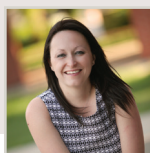


Wine and Chocolate: How to Get the Perfect Pairing



By Angela Zuba, Waters Edge Winery & Bistro - Kalispell

Spoil her with chocolate and wine? Of course — but you'd better know which wine goes with which chocolate!

Chocolate and wine have been spoken and written about for centuries, but it's not as easy as one would think to find the right pairing. Not all chocolate goes with all wine, believe it or not. However, the two primary similarities between wine and chocolate are that they are both aphrodisiacs and antioxidants — great for the libido and to keep you healthy! (Ahem, when consumed in moderation, of course!)

So, let's dive in: What wine should you get? What chocolate?

Contrary to popular belief, dry red wines and dark chocolate do not complement each other. They both have high concentrations of tannins, which is what makes wine "dry" in the mouth and gives dark chocolate a bitter taste. When combined, they will make the wine taste, well, bad — and you don't want to mistake a great wine for a less than stellar one simply because you paired it with the wrong chocolate!

The absolute best chocolate to pair with wine is a truffle. Truffles have a high concentration of fat because of the heavy cream used to make them. And often, they consist of a combination of milk chocolate and dark chocolate, reducing the tannins. This combination helps pull out the fruit flavors and aromas in a red wine.

But you still need to pick out the right style of red. Choose something that is naturally fruit forward and full-bodied. A Zinfandel or Zinfandel blend like the Ruby Crowned Kinglet is an excellent option. Grab a bottle of that and some truffles, and you'll surely have a pairing guaranteed to make her eyes light up!

If she absolutely adores dark chocolate, there is an excellent option, too. Bitter and sweet is the way to go. The heavy sugar concentrations in a sweet wine will offset the bitterness of the chocolate. Look for a sweet white such as a Gewurztraminer, sangria or a dessert wine, such as an ice wine. Then dazzle her with your knowledge of how the ice wine is made! Grapes frozen on the vine before harvest are pressed to release the delicate and rare nectar that creates thick, syrupy ice wine.

Now, if red wine is the way to her heart, then white chocolate is the answer. White chocolate isn't technically chocolate — because it doesn't have cacao in it, the component that holds the bitter tannins. But that's precisely what makes it pair with virtually any red! White chocolate simulates the "fat" composition that enhances fruit flavors that are prevalent in so many reds. To really get the best pairing, grab a bottle of Pinot Noir that is fruit forward or a Carmenere that has spicy notes.

Whatever wine and chocolate you ultimately land on, remember that some occasions call for wine and chocolate just as other occasions call for ... wine and chocolate!

Visit Waters Edge Winery & Bistro Kalispell at #8 – 2593 Highway 2 East for all the wines discussed in this article.

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