

FRESH SPICY REDS

These are savoury, firm reds with lots of personality such as Dolcettos, Barberas, some Zinfandels, Cru Beaujolais, Argentine Malbecs, Chilean Carménère and certain Syrahs. Spicy reds are more flavourful than Mild reds, more herbaceous and earthy than Soft Fruity reds, but have less structure than Powerful Reds.

These Spicy Reds combine medium to high intensity of aroma and flavour with an assertive but not over-imposing structure. They display medium to full body along with perceptible tannin and acidity. Their alcohol can be medium or high, but even when high, it doesn't define the wines by making them sweet or leaving a "hot" sensation in the back of the mouth. They have substantial texture, are moderately dense and can be fleshy, velvety or grainy in mouth feel. They are not thin and you wouldn't call them soft because their tannin is well defined. A good spicy red leaves you with a sense of angularity rather than roundness in the mouth.

The aromatics of spicy reds are quite pronounced. Spiciness is of course one of the main aromas and flavours present, but there are many others. Along with spicy notes of black pepper, cinnamon and cloves they will often display strong fruity aromas and flavours, especially fresh (as opposed to stewed, baked or dried) fruits and berries. Many spicy reds also have a distinct mineral component to their taste.

Spicy reds tend to grow in moderate as opposed to warm climates. The underlying grapes tend to be those that are expressive in aroma and flavour, particularly those with spicy aromatics. Because these wines come from many grape varieties and lots of regions they exhibit more diversity and less "sameness" within the style.

BODY



SWEET



TANNIN



ACIDITY



ALC



FLAVOUR INTENSITY



KEY FLAVOURS

-  ----- Black pepper
-  ----- Cinnamon
-  ----- Cloves
-  ----- Berries
-  ----- Plum
-  ----- Dried Herbs

KEY TO INTENSITY SCALES

Guide to each wine variety's intensity notes.

LIGHT
MEDIUM
FULL

BODY

DRY
MEDIUM
SWEET

SWEET

LOW
MEDIUM
HIGH

TANNIN

MILD
BALANCED
CRISP

ACIDITY

LOW
MEDIUM
HIGH

ALC

LOW ALCOHOL <12%
MEDIUM 12-13.5%
HIGH 13.5+%



WHERE IN THE WORLD

Italy, France, Austria, South Africa, California, Washington, Chile and Argentina, all produce wines in the Spicy Red style. The lesser regions of France produce extremely good value examples of this style. Try a Cahors made from the Malbec grape. The cheaper examples are spicy while the more expensive examples tend towards the Powerful Reds category. A Corbières is a blend of Carignan, Syrah and Mourvedre. Its fantastic value and an excellent example of the Spicy Red style. Minervois, Fitou and Cotes du Roussillon are other spicy reds from the same general area made from similar blends of grapes. The Rhone produces both Gigondas and some Cotes du Rhone from the Southern Rhone and Crozes Heritage from the North that fit the spicy red bill.

The red wines from the Loire are quintessentially spicy reds. Most are made from Cabernet Franc and carry appellation names such as Chinon, Bourgueil, St Nicolas de Bourgueil and Sauternes- Champigny. They tend to be dry textured with vegetal and red fruit aromatics and sometimes a distinct coffee-grounds character.

Cru or Village Beaujolais wines are also quite spicy. Look for examples from the villages of Fleurie or Brouilly. These wines tend to have more substance and tannin backbone than your typical examples of Beaujolais which fall into the Soft, Fruity reds category.

Northern and Central Italian reds often fit this category. Two favourites are Dolcetto and Barbera from the Piedmont district. Dolcetto with aromas and flavours of spiced pepper and ripe fruits is the spicier of these two wines. The Trentino-Alto Adige region grows Lagrein which has distinct spicy characters. Central Italy has a multitude of wines based on the Sangiovese grape which actually produces wines across all four of the red styles. However, look out for cheaper Chianti Classico which best approximates the spicy red style from the Sangiovese based wines.

Montepulciano d'Abruzzo is one of the best value Italian reds on the market and better quality versions of this wine display lovely spicy notes. The cheaper versions tend to fall more towards the soft, fruity red style. In nearby Marche, blends of Sangiovese and Montepulciano can be spicy reds.

Spain's spicy reds come from various regions. Fresher Rioja wines vinified and aged in more of a modern rather than traditional fashion will usually be spicy. Some oak ageing (Crianza and Reserva Riojas) will also add some spiciness to these wines. Jumilla wine made from Monastrell is another that fits the spicy bill and well worth trying.

Portuguese wines generally lack the freshness and edginess of spicy reds but Tourigal Nacional based wines from Douro in the North can have a spiciness that qualifies them for this category.

In the New World regions, Argentina's distinctive Malbec wines are medium bodied with forward aromas and flavours of red and black berries and spice. In Australia, certain Shiraz displays a spiciness that puts them into this category. Look for examples from Victoria rather than blended versions from South Eastern Australia which tend more towards Soft Fruity Reds. At the other end of the scale, you have the big, bold, intense Shiraz that are clearly Powerful Reds.

The native Pinotage grape of South Africa produces spicy red wines that are well worth trying. And while most Californian Zins are big, jammy, powerful reds, the more restrained, refined examples can be quite spicy. The Syrahs from Washington are generally spicy and so too are some Merlots and Cabernets from this region.



WHERE IN THE WORLD

WINE	REGION	COUNTRY
Cotes du Rhone, Crozes Hermitage, Gigondas	Rhone Valley	France
Cotes du Roussillon	Roussillon	France
Syrah	Crozes Hermitage, Rhône Valley, Corbières, Minervois, Languedoc, Roussillon	France
Grenache	Côtes du Rhône, Gigondas, Rhône Valley, Minervois	France
Malbec	Cahors, Southwest France	France
Cabernet Franc	Anjou, Bourgueil, Chinon, Saumur-Champigny, St Nicolas-de-Bourgueil, Loire Valley	France
Montepulciano	Abruzzo, Marche	Italy
Barbera d'Alba, Barbera D'Asti, Dolcetto	Piedmont	Italy
Sangiovese	Chianti, Tuscany	Italy
Malbec	Mendoza	Argentina
Shiraz	Victoria, Sth Australia	Australia
Carménère	Maipo, Rapel	Chile
Touriga Nacional	Douro	Portugal
Pinotage	Paarl, Stellenbosch	South Africa
Monastrell	Jumilla	Spain

VARIETAL EXAMPLES

Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Pinot Noir, Zinfandel, Sangiovese

TRY WITH

Ratatouille, hard salami, fried chicken, burgers, beef and veggie stir fry, steak with mild BBQ sauce.