Alta Sierra Wine Shop

Thanksgiving Wine Pairing Guide

From the first appetizer to the final slice of pie



Ten traditional Thanksgiving wine styles, with shop selections and prices.

Ten Thanksgiving Wine Styles

Flavor profiles, pairing ideas, and shop selections

1. Sparkling Wines *(Champagne, Prosecco, Cava, or brut)*

FLAVOR PROFILE Dry, crisp, lively bubbles; citrus and green apple, sometimes toast or brioche.

PAIRS BEST WITH Welcome drink, cheese and charcuterie, deviled eggs, salty nuts, and fried or savory appetizers. Acidity and bubbles refresh the palate and cut through richness.

SHOP SELECTIONS

- Graham Beck Brut — $24
- Montsarra Cava — $16
- Gambino Prosecco — $12

2. Sauvignon Blanc

FLAVOR PROFILE Bright acidity; lemon, grapefruit, green apple, and fresh herbs.

PAIRS BEST WITH Goat cheese, crudités, shrimp cocktail, herb-forward appetizers, green beans, and lighter vegetable sides. Refreshing before and alongside the meal.

SHOP SELECTIONS

- Oak Farm — $15
- Lapis Luna — $15
- Merriam — $15
- Ferrari-Carano — $14

3. Dry Riesling

FLAVOR PROFILE Lime, peach, apple, and floral notes; high acidity. Off-dry versions have a touch of sweetness.

PAIRS BEST WITH Spiced nuts, glazed carrots, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, and dishes with a little heat. Off-dry Riesling is especially good with sweet-savory sides; choose dry for a crisper profile.

SHOP SELECTIONS

- Poet's Leap — $19

4. Chardonnay *(Unoaked or lightly oaked)*

FLAVOR PROFILE Apple, pear, lemon, and sometimes cream, butter, or vanilla.

PAIRS BEST WITH Roast turkey breast, mashed potatoes, stuffing, creamy casseroles, and buttery rolls. Unoaked styles feel fresher; lightly oaked styles complement richer dishes.

SHOP SELECTIONS

- Balletto Unoaked — $19
- Golderado — $18
- Geyer Peak — $12
- Ironstone — $14

5. Dry Rosé

FLAVOR PROFILE Strawberry, watermelon, citrus, and subtle floral notes; refreshing and food-friendly.

PAIRS BEST WITH Appetizers, salads, roasted vegetables, turkey, and cranberry relish. A versatile bridge wine when guests have different preferences.

SHOP SELECTIONS

- Stellar Ridge — $20
- Berne Inspiration — $21
- Alexander Valley Vineyards — $15
- Marqués de Riscal — $15

6. Pinot Noir

FLAVOR PROFILE Red cherry, cranberry, raspberry, gentle spice, and earthy notes; light to medium body.

PAIRS BEST WITH Roast turkey, mushroom stuffing, gravy, roasted root vegetables, and cranberry sauce. Moderate tannins and bright acidity work well with the range of flavors on the table.

SHOP SELECTIONS

- Lincourt — $21
- Boen — $20
- Sea Sun — $15
- Merriam — $20

7. Light Reds

FLAVOR PROFILE Red-fruit flavors such as fresh cherry, raspberry, cranberry, and strawberry rather than heavy black fruits.

PAIRS BEST WITH Turkey, glazed ham, roasted vegetables, savory stuffing, and cranberry dishes. Serve slightly cool for a lively, easygoing red.

SHOP SELECTIONS

- Ely Cabernet Sauvignon — $18
- Marqués de Riscal Rioja — $22
- Quinta de Saes — $21
- Curran Tempranillo — $24

8. Zinfandel

FLAVOR PROFILE Ripe blackberry, raspberry, plum, pepper, and baking spice; medium to full body.

PAIRS BEST WITH Dark-meat turkey, smoky or sausage stuffing, rich gravy, and sweet potato casserole. Ripe fruit and spice stand up to bold, savory sides; avoid very high alcohol if the meal is delicate.

SHOP SELECTIONS

- Mazzocco Verano — $21
- deLorimier Tombstone — $25
- 7 Deadly Zins — $15
- Klinker Brick Old Ghost — $36

9. Grenache

FLAVOR PROFILE Red cherry, raspberry, herbs, and warm spice; medium body with generally moderate tannins.

PAIRS BEST WITH Herb-roasted turkey, sausage stuffing, roasted squash, mushrooms, and savory gravy. A flavorful red that is often less forceful than a big Cabernet.

SHOP SELECTIONS

- Guthrie Family — $23

10. Moscato

FLAVOR PROFILE Mandarin orange, candied lemon rind, ginger, and white tea. Slightly frizzante (gently sparkling), refreshing, fruity, and sweet.

PAIRS BEST WITH Apple pie, pear tart, pumpkin pie, fruit desserts, and a cheese course. Choose a wine at least as sweet as the dessert so it does not taste thin or tart.

SHOP SELECTIONS

- Noceto “Frivolo” — $18

Simple Tasting Flow

APPETIZERS	Sparkling Brut → Sauvignon Blanc or Dry Rosé
MAIN MEAL	Chardonnay → Pinot Noir → Light Reds → Zinfandel or Grenache
DESSERT	Moscato

Quick Tips for the Holiday Table

Embrace versatility Bright acidity and moderate alcohol help wines such as Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc refresh the palate alongside gravy, stuffing, and cranberry sauce.

Good wine doesn’t have to be expensive Value-focused selections can keep everyone’s glass full without overshadowing the meal.

Bring on the rosé and bubbles Dry rosé adds freshness and red-fruit character; sparkling wine lifts rich dishes and sets a celebratory tone.

Pair sweet with sweet For pumpkin pie and other sweet desserts, try a lightly sweet Riesling or late-harvest wine.

Forget perfection Thanksgiving is about gratitude and gathering. Choose wines you enjoy, and let the table do the rest.

Why Pairing Matters

The right wine can make a dish pop, refresh your palate, or balance heat, richness, herbs, and spice. Crisp Sauvignon Blanc can cut through creamy sides, fruit-forward Pinot Noir complements roasted turkey, and slightly sweet Riesling works beautifully with sweet potato dishes.

A useful rule: avoid wines that are dramatically more tannic, oaky, or sweet than the food. Thanksgiving has many competing flavors, so balance and versatility usually win.

Thanksgiving Pairing Cheat Sheet

Quick matches for the dishes most likely to appear on your holiday table

Charcuterie	Sparkling Wine
Roasted Turkey	Chardonnay or Pinot Noir
Fried Turkey	Unoaked Chardonnay or Rosé
Cranberry Sauce	Pinot Noir or Riesling
Herb-Based Stuffing	Sauvignon Blanc or Albariño
Sausage Stuffing	Pinot Noir, Merlot, or Zinfandel
Green Bean Casserole	Pinot Noir or Pinot Gris
Sweet Potato Casserole	Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, or Riesling
Creamed Spinach	Sauvignon Blanc
Pumpkin Pie	Late-Harvest Orange Muscat, Late-Harvest Chardonnay, or Brut Reserve Sparkling Wine

Wishing you a warm, generous, and delicious Thanksgiving

Alta Sierra WINE SHOP & Tasting Room

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