

Choosing the right type of wine to go with poultry dishes might seem straightforward, but it can get complicated when you start thinking about all the possible flavor combinations. What kind of poultry are we talking about, specifically? Is it fried, spicy, parmesan crusted, BBQ, or one of the other several garden varieties? And is it duck, chicken, or turkey? We'd like to discuss the basics of pairing wine with poultry with special consideration going to specific flavor profiles.

Pairing Basics

When it comes to pairing wine with poultry, there is a distinct difference with what wines pair well with white meat (most chicken and turkey, besides the legs) vs. which pair well with darker meat (most duck cuts). With dark meat, it's best to go with medium-bodied red wine, but with white meat like chicken, we found that white wines such as [Sauvignon Blanc](#) or [Chardonnay](#) pair the best; this is because the intensity of the dish matches the intensity of the wine.

Keep in mind that some white meat—depending on how it's cooked—can also go well with medium-bodied Rosé wines and with wine that have a lighter tannin structure.

But like we said, it can get complicated the more you dress your poultry up and change its overall flavor profile. Essentially, the more intense the flavor gets, the more intense the wine has to become.

Fried Chicken and Wine

It might not seem possible to pair fried chicken with wine because fried chicken is typically greasy, breaded and heavy, but we assure you it is -- you just have to do it very carefully! We recommend a [Riesling](#) that is semi-sweet; it'll help wash the grease down and refresh the palate.

Herb Crusted Chicken and Wine

Since herb-flavored chicken is typically a lighter take on chicken, we recommend an equally light wine: [Sauvignon Blanc](#).

Roasted or Smoked Thanksgiving Turkey

Red [Zinfandel](#) has long been considered the best wine to pair with that delicious Thanksgiving turkey dinner, with or without cranberry sauce. Zinfandel has flavors much like sweet tobacco, making it match well with rich smoked or roasted turkey meat.

Duck

Duck and other similarly-tasting poultry pair well with medium bodied red wines like Zinfandel or a [Pinot Noir](#). Experts also say you can often cook duck with Pinot Noir.

Pairing Specifics

What are some of the specific wines that go really well with poultry dishes?

Here are some specific duck, turkey and chicken wine pairing recommendations:

- Try pairing fried chicken with the semi-sweet 2011 Washington Hills Riesling.
- Try pairing an herb-crusted chicken dish with Grgich Hills Estate 2012 [Napa Valley wine](#) (Sauvignon Blanc).
- Try pairing roasted or smoked turkey with Dashe Cellars 2009 Les Enfants Terribles (Zinfandel).
- Try pairing your next duck dish with a 2006 Kris Pinot Noir.

When pairing wine with poultry, keep the following in mind to come up with the perfect wine pairing: (1) the way it's cooked, (2) the type of poultry it is (white or dark), and (3) its full flavor profile.