

Wine Enhances Spice-Flavored Dishes

By Luann Alemao

Food is such a sensory experience. If it's visually pleasing we can't wait to taste; however, the aroma is often the first temptation we receive, and it's an important element of the culinary experience.

One of the many ways to get more enjoyment from food is to think about pairing the right drink with the right flavors. Try these suggested wines the next time you cook with your favorite spice.

Basil is often associated with Mediterranean cuisine. The rich, strong flavor and aroma is a compliment to all kinds of foods such as red meat, seafood, poultry, salads, garlic and many varieties of berries.

Wine: Chardonnay and Chianti

Cilantro is a spicy herb that we often associate with Mexican cooking. Fresh cilantro is often used in soups and salsas, blending naturally with garlic, limes and chilies. Cilantro is also known as coriander and is often mistaken for Italian parsley.

Wine: Sauvignon Blanc

Curry Powder is a blend of spices derived from regions of India. Each region has its own blend of curry, which is primarily made up of coriander, cumin, turmeric, peppercorns, cardamom, chilies and cinnamon. Other spices may be added, but it's usually a generalized blend. Use curry powder with rich foods or Indian dishes and meat entrees.

Wine: Riesling

Rosemary has an unforgettable flavor, but its woody pine and sage aroma can easily overpower so pair with an equally strong food such as root vegetables and gamey meats. Rosemary shows its delicate side when added to sweets. Try it in vanilla hard sauce or with apple desserts.

Wine: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Pinot Noir

Tarragon is a peppery, anise-flavored herb that is often used in French cuisine. Found in many different spice blends, Tarragon is superb with chicken, fish, salad dressings, tomatoes and omelets.

Wine: Chardonnay and Viogniers

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