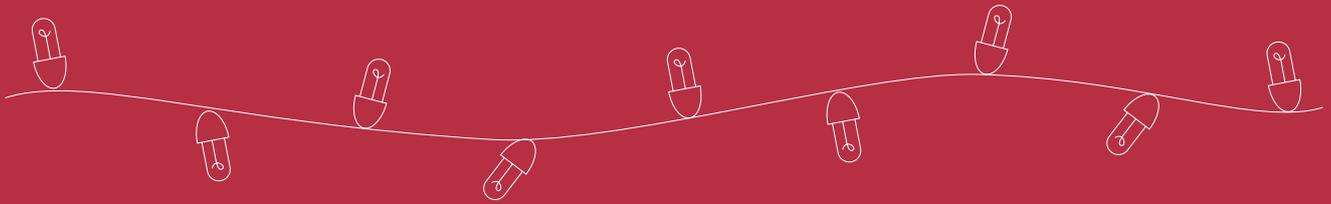


The ultimate guide to seasonal food pairing

'Christmas time, mistletoe and wine'







Cliff Richard pretty much sums it up, doesn't he? Christmas just isn't Christmas without wine... and to a lesser extent mistletoe, we suppose. That's why when it comes to planning your Christmas feast the perfect seasonal wine pairing is essential.

So, if you're planning the quintessential roast turkey dinner, or branching out with a glazed ham, with our ultimate guide to seasonal [food pairing](#) your festive food will be perfectly complemented with the ideal wine.

We've compiled the perfect list for your Christmas menu. Whether you're devoted to white, mad about red, weak at the knees for sweet wine or can't help yourself around bubbles, we have a wine to suit every taste.

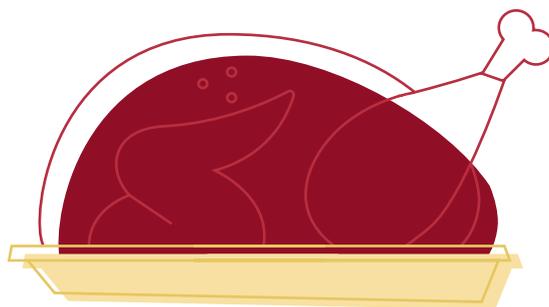
01. Turkey



When it comes to pairing wine with everyone's favourite yuletide bird, there's a few pairing options to choose from. While some of the other meats on this list call for very specific flavours, roast turkey is a flexible dish which works well with many types of wine.

With its mild flavours and low-fat content, you can get away with pairing your turkey with a robust wine. We suggest a medium-bodied red, or a full-bodied white. Think **Pinot Noir**, a **red Bordeaux**, or a **Chardonnay**.

However, while roast turkey is an effortlessly versatile dish, it's the rich trimmings that are harder to pair. To cut through the rich fat of roast potatoes, bread sauce and glorious gravy, choose a wine with high levels of acidity and minerality. This helps to cleanse your palate and allow you to thoroughly enjoy your indulgent meal.



02.

Smoked salmon

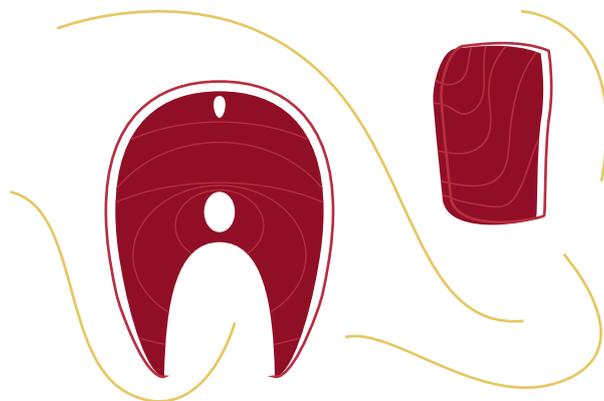


While you may not be planning to tuck into smoked salmon for your main Christmas feast, creamy eggs royale makes for a fabulous festive breakfast. What's more, smoked salmon served with blinis is a perfect Christmas party canape.

Smoked salmon has an unmistakable strong flavour and oily texture. Therefore, we suggest pairing it with a light, crisp wine, with enough acidity to cut through that delicious fat salmon is famous for. Our top pick is **Riesling**.

Whether it's sparkling or still, Riesling harmonises perfectly with salmon. Traditionally served with (overrated) Champagne, we think a good dry bottle is the perfect match. However, avoid medium dry or sweet Riesling, they just won't do it justice.

For those devoted to red wine, we say forget the traditionalists - life is too short not to pair fish with red occasionally. **Pinot noir** has low tannin and that means it can pair well with salmon. So go ahead and enjoy, it's Christmas after all.



03. Ham

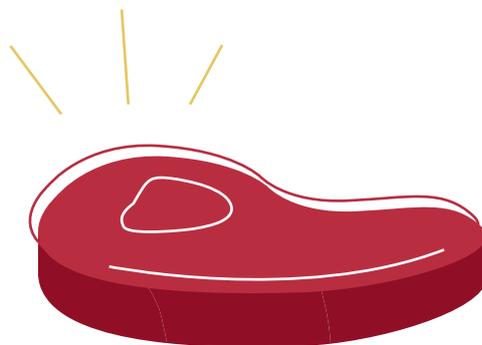


While roast turkey is usually the meat of choice at Christmas time, Christmas ham is steeped in history and tradition. Particularly popular in Germany, Australia and Sweden, the tradition of a generous serving of festive ham dates back as far as [Germanic Paganism](#) and the Anglo-Saxons.

While those early merry makers may have favoured a simpler recipe, today's Christmas ham is usually served with a tempting, sweet glaze. This is why, when pairing ham, you must find a wine that compliments sweeter flavours.

For orange/marmalade-based glazes, think **Shiraz**. For glazes featuring spices, cloves or mustard, a zingy **Zinfandel** really compliments that spice.

And, for those who favour a more savoury glaze, think **Amarone** or **Merlot**. While [these reds](#) may be too powerful for turkey, they pair beautifully with the textured, rich flavours of pork.



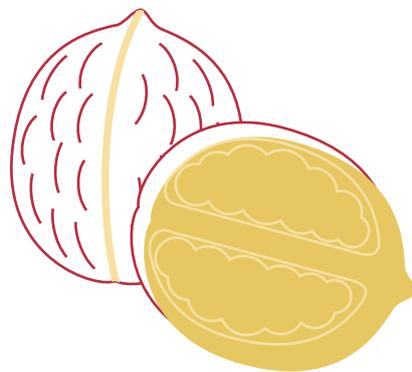
04.

Nut roast



For most, Christmas is a purely carnivorous affair, but don't forget [vegetarians](#) and vegans love a Christmas feast too! Whether you don't eat meat yourself, or a vegetarian is joining you for dinner, make sure your wine selection fits their meal too.

Luckily, a nut roast isn't miles away from a traditional roast turkey when it comes to wine pairing. While there are of course many variations of nut roast, the basic recipe of nuts, breadcrumbs, herbs and spices, pair beautifully with a full bodied red or a rich white wine. We recommend a **Pinot Noir** or a **white Burgundy**.



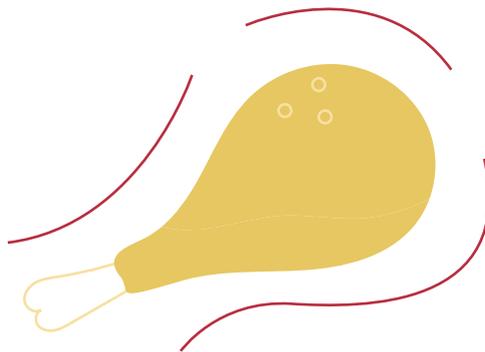
05. Goose



A fat goose was the traditional [Christmas bird](#) long before Scrooge generously coughed up for a prize turkey in a Christmas Carol. And, while it's fallen out of popularity in the UK in more recent years, goose is still eaten in most households on [Christmas Eve in Denmark](#).

Goose is a notoriously succulent meat, with a high fat content and much stronger flavour than turkey. To help counteract these strong flavours, we suggest pairing it with an acidic wine, with plenty of structure - our top pick would be [Barolo](#).

However, as is true for many of these meat dishes, you mustn't forget how the trimmings will affect your pairing. While [Barolo](#) is divine for goose served with chestnuts and potatoes, for fruitier accompaniments, such as cranberry sauce or apple stuffing, [Riesling](#) would be an unexpected yet exciting choice.



06. Mince pies



Mince pies are quintessentially festive. Whether you're topping off your dinner with a couple of these marvelous little pies or rewarding yourself for a successful night of caroling, a mince pie served with a steaming mug of **mulled wine** is Christmas personified.

Whether you prefer traditional British mulled wine or German Glühwein, choose a red that lends itself to spices and fruit. We think **Cabernet Sauvignon** or a quality **Merlot** are ideal choices. For a delicious recipe, that's sure to give you that Glühwein Glow, check out our [recipes here](#).



07. Christmas pudding



Sweet, fruity and often on fire, Christmas pudding is the best way to end your dinner with a bang.

Due to Christmas pudding's high fruit content and deep treacle flavour, a sweet fortified wine, such as **tawny port**, is a popular pairing choice, though **Madeira** and **Vouvray** are also common.

However, as it's Christmas, we think Recioto is the ultimate treat. A favourite aperitif in Italy, **Recioto** is commonly eaten with biscotti and panettone, but we think it's brilliant with a range of desserts, cheeses, chocolates and Christmas pudding in particular.



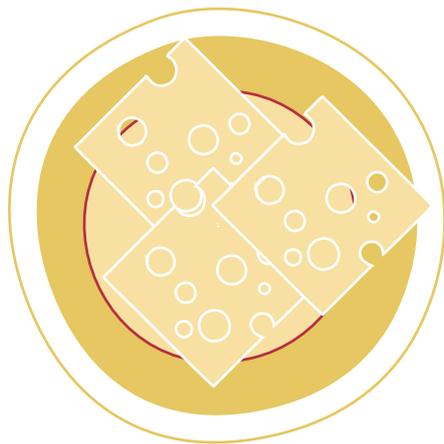
08. Cheese plate



Ahh Cheese and wine, has there ever been a more dynamic duo?

At the end of your festive dinner, you may be more in the mood for a good nap in front of the queen's speech, rather than taking another bite. However, for those brave enough, there are plenty of wonderful wines begging to be paired with a good cheese plate.

While the cheese you have on hand will greatly affect which wine you pair, we believe you can't go wrong with a soft red, such as **Merlot**, or subtle dessert wine like **Recioto**.





Treat yourself, this Christmas

Christmas is all about friends, family and indulgence, so don't hold back when it comes to treating yourself this holiday season.

Whatever you choose to put on your table, make sure you have a wine that sets off those lovely wintery flavours and adds an extra level of pleasure to your meal. After all, it only comes once a year, so make sure your Christmas menu delights your guests and ends the year perfectly.

