



# Wine Tasting

PLANNER

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# Hi, my wine-loving friend!



So, you want to host a wine tasting.  
Great! I'm here to help.

As a wine expert, I've planned quite a few wine tastings in my day. And I've poured all my best tips and tricks into this guide.

From supplies to themes to games, this planner has everything you need to make your tasting a success!

Plus, I've included worksheets to keep track of all the details for your fabulous soirée.

I can't wait to hear all about it!

Cheers,  
Laura



# Wine Tasting Timeline

## 8 WEEKS OUT

Decide on your wine tasting theme and guest list.

## 6-8 WEEKS OUT

Mail, email, call, or text invitations to your party, including RSVP deadline.

## 4 WEEKS OUT

Follow up on outstanding RSVPs. Order wines (if buying online), supplies, and décor.

## WEEK OF PARTY

Make grocery list, go food shopping, and stock up on paper goods. Buy wines if you didn't order online.

## DAY BEFORE PARTY

Prep food. Pull out wine tasting supplies and serving dishes. Put up décor.

## MORNING OF PARTY

Put sparkling, white, and rosé wines in the fridge. Finish food prep. Set out wine-tasting supplies.

## 1 HOUR BEFORE START

Open red wines and decant any heavier tannic ones that need it.

## 30 MINUTES BEFORE START

Open and place chilled wines in ice buckets. Set out food. Turn on music.

## DURING THE PARTY

Serve wines in this order: sparkling, white, rosé, red (light to full-bodied), dessert.

## AFTER THE PARTY

Celebrate a successful wine tasting and start planning your next one!





# Party Basics

## Guest List

It's best to keep this type of party fairly small (8-10 is ideal). Of course, invite all your wine-loving friends. But if you have space, it's also a great way for wine newbies to get to taste and learn what they like.

## Invitations

If you're having a more formal party, you can buy or make cute wine-themed invitations to mail. Or send a fun e-vite. For a casual get-together, reach out to your guests by emailing, calling, or texting.

## Selecting the Wines

Decide if you're going to supply the wines or have your guests bring wine. If your theme is complex, it may be easier to supply them yourself. You can ask guests for contributions in lieu of bringing a bottle.

## Buying the Wines

Plan how much wine to buy based on your final guest list. A bottle of wine has about 12 tastings of 2 oz. pours. If you'll have more than 12 people, you'll want to get 2 bottles of each type of wine.

## *Pro Tip: Don't Forget the Tunes*

What's a party without music? Create a playlist to set the mood. Think relaxing background music. Or match your party theme.



# Wine Tasting Supplies



Host your wine-tasting party like a pro with these supplies. Don't own something? Visit the link below to get my curated list.

- Wine Opener
- Wine Pourers – helps avoid drips when pouring
- Wine Glasses – ideally a white and a red wine glass per person; you can rent if you don't have enough
- Wine Glass Charms – to mark each person's glass
- Decanter – for full-bodied red wines
- Ice Bucket – for white, rosé, and sparkling wines
- Spittoon / Dump Bucket
- Wine Bags – for blind tasting
- Numbered Tags – if your wine bags aren't numbered
- Printouts – information about the wines
- Tasting Sheets – see page 16 for your free printable
- Pens
- Water
- Crackers
- Napkins

Visit  
[WINETRAVELISTA.COM/SHOP/WINE-TASTING](https://winetravelista.com/shop/wine-tasting)  
for links to these supplies.



# Themes: Single Grape

Choose a grape and try wines made from that grape in different regions of the world.

## 1 Sauvignon Blanc

This white grape makes wines with refreshing acidity and flavors of lemon and green apple. Try it from Marlborough in New Zealand, Loire in France, and Napa or Sonoma in California.

## 2 Riesling

Riesling is a white grape made in varying levels of sweetness. Pick up a few from Germany (Trocken means dry), Austria, and France (Alsace). In the U.S., also look for Finger Lakes, NY.

## 3 Chardonnay

Think you don't like Chardonnay? Think again. Reintroduce yourself to this versatile grape. Try Chablis and white Burgundy from France. Also look for ones from Sonoma, CA or Oregon.

## 4 Pinot Noir

This light-bodied red wine often has flavors of red cherry and raspberry. Look for Willamette Valley, Oregon in the U.S., Central Otago in New Zealand, and Burgundy in France.

## 5 Syrah/Shiraz

It has two names, but it's one grape. This spicy, full-bodied red is called Shiraz in Australia (look for Barossa Valley). For Syrah, try Walla Walla, Washington and Northern Rhône in France.

## 6 Cabernet Sauvignon

The king of red grapes, Cabernet is a full-bodied wine with flavors of blackberry. Outside of California, look for left bank Bordeaux and Chilean versions from Casablanca Valley.





# Themes: Single Region

Choose a specific region and try different wines made in that region.

## 7 Piedmont

Italy's northwest region is home to the Nebbiolo grape. Try Barolo, Barbaresco, or Langhe Nebbiolo. Other reds include Dolcetto and Barbera. Gavi is a white from the Cortese grape.

## 8 Napa or Sonoma

Explore one of these well-known regions in the United States. Choose from fruit-forward Cabernet Sauvignons, bold Zinfandels, ripe Chardonnays, and citrusy Sauvignon Blancs.

## 9 Tuscany

If you're a fan of Sangiovese, this is the region for you. Beyond Chianti Classico, look for Brunello or Rosso di Montalcino and Vino Nobile di Montepulciano. Or try a Super Tuscan blend.

## 10 Rhône

Pick up a bottle of Syrah from France's Northern Rhône and a Grenache-Syrah-Mourvèdre (GSM) blend from the Southern Rhône. Whites include Viognier, Marsanne, and Roussane.

## 11 Rioja

Tempranillo is the star grape of this Spanish region. Compare a youthful Joven or Crianza to an aged Gran Reserva. And pick up a white Rioja, most commonly made with the Viura grape.

## 12 Bordeaux

This French region is famous for its Cabernet and Merlot red blends. Compare left bank vs. right bank Bordeaux. And try white Bordeaux (Sauvignon Blanc) and Sauternes (Semillon).





# Themes: Comparison

Go in-depth on a type of wine by comparing variations.

13

## Vertical Tasting

Experience how weather impacts wine. Buy multiple vintages (e.g., 2014, 2015, 2016) of a single wine from an individual producer in a region that has vintage variation (e.g., Bordeaux).

14

## Horizontal Tasting

See how differences in winemaking influence a wine. Select a single type of wine and get bottles from several producers in the same vintage (e.g., 3 Pinot Noirs from Willamette Valley).

15

## Old World vs. New World

Explore how terroir and winemaking styles impact a wine. Compare Old World wines (Europe and the Mediterranean) with wines from the New World (the rest of the winemaking world).

16

## All Sparkling

Love bubbly? Go beyond Champagne. Try Crémant from France and Cava from Spain. Or go Italian with Prosecco, Franciacorta, and Lambrusco. And don't miss South Africa's Cap Classique.

17

## All Rosé

Known best from Provence, Bandol and Tavel are other great regions to try in France. Throughout the world, you'll also find it from Spain, Italy, Portugal, California, Australia, and more.

18

## All Dessert

Throwing a dessert party? Go with dessert wine. You can try Port from Portugal, Sherry from Spain, Sauternes from France, Tokaji from Hungary, Vinsanto from Greece, or any ice wine.





# Themes: Creative

Base your theme on a historical event, a food, a worldly destination, or go blind!

## 19

### Judgement of Paris

Re-enact the famous 1976 blind tasting where California wines beat French wines. Have guests bring a Napa Cabernet Sauvignon or a French Bordeaux concealed in a bag. Put numbered tags on each wine and have guests write down whether they think each wine is from California or France. Give aprize to the one who guesses the most correctly.

## 20

### Around the World

Explore the world of wine without leaving your house. Choose 6-8 wine regions or countries and purchase or assign guests to bring wines from there. Set up stations around your house for each region/country. Make or have people bring a food dish to pair with the wines. Take things up a notch with passports and country stamps, decorations, or even costumes!

## 21

### Blind Tasting

This is a fun one to see how price and quality relate. Buy several wines that are either under \$20 or over \$50 (half and half). Conceal the bottles in bags and assign them numbered tags. Have guests write down a price for each and rank the wines from lowest to highest. There may be a few surprises when it comes to the unveiling! Give a prize to the winner.

## 22

### Wine and Cheese

What goes better with wine than cheese? Probably not much. Pair light whites, sparkling, and rosé with a soft, creamy cheese like camembert. Medium-bodied wines go best with semi-hard cheeses like manchego. Bold reds and full-bodied whites should be matched with aged hard cheese like comté or gruyere. And sweet dessert wines with blue cheese.



# PARTY

## GAMES & PRIZES



### BEST WINE

If you're having guests bring wine for your tasting, have each person vote for their favorite wine of the night (it can't be their own). Whoever's wine gets the most votes wins a prize (or gets to host the next wine tasting!).

### CORKS GUESSING GAME

Have a bunch of extra corks? Count them and put them in a tall glass canister. When guests arrive, have them write down a guess of how many corks are in the container. The closest without going over gets a prize.



### WINE SWAP

Have each guest bring an extra bottle of wine (one of their favorites) that won't be opened at the wine tasting. Put them all in a box and have guests close their eyes and pick one to take home. Or set it up as a ring toss game — take home whichever bottle you ring first.



# Food Ideas

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For a wine tasting party, you'll want food that won't overpower the wine. It should also be easy to eat while holding a glass of wine.

Below are some staples you can start with. And then add on complementary dishes that work with the wines and your chosen theme.

## Cheeses

- Light wines – soft cheeses like camembert, brie, and goat cheese
- Medium-bodied wines – semi-hard cheeses like manchego and Havarti
- Full-bodied wines – hard, aged cheeses like cheddar, comté, and gruyere
- Dessert wines – blue cheese

## Cured Meats

- Light wines – prosciutto, soppressata
- Bold wines – coppa, bresaola

## Fruit

- Grapes, berries, dried fruits

## Nuts

- Marcona almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, walnuts

## Olives

## Bread

## Crackers





# Wine Tasting Plan

Fill in all the details for the big day.

Date: .....

Time: .....

Location: .....

Theme: .....

Supplies to Buy:

Wines to Buy:

Games & Prizes:

Decorations:



# Guest List

Add your wine-loving besties!



# Grocery List

Add all the ingredients for your tasty menu.

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# Tasting Notes

See. Swirl. Sniff. Sip. Savor!

## Wine 1

Appearance:

Aromas:

Flavors:

Rating:



## Wine 2

Appearance:

Aromas:

Flavors:

Rating:



## Wine 3

Appearance:

Aromas:

Flavors:

Rating:



## Wine 4

Appearance:

Aromas:

Flavors:

Rating:



## Wine 5

Appearance:

Aromas:

Flavors:

Rating:



## Wine 6

Appearance:

Aromas:

Flavors:

Rating:

