

Perfect PAIRINGS

When pairing drinks with food, one always comes up against some tough opposition. Trickiest of all, perhaps, are spices and chocolate. So read up on Christopher Cooper's expert advice, and prepare to astound yourself and anyone with whom you share these inspired pairings...

With many spices and bold global flavours, the typical suggestion is that the more prominent the spice, the more aromatic and richer the accompanying drink should be. As a general rule with spice, it's best to consider how heavy the dish is and match it like for like. When it comes to chocolate, consider classic pairings and match the flavours you find in the chocolate with those in the glass. But don't stick with the tried and tested - spice and chocolate are exciting areas. Check out these perfect pairings, and see where your taste experiments take you.

To try with Thai

1. ALBARIÑO ALBA SIGNATURE, RIAS BAIXAS, SPAIN 2011

PRICE £5.98 ASDA.COM

Why Albariño is grape that's indigenous to Galicia. Grown near the salty Atlantic cliffs of western Spain, it's really gaining kudos as a serious Sauvignon alternative. Salty, fresh, and citrusy, this wine has a clean freshness balanced with its acidity and dryness.

Try Paired with fishy Thai dishes and also Ravi Kanhye's Mauritian Octopus

2. MANZANILLA 'LA GITANA' HIDALGO, JEREZ, SPAIN NV

PRICE £8.50 WAITROSE.COM

Why Put preconceptions aside and try this Sherry. Founded in 1792, Hidalgo is one of Spain's oldest wine brands, and this is a real market leader in terms of quality. Manzanilla is one of the drier styles of sherry - this is fruity, fragrant, fresh and crisp.

Try Chilled, it goes well with Thai spices and Ben Tish's Soused Mackerel



Your expert guide

Christopher Cooper

Christopher is the director of successful wine and drinks consultancy Drinkonomics, providing accessible, informed wine guidance to the industry and at-home drinkers alike. Earning his stripes at Soho House, Gordon Ramsay and Corbin & King, Christopher's well-established, highly respected drinks nous is to be noted.



Images by Sarah Bayliss Photography Limited



Perfect pairing

HOT
STUFF!



1.

Incredible ideas for Indian food

1. GOOSE ISLAND IPA, USA PRICE £2 ASDA.COM

Why Proper Indian Pale Ales are highly hopped - historically, to preserve their distinct taste during a long voyage. This beer is a hop-lovers' dream with a fruity aroma offset by a dry malt middle and long hop finish. Citrussy, fresh, and moreishly tangy.

Try With hot aromatic curries like Mallika Basu's Mustard Fish

2. DGS DRIED GRAPE SHIRAZ, SOUTH EASTERN AUSTRALIA 2013

PRICE £8.99 OCADO.COM

Why Anyone that's ever heard of Amarone wines - where the grapes are partially-dried - will love this great-value wine. The concentrated flavour is intense yet full-bodied, with a very low tannin; tasting deliciously of black cherry, smoke and cedar.

Try The perfect red wine accompaniment to Maunika Gowardhan's Pork Vindalho

Moreish with Middle Eastern cuisine

3. HOCHAR PÈRE ET FILS, CHÂTEAU MUSAR, BEKAA VALLEY, LEBANON 2009

PRICE £11.99 MAJESTIC.CO.UK

Why Lebanese wine may be under the radar but there's so much quality to be had. This wine's a bit Bordeaux in style but with a real Middle Eastern feel. Black fruits backed up by figs, dates and spices; with good acidity, fine tannins and decent length.

Try A fine partner with lamb, mince, or Korean Spiced Pork Ribs

4. CUATRO PASOS, BIERZO, SPAIN 2010

PRICE £9.99 MORRISONS.COM

Why This Spanish red is more approachable than some wines from Rioja. Made using Mencía grapes from eighty year-old vines found high in the hills of Galicia, it has this grape's typical flavours of red fruit, brambles and vanilla, and is elegant and balanced.

Try Perfect with *tabbouleh*, *mezze*, or Chantal Coady's Grenada Pepperpot

Lebanese wine
will prove a
welcome guest
on your table

OR
TRY...

4.

OR
TRY...



2.

3.



HOT
STUFF!



"When pairing spicy food with
drinks, it's important to consider
how heavy a dish is and
match it like-for-like"



Entertaining



1.



2.



3.

HOT
STUFF!



OR
TRY...



4.



HOT
STUFF!



5.



6.

OR
TRY...

With white chocolate

1.TESCO VOUVRAY, LOIRE, FRANCE NV

PRICE £5.79 TESCO.COM

Why This number is a ripe, rounded medium-dry white with textured flavours of apple, honey and a long fruit richness.

Try With simple white chocolate, or Cuban Rice Pudding

2.NYETIMBER DEMI-SEC, WEST SUSSEX, UK NV

PRICE £39.99 MAJESTIC.CO.UK

Why This is made in small quantities from 100% Chardonnay, bottled with extra dosage for a richer feel. A balance between sweet and fresh.

Try With Chantal Coady's White Chocolate Mousse

Milk choc matches

3.CURATOLO SECCO SUPERIORE, MARSALA, SICILY, ITALY NV

PRICE £11.29 WAITROSE.COM

Why Above 'cooking grade' marsalas lie exciting, diverse fortified wines.

Try Hotel Chocolat's Bread & Chocolate Pudding

4.MOUNT GAY EXTRA OLD RUM, BARBADOS

PRICE £35 WAITROSE.COM

Why This extra aged Bajan rum is full of rich, mellow oak aromas with sweeter, fruity notes.

Try With Banana Flambé, spiked with milk chocolate

Delicious with dark

5.IKEA ÖL MÖRK DARK LAGER, SWEDEN

PRICE £1.50 ikea.com

Why: A refreshing reddish-brown dark lager with a mellow, malty, rich and creamy roasted coffee taste.

Try: With dark chocolate or Black Velvet Cake

6.MAVRODAPHNE OF PATRAS, GREECE NV

PRICE £4.99 morrisons.com

Why: A delicious concentration of black cherries, raisins and dates, with good acidity and freshness.

Try: With fruity treats like Raw Chocolate & Cherry Fudge