

Wine Guide

Red Wine and Headaches

Red wines go well with many things. Beef, lamb, duck, brie. But it doesn't pair well with many people's heads.

For some people, drinking even a sip or two of red wine can trigger headaches. Keep reading to find out why.

IT'S CHEMISTRY

Researchers at the University of California, Davis, say they've found the chemical responsible: quercetin, a flavanol naturally present in fruits and vegetables, including grapes. It's considered a healthy antioxidant and can even be purchased as a supplement to help protect against heart disease, cancer, inflammation and allergic reactions. Sounds harmless, right?

However, when metabolized with alcohol, it gets converted to a different form called quercetin glucuronide.

"In that form, it blocks the metabolism of alcohol," says Andrew Waterhouse, a wine chemist and researcher with UC Davis. Because of that blocking mechanism, people can accumulate acetaldehyde, a toxin. High levels of acetaldehyde can cause facial flushing, nausea and, you guessed it, headaches.

Quercetin is produced by grapes in response to sunlight. Levels can also fluctuate depending on how the wine is made, including skin contact



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during fermentation and aging.

AND GENETICS

Researchers say that some people are genetically predisposed to acetaldehyde build-up from red wine. For about 40% of the East Asian population, the enzyme that breaks down acetaldehyde doesn't work

properly, allowing it to build up in their system.

"We postulate that when susceptible people consume wine with even modest amounts of quercetin, they develop headaches, particularly if they have a preexisting migraine or another primary headache condition," says Morris Levin, professor of neurology and

director of the Headache Center at the University of California, San Francisco. "We think we are finally on the right track toward explaining this millennia-old mystery."

NEXT STEPS

UC Davis scientists will now test their quercetin theories in a small human trial, the uni-

versity says, funded by the Wine Spectator Scholarship Foundation. They hope to find out why some people are more susceptible than others to red wine headaches, and if their enzymes are more easily inhibited or if certain populations are just more easily affected by acetaldehyde build-up.

Napa Predicts Best Vintage

There are some remarkable vintages out there, with price tags to match.

Napa Valley wine producers say that 2023's bottles may soon be among them.

Of late, heat spikes in the Valley, along with wildfires and other natural events, have caused grapes to be picked early.

Not in 2023. A longer, cooler growing season is leading wine experts in Napa to call the 2023 harvest the best vintage in decades.

Wine blogger and author Karen MacNeil says the "gentle weather," including enough rain to bust a drought, triggered excitement in the Valley.

"When was the last time Napa grapes were picked in November?" she asked on her blog WineSpeed.

That extra time on the vine will allow a fuller flavor for Napa wines, vintners say.

"I have no doubt that 2023 will go down as one of the most phenomenal vintages ever in the Napa Valley," McNeil says.

Seavey Vineyard winemaker Jim Duane told CBS News that excitement is brewing along with the wines in the valley.

"This 2023 could be the vintage of a lifetime," he says. "It's absolutely my job not to mess this up."

Burgess Cellars winemaker Meghan Zobeck says this year's



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crop was something special, even among Napa wines.

"Grapes have big energy and complexity," she told ABC 7 News. "But there was something special in the taste and the feel of this harvest. You just know this harvest is incredible."

Matt Crafton with Chateau Montelena told the Napa Valley

Register that his grapes remind him of 2019's vintage, but with more nuance.

"There seems to be more room to take advantage of different shades of flavor, however, through selective harvest and decisions in the cellar," he says.

In the Stags Leap District of

the Valley, Elizabeth Vianna with Chimney Rock Winery told the newspaper that she's excited about the 2023 grapes.

"We concur with the amazing quality in the fruit this year — beautiful color, flavor, intensity and integrity," she says. "It's hard not to get giddy with excitement about the beauty of

this fruit.

Napa Valley Grapegrowers say the harvest came with both quality and yield.

"One for the record books," Caroline Feuchuk says, for both reds and whites.

Depending on the bottle, 2023 Napa wines should be ready in one to three years.



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White, Red, Pink: A Guide to Rose

We all know that white goes with chicken and red with beef, generally speaking. Rose, a pink wine, is exploding in popularity, however. Here's what you need to know.

HOW DID IT GET THAT COLOR?

The signature pink hue comes from the skins of red grapes. While red wines leave the skin in for weeks, the skins stay in with rose wines for just a few hours. Any red grape can be used to make rose, but some of the most popular are syrah, pinot noir and cabernet.

There are four methods of making rose wine. Maceration is the most common, and it involves crushing the grapes and allowing them to rest (macerate) in their skins for a short time. Macerated roses tend to be more full than wines made by other means. Saignee involves bleeding off some of the red wine juice during fermentation

and using that to make rose. Direct-pressed roses are made by draining the pressed juice off the skins immediately, giving the resulting wine a light pink hue and bright flavor. Blending involves mixing white and red wines and is most common in making sparkling roses and rose champagne.

WHAT DOES THAT COLOR MEAN FOR FLAVOR?

Generally speaking, the lighter the rose, the cleaner the finish, bringing citrus and floral tones.

Darker roses tend to be more full and earthy. Depending on the grapes used to make the bottle, roses can run the

gamut from sweet to dry.

WHEN DO YOU DRINK IT?

Rose pairs well with light dishes such as seafood, salads and light pastas. Its refreshing taste makes it great for warmer months and outdoor entertaining. The hint of red makes it a great wine for when you want the feel of a white but the structure and body of a red.

It's also making a mark in cocktails.

SPARKLING ROSE MARGARITA

Recipe is from Liquor.com.

10 ounces strawberry-basil infused blanco tequila

5 ounces lime juice
 4 ounces agave syrup
 1 750-milliliter bottle sparkling rose
 1 cup strawberries, sliced
 Lime wheels

1. To make the tequila: Combine 1/2 cup sliced strawberries and 1/2 cup fresh basil leaves with a 750-milliliter bottle of blanco tequila in a glass jar. Seal the jar and let it sit, unrefrigerated, for 3-5 days. Shake daily. Strain out the solids and rebottle it for use.

2. In a punch bowl, combine the infused tequila with the lime juice and agave syrup. Add cubed ice and stir to mix. Top with the rose.

3. Add the strawberries and lime wheels.

Wine Cocktails To Pour In 2024

Wine is great on its own, but add some mixers and a splash of liquor, and it can really shine.

Try these wine cocktails the next time you belly up to your home bar.

WHITE SANGRIA

Makes eight servings. Recipe is from Delish.

Ingredients

- 1 cup sliced strawberries
- 1 mango, cubed
- 1 peach, sliced
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup Grand Marnier
- 1 apple, sliced
- 1 orange, sliced
- 1 lime, sliced
- 1 750-milliliter bottle dry white wine, chilled
- 1 cup seltzer

Directions

1. Combine strawberries, mango, peach, sugar and Grand Marnier in a bowl. Refrigerate for an hour.

2. To a large pitcher, add the fruit mixture and apple, orange and lime slices. Pour in the white wine and seltzer and stir to combine. Serve chilled.

APOTHIC SPICE

Makes four servings. Recipe is from Apothic Wines.

Ingredients

- 8 ounces Apothic red
- 1 ounce bourbon
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 10 cardamom pods



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- 1 inch fresh ginger, peeled and chopped
- 10 whole cloves
- 6 whole star anise
- Pinch cayenne pepper
- Whipped cream

Directions

1. Place the ginger, cloves, anise, sugar and wine in a saucepan on low heat. Do not bring to a boil. Stir until the sugar is completely dissolved.
2. Remove from the heat and stir in pepper and bourbon.

3. Strain into four glasses and top with whipped cream.

FRENCH KISS

Makes 1 drink. Recipe is from Total Wine.

Ingredients

- Raspberries or your favorite berry
- Mint leaves
- 1/2 ounce lemon juice
- 1/2 ounce vodka
- 1 bottle sparkling red wine
- 1/2 teaspoon raw honey (optional)

- 1/2 teaspoon raspberry liqueur (optional)

Directions

1. Place five berries in the bottom of a shaker tin. Add the mint leaves and lemon juice. Using a wooden muddler, muddle until slightly mashed but still somewhat whole.
2. Add vodka and ice, shake. Strain into a champagne flute.
3. Fill the rest of the glass with sparkling red wine. If using, add honey and liqueur.

PINEAPPLE WHIP

Makes four servings. Recipe is from Sutter Home.

Ingredients

- 5 cups small chunks pineapple, frozen
- 1 cup low-fat coconut milk
- 1 750-milliliter bottle Sutter Home Tropical Pineapple Fruit Infusions

Directions

1. Pour all ingredients into blender and blend until creamy. Serve immediately.

Celebrate a Wine Holiday

Not that we need a reason, but according to the Wine International Association, there are several days of the year where we can raise a glass to our favorite bottles.

International Wine Day itself is May 25, but, starting from the top are:

Feb. 16: International Syrah Day. Syrah grapes originated in the Rhone Valley of France, but are now produced in Australia, the U.S. and South Africa. Also known as shiraz, this is a dark red grape that tends toward tannic, acidic wines.



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March 3: Mulled Wine Day. Mulled wine is a red wine slowly warmed with spices. It originated in Middle Ages Europe, where

drinkers believed it would promote health.

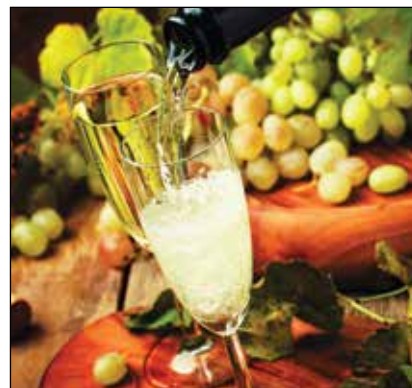
March 13: International Riesling Day. Riesling is made from German white grapes that are characterized by flowery aromas that can produce dry to sweet wines. It generally bears notes of orchard fruits, but also an acidity that makes it a versatile table wine.

April 17: World Malbec Day. Malbec is a deep purple grape used in red wines. It produces an inky color and is one of the six grapes allowed in Bordeaux wine.

May 5: International Sauvignon Blanc Day. Sauvignon blanc is a white grape from Bordeaux with its origins as a grape native to southwest France. It produces a crisp, dry white wine and is now cultivated around the world.

June 21: World Lambrusco Day. An Italian red sparkling wine, lam-

brusco is made principally from the namesake grape. It comes from the provinces of Modena, Parma, Reggio-Emilia and Mantua and archaeological evidence supports claims that it was first cultivated by the Etruscans.



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July 12: International Cava Day. Bubbles are the defining characteristic of cava, a Spanish wine that can be red or white. White cava is made from macabeo, pareliada and xarel-lo grapes, primarily, though

chardonnay and malvasia are also allowed. Red cava can be made from garnacha tinta, monastrell, trepat and pinot noir.



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Aug. 4: National White Wine Day. The dog days of summer pair perfectly with crisp, cool, refreshing whites. Pick your favorite variety and open a bottle or two to celebrate.

Sept. 6: National Chianti Day. Italy's chianti is a deep red wine that's a perfect pairing for Italian cuisine. It



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hails from Tuscany and most usually comes in a bottle nestled in a straw basket called a fiasco (flask).

Oct. 27: World Champagne Day. It's only champagne if it comes from the Champagne region of France. No, really. It's a white sparkling wine traditionally used to celebrate.

Nov. 7: International Merlot Day. Merlot is a dark blue-black grape that is used both as a blending grape and for varietal wines. It is one of the grapes used in Bordeaux wine.

No- or Low-Alcohol Wines

No-alcohol or low-alcohol wines are increasingly popular, whether for health reasons or just to enjoy a cocktail and not have to worry about how you're going to get home.

THE VOCABULARY

Dealcoholized wines are bottles that look to replicate the taste, look and feel of wine without the kick. Wine alternatives are bottles that create their own flavors and experiences. Check with the experts at your local wine store and your medical professionals; some nonalcoholic bottles have 0.5% alcohol. For people that would be harmed by even trace amounts, read the labels carefully.

According to the Food and Drug Administration's CPG Sec. 510.400 Dealcoholized Wine and Malt Beverages — Labeling (that's a mouthful), wine contains not less than 7% and not more than 24% alcohol by volume.

Dealcoholized or alcohol-removed should appear in the statement of identity just before the term wine or before the type of wine from which it was derived. For instance, dealcoholized merlot. Wines labeled as dealcoholized cannot exceed 0.5% alcohol by volume.

Dealcoholizing wines takes out some of what makes wine, well, wine. Bottlers may add other ingredients to mask it, but the fact remains that some-

thing may be missing from your glass, and it's not just the booze. Some reviewers of dealcoholized wines called the taste flat or lacking punch.

Wine alternatives look to make a similar experience to drinking wine, but do not go through dealcoholization. These brews can use ingredients that aren't even grapes, such as tea, beets and kombucha. They also cannot exceed 0.5% alcohol by volume, though some may be present.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Look at the label closely, not just for the alcohol content, but also for the source. Your dealcoholized wine or wine alternative should specify where it's from. If it includes grapes, it should include the variety or varieties used. The ingredient list, for beverages that start with wine, should be that wine.

For wine alternatives, the ingredient list should lead with what it says on the label. For example, take NON's #1 Salted Raspberry and Chamomile Non-Alcoholic Rose Wine Alternative. The first ingredient? Whole raspberries.



Planning a Wine Trip

For every varietal, there is a beautiful vacation. Wine-tasting trips are the perfect way to relax and learn more about your favorite pours.

Once you've done the normal things, such as decide on a budget and update your paperwork (such as your passport), here are some wine-tasting destinations to consider.

TEXAS HILL COUNTRY

The Texas Hill Country boasts more than 100 wineries covering 9 million acres in the Lone Star State. This wine growing region boasts a rich German heritage combined with varietals from France, Italy and Spain. Local restaurants and shops are nestled in this beautiful country pockmarked with history and natural beauty.

NAPA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

Napa is the granddaddy of all wine tours in the U.S. Visit Napa Valley recommends booking 2-3 winery visits per day. You can hire a car or local tour company to drive or even plan a full day of outings for you. And it's just 50 miles north of San Francisco, meaning you can hit the big city, too.

RIOJA, SPAIN

Spain is the third-largest wine producer globally. La Rioja is famous for Tempranillo-based wines. It's fairly rural; the tiny region is

home to just 316,000 residents. There are a cornucopia of La Rioja (that's the region; just rioja is the wine) tours available that cater to almost every interest.

TUSCANY, ITALY

The birthplace of the Italian Renaissance is also home to many of Italy's greatest wines, including chianti. Hotspots include Florence, Castiglione della Pescaia, Lucca and Siena. It's an area rich with history and art that can also boast world-class wine experiences.

AUSTRALIA

The Land Down Under has more than 2,400 wineries in 65 wine regions around the country. It boasts more than 100 grape varieties that it exports around the world. Wine tours in this country often blend wine, food and adventure.

ARGENTINA

Visit any of Argentina's 2,000 wineries during the fall (March-May in the southern hemisphere) and take advantage of festivities surrounding the country's wine harvest. The Ruta del Vino is a belt of the country that covers about 1,243 miles across several provinces and wine-growing regions.

