or more to taste before adding more wine.

Remember that wine does not belong in every dish. More than one winebased sauce in a single meal can be monotonous. Use wine in cooking only when it has something to contribute to the finished dish.

Sulfites in Wine:

All wines contain some small amount of sulfites, as they are a natural result of the same fermentation process that turns grape juice into alcohol. Even wines that have not had any sulfites added during the winemaking process contain some amount of sulfites. Sulfur dioxide (SO₂) is used by winemakers to keep freshly pressed "must" from spoiling. It keeps down the activities of native yeast and bacteria and preserves the freshness of the wine.

When cooking with wine containing sulfites, you do not concentrate them as you would flavor, but rather they evaporate like alcohol. The sulfite goes through a conversion in the liquid of the wine to produce sulfur dioxide. This is actually the compound that prevents the oxidation. It also is a gas, and when subjected to heat, it dissipates into the air. All that remains is some salts, but they are so minute in quantity that they have no effect on flavor.

Storage of Leftover Wine

Leftover wine can be refrigerated and used for cooking if held for only 1 or 2 weeks. If you have at least a half bottle of wine left over, pour it off into a clean half bottle, cork it, and store in the refrigerator. Without air space at the top, the rebottled wine will keep for up to 1 month.

Wine Reduction for Pan Sauces:

1/2 to 3/4 cup raw wine = 2 tablespoons of wine reduction

For ultimate flavor, wine should be reduced slowly over low heat. This method takes more time and effort, but will achieve a superior sauce because the flavor compounds present in the wine are better preserved.

Traditional formula for pairing wine with cooking:

Young, full bodied red wine Red meat, red meat dishes Young, full bodied, robust red wine Red sauces Earthy red, full bodied red wine Soups with root vegetables and/or beef stock Dry white wine or dry fortified wine Fish/shellfish/seafood, poultry, pork, veal Dry white wine or dry fortified

wine Light/cream sauces Crisp, dry white wine Seafood soups, bouillabaisse Sweet white wine or sweet fortified wine Sweet desserts Dry, fortified wine (i.e.: sherry) Consommé, poultry, vegetable soups Regional cuisine Regional wine

Actual Consumption of Alcohol:

The amount of alcohol that remains in your dish is dependent on the manner and length of preparation. Typically, the alcohol in the wine evaporates while cooking and only the flavor remains. The following table of alcohol remaining after food preparation is from the Agricultural Research Services of the USDA (1989):

100% Immediate Consumption 70% Overnight Storage 85% Boiling liquid, remove from heat 75% Flamed

Dishes that have been baked or simmered: 40% After 15 minutes 35% After 30 minutes 25% After 1 hour 20% After 1.5 hours 10% After 2 hours

Best suggestions:-

1. Cook with a wine you would drink. Do not use a wine to cook if you would never drink it in a glass or serve it with food.
2. Avoid using wines that are labeled "cooking wines." These wines contain a lot of salt and other additives and you would never drink them in a glass.
3. Pay attention to the quantity of wine you use. Think of it as similar to a seasoning. Too little wine will be lost, and too much will be overpowering.
4. Start with small amounts, and add gradually. Remember that you can always add more wine, but you cannot take back what you have already put in.

5. Substitute wine for water in any recipe. Wine will provide the moisture that the water would have helped with, and add a nice flavor to what you are cooking.

6. Marinate foods in wine before you cook them. Wine that is room temperature can tenderize meats. You can also marinate vegetables in wine before you grill, roast, saute or bake them.

7. Add red wine to gravy for extra flavor. Stir in 1 or 2 tbsp. at a time until you reach the flavor you desire.

8. Saute food in wine mixed with oil. This will work for meat and vegetables. Heat the wine before you add the food but do not let the wine boil or it will lose flavor.

9. Add sweet wine or dessert wine to baked items or desserts. Use sherry in recipes for baked goods, or splash some wine over ice cream or cheesecake.

10. Baste meat and poultry that you are roasting with wine. You can mix the wine with oil or melted butter as well as a stock, or use it on its own.

11. Reduce wine slowly over low heat, for best flavour results. It can make a nice sauce if you reduce it over time.

12. Warm wine before you add food to a pan as well. Heating the wine before you cook food in it will provide more moisture to the food and prepare the pan or pot for cooking.

13. Experiment with cooking with wine. The more you use wine in your recipes and cooking, the better you will be able to predict the taste and flavour.

Wines have a variety of functions in cooking. Some of them are:

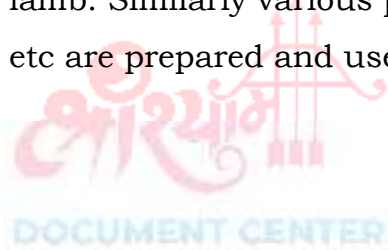
- a) **Marinades:** Both red and white wines are used as marinades for meats. Apart from flavor they help to tenderize the meat and remove offensive aroma if any.
- b) **Sauces:** Wines are used in making sauces, both for savoury items as well as desserts.
- c) **Deglazing:** Deglazing is a process where the liquid, such as wine and stock are used for dissolving the remains of the cooked food in a pan. The sediments contain most of the concentrated flavours.
- d) **Flaming:** Wines and spirits contain alcohol. Thus, upon igniting these wines flare up and burn until the alcohol has burned off. Desserts such as baked Alaska and plum puddings can be served flambéed with wine and spirits.
- e) **Stocks:** Wine is used in poaching liquor court bouillon made for poaching oily fish.
- f) **Flavouring:** Wines can be used to flavor cakes, pastries, sauces and stocks. It may be used for preparing mousse etc.

HERBS IN COOKING:

Herbs are green leaves of plants. In ancient times the herbs were known for their medicinal value, but today they are also used to bring a distinct aroma and taste to the food. Herbs are used for:

- a) **Flavouring:** Herbs can be chopped, minced or torn and added to soups or stocks. The traditional bouquet garni includes sprigs of parsley, thyme, leeks and bay leaves. They are also used in cookies, breads and desserts.
- b) **Garnishing:** Fresh sprigs kept in chilled water can be used to garnish. They can also be deep fried such as curry leaves etc and used crisp. They can be chopped or minced to make a garnish.

- c) Seasonings: A mixture of dried herbs such as dill, thyme and oregano are combined with dried onion, sesame seeds, black pepper and garlic powder to make saltless seasoning. Celery salt is a common ingredient in cooking.
- d) Herbal oils: Oils can be flavoured with one or more herbs. These oils are used for making vinaigrettes or dressings for salads.
- e) Herbal vinegars: Vinegars can be infused with various herbs and used in flavouring dishes.
- f) Herb butter: This is made by combining softened butter with chopped herbs. These compound butters are served with various meat accompaniments.
- g) Herbal teas/ water and mocktails: Numerous herbal decoctions have been used since centuries as refreshing and rejuvenating drinks.
- h) Sauces and spreads: Mint sauce is a traditional accompaniment to roast lamb. Similarly various pastes such as pesto, chimichurri, mint chutney etc are prepared and used widely.



IHM NOTES

S.NO.	HERB	USE
1	Basil (tulsi)	Pairs up well with tomatoes, olive oil and garlic.
2	Bay leaf (tej patta)	Used in bouquet garni for soups
3	Chervil	Used in salads, and soups
4	Chives (hara pyaaz)	Used in fines herbs, in salads, or egg dishes and sour cream.
5	Cilantro (dhaniya)	Leaves are chopped and added to the food at the last minute.
6	Dill (soya)	Used with fish, sea food and cheese. Also pairs well with sour cream and cucumber
7	Marjoram (oregano)	Pairs well with game, meat and potatoes. Also acts as tenderizer.

8	Mint (pudina)	Used in many sauces and chutneys.
9	Parsley	Used in garnishing and stem is used in bouquet garni.
10	Rosemary	Used with roast lamb as a classical combination.
11	Sage	Used in sage and onion stuffing for roast turkey. Also used in sausages and meat.
12	Tarragon	Flavouring for meat, eggs, creamy sauces and raw vegetable salads.
13	Thyme	Used in bouquet garni, with chicken and pork. Also pairs up with tomatoes, aubergines, courgettes and sweet bell peppers.
14	Lemon grass	Lower bulbous part is used in curries and stir fries or soups.



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