# Pairing Wine with the Thanksgiving Feast

When you are hosting a dinner party or holiday meal, decide in advance what wines you would like to serve, selecting ones that will complement your menu. If you are planning a party where everybody contributes a bottle of wine, ask each guest to bring a different wine until all the wine slots are filled. If you have friends who are interested in wine, you might even want to hold an informal wine tasting.

## Basic Guidelines

Dinner Parties: The first consideration for a dinner party is whether to plan the wine around the food or vice versa. In most cases, the menu usually comes first, but if you want to show off a special wine or series of wines, then work forward from the wine.

**Planning the Menu:** In general, move from lighter to heavier foods and wines. Plan the menu course by course or wine by wine and decide which wines will work best with each dish.

How Many Wines: For a simple holiday meal, you might prefer to open only one wine and serve it right through to the dessert. If the wine is to be in the spotlight, however, you could serve a different wine with each course, in which case you will need to consider glassware. If you do not have enough glasses for each course and want to avoid washing them between courses, take a cue from wine professionals: When you are finished with one course and wine, pour a small amount of the next wine into the glass, swirl it briefly, then empty it into a pitcher or dump bucket. This works perfectly well going from white to red wine, but less well going from red to white.

Aperitifs: Before you sit down to dinner, a glass of sparkling wine is always a welcome aperitif. Alternatively, you could serve a white wine, such as Chardonnay, Mosel or a light Alsace wine. A classic aperitif is a well-chilled Fino or Manzanilla sherry. The distinctive flavor of sherry, combined with its delicate aromas, makes it a welcoming drink. It is always a good idea to serve appetizers with the opening drinks. Olives or salted nuts go particularly well with a glass of dry sherry.

**Dessert Wines:** The choice of a dessert wine depends on the meal preceding it. If it has been an extensive and heavy meal, you might want to serve a lighter, less alcoholic wine, such as a sweet Riesling or Muscat. For serving after dinner, the classic digestif is a tawny or vintage port.

Estimating Quantities: For a four-hour party with a few nondrinkers, most caterers recommend one-half to three-fourths of a bottle of wine per person. Of course, your knowledge of your guests may alter this rule of thumb. Most hosts would prefer to have wine left over than to run out before the guests leave. Many wine merchants will let you return unopened bottles.

### Pairing Food and Wine

Pairing the right wine with food creates something greater than the sum of the parts. A complementary wine can enhance and add new dimensions to food, and vice versa. Matching food and wine is a fairly recent concept. In the past, people simply served the local foods with whatever wine was available, especially in wine-producing areas—an evolutionary, though not conscious, pairing. Over the years, the teaming of good food with fine wine has become an art form.

### **Basic Principles**

There are two fundamental ways to approach pairing wine and food: Either match a rich, strongly flavored dish with an equally rich, powerful wine, or set off a strongly flavored, spicy plate of food with a light, acidic wine.

Acidity: The acids in wine and the natural acids in food must be considered when making a match.
Acidity in a wine is very helpful in food pairings. An acidic wine, such as Sauvignon Blanc, is useful in balancing a rich or spicy chili-based dish.

Age/Maturity: An older wine may be overwhelmed by strong flavors. Let the complex flavors of the wine shine on their own against a simpler dish—for example, a grilled steak with an aged Bordeaux

**Body:** Keep the body, or weight, of the wine in mind. A heavy, full-bodied wine will match well with a rich dish, such as beef bourguignonne.

**Oak:** A young wine that still tastes of oak tannins tends to obscure subtle foods. That is one reason why young, oaky Chardonnay is often best served as an aperitif with a salty snack. Subtle oakiness is not a problem.

Sweetness: A sweet wine is best matched with a high-acid food, such as a blue cheese. Sweet foods tend to distort wine flavors and make dry wines taste flat and insipid.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Guides, *The Wine Guide* (Time-Life Books, 1999).

Fill a large saucepan two-thirds full of water and bring to a boil over high heat. Fill a large bowl two-thirds full of ice water. Add 1 Tbs. salt to the boiling water along with the green beans and cook until bright green and still very crisp, about 2 minutes. Using tongs or a slotted spoon, immediately transfer the beans to the ice water. Let cool for 2 minutes, then drain the beans thoroughly and blot dry with paper towels. Set aside.

In a 12-inch fry pan over medium-high heat, melt the remaining 3 Tbs. butter and swirl to coat the pan. Add the green beans and sauté, stirring constantly, until the beans are heated through and crisp-tender, about 3 minutes. Add the lemon juice and almonds and sauté for 1 minute more. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer to a warmed serving bowl. Sprinkle with the panko topping and serve immediately. Serves 6 to 8.

Do ahead: This sauté is best when made right before serving. However, the green beans can be blanched up to 1 day in advance. Spread the cooled beans on dry paper towels or a clean cotton towel, roll up jelly-roll style and place in a sealed plastic bag. Remove from the refrigerator 2 hours before sautéing. The panko topping and toasted almonds can be prepared up to 1 day in advance. Cover and store in separate airtight containers at room temperature.

Adapted from The New Thanksgiving Table, by Diane Morgan (Chronicle Books, 2008).

# Classic Pumpkin Pie

To add a fanciful finish to this pumpkin pie, use decorative cutters to create autumnal shapes from rolled-out pie dough. If desired, use the tip of a paring knife to create details on the cutouts, such as veins on the leaves. Then bake the cutouts and place them on the baked and cooled pie. When preparing this pie, be sure to use a deepdish pie dish.

Preheat an oven to 375°F.

In a bowl, whisk together the brown sugar, cornstarch, salt, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and cloves. Add the pumpkin, eggs, cream and milk and whisk to combine.

Pour the filling into the prebaked piecrust and bake until the center is set, 60 to 65 minutes, covering the edges of the crust with aluminum foil after 30 minutes if they brown too quickly.

Transfer the pie to a wire rack and let cool completely, at least 2 hours, before serving. Serves 10.

Tip: To prebake the piecrust, position a rack in the lower third of an oven. Place a cookie sheet on the rack. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Fit the pie dough into the pie dish, line the piecrust with parchment paper or aluminum foil and fill with pie weights. Place the pie dish on the preheated cookie sheet and bake for 15 minutes. Remove the parchment and weights and bake until the crust is light golden brown, about 5 minutes more. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool completely, about 30 minutes.

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# Turkey Roasting Basics (cont.)

- To ensure the most consistent results when roasting the turkey, insert a leave-in thermometer into the thickest part of the breast or thigh, away from the bone. The turkey is done when the breast registers 165°F and thigh, 175°F. This tool lets you know exactly when the turkey has reached the desired temperature without consistently having to pierce the flesh with an instant-read thermometer, losing juices in the process.
- Before carving the roasted turkey, let it rest for 20 to 30 minutes. This allows time for some of the juices to be absorbed back into the meat, making it more moist and easier to carve. You can loosely cover the bird with aluminum foil, but be sure that steam can escape or the skin will lose its crispness.

### Ingredients for Classic Pumpkin Pie

11/4 cups firmly packed dark brown sugar

1 Tbs. cornstarch

½ tsp. salt

1½ tsp. ground cinnamon

½ tsp. ground ginger

½ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg

1/8 tsp. ground cloves

2 cups pumpkin puree

3 eggs

1 cup heavy cream

⅓ cup milk

Prebaked and cooled deep-dish piecrust

# The Foolproof Potluck

You have a vision: an enjoyable evening filled with your closest friends and family, delicious food and lively conversation. You even know what you want to serve—a juicy turkey, traditional side dishes and, for a sweet finish, a classic pumpkin pie. The only problem is that you don't want to spend days laboring in the kitchen.

Think potluck, instead. You can still prepare the main course, but ask your guests to bring the appetizers, salad, side dishes and dessert. Don't hesitate to give them specific recipes either. They'll be glad to receive your guidance. Remember, though, to match the talent of the cook to the difficulty of the dish. If you're inviting friends who can't or don't like to cook, ask them to provide a loaf of bread or a bottle of wine that will complement the roast turkey.

Once everyone arrives, it's entertaining in a snap. Put the finishing touches on the dishes, set up the buffet and relax in the company of your friends and family.

### Turkey Roasting Basics

One of the oldest and simplest forms of cooking, roasting is a technique that involves cooking food in an uncovered pan in the dry heat of an oven. One of the most appealing qualities of roasted foods is the beautiful and delicious brown crusts that develop in the oven. This irresistible counterpoint of caramelized crust and tender interior makes roasting a favorite cooking method for turkey. These tips will help you roast a turkey to perfection:

 Bring the turkey as close as possible to room temperature. Remove it from the refrigerator 1 hour before roasting, but no longer—the maximum time allowed for food safety.

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### WILLIAMS-SONOMA

# Technique Class: Back to Basics—A Classic Thanksgiving

# Selecting the Turkey

Fresh turkeys are easy to find during the holidays and taste immeasurably better than frozen ones, which will have drier meat. If possible, choose a fresh bird that was raised free range and fed organic grain. These turkeys have more flavor than those raised on factory farms and can be ordered from specialty butchers or natural-foods stores. Avoid self-basting turkeys, which are injected with a yellow, fatty substance to keep them moist. If you choose a free-range, organic turkey, be sure to follow the turkey packer's tips on roasting, which usually accompany the bird. These turkeys may require different roasting techniques than ordinary supermarket varieties.

### What Size Turkey to Buy

For the best results, buy a turkey that weighs more than 10 lb. If you want a smaller bird, a turkey breast is a better choice. To ensure ample servings for Thanksgiving dinner as well as generous leftovers, allow for 1 to 1½ lb. of turkey per person.

### Storing the Turkey

Plan to pick up a fresh turkey the day before you will be roasting it and store the bird in its original wrapping in the coldest part of the refrigerator. Frozen turkeys should also be kept in the refrigerator as they thaw to keep bacteria from multiplying. Allow 24 hours for every 4 lb. of turkey. Depending on your refrigerator temperature, a 12-lb. bird should thaw in 3 days. Thawed turkey should be cooked within 2 days and should not be refrozen, or the texture of the meat will suffer.

# About Brining

A traditional method of preserving foods before the days of refrigeration, brining is a cooking technique that is regaining popularity. Chefs and home cooks alike are discovering that a good brine bath adds flavor and juiciness to the classic roasted turkey. It has become one of the most popular choices of preparing the turkey before roasting.

A brine penetrates into food much more deeply than a marinade. Water from the brine enters each meat cell, making the meat juicier while infusing it with flavor. Brining helps keep the meat juicy without giving it a salty taste—you'll never have to worry about serving a dried-out holiday bird again.

### Ingredients for Brined Roast Turkey

- 1 jar (1 lb. 2.2 oz.) turkey brine apple and spices
- 1 fresh turkey. 16 to 18 lb., neck. heart and gizzard removed (reserved,
- 8 Tbs. (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 Tbs. finely minced fresh thyme
- 1 Tbs. finely minced fresh flat-leaf parsley
- ½ tsp. freshly ground pepper

### Ingredients for Classic Mashed Potatoes

- 5 lb. russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 2 tsp. salt, plus more, to taste
- 8 Tbs. (1 stick) unsalted butter. cut into small pieces
- 11/4 cups half-and-half, heated
- Freshly ground white pepper, to taste

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### Brined Roast Turkey

Our turkey brine combines aromatic spices and sweet apples with tangy citrus zest

Prepare the turkey brine and brine the turkey according to the package instructions. Remove the turkey from the brine; discard the brine. Rinse the turkey inside and out with cold water and pat dry with paper towels. Trim off and discard the excess fat. Let the turkey stand at room temperature for 1 hour.

Position a rack in the lower third of an oven and preheat to 400°F.

In a small bowl, stir together the butter, thyme and parsley until well blended. Gently slide your fingers under the breast to loosen the skin and work your fingers down to the thigh, being careful not to tear the skin. Spread half of the butter mixture evenly under the skin, then spread the remaining butter evenly on the outside of the turkey. Sprinkle with the pepper. Truss the turkey as desired using kitchen twine.

Place the turkey, breast side up, on a rack in a large roasting pan and roast for 30 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 325°F and continue roasting, basting every 30 minutes with the pan juices. If the breast begins to cook too quickly, tent it loosely with aluminum foil. After about 2 hours of total roasting time, begin testing for doneness by inserting an instant-read thermometer into the thickest part of the breast and thigh, away from the bone. The breast should register 165°F and the thigh, 175°F. Total roasting time should be 3 to 3½ hours.

Transfer the turkey to a carving board, cover loosely with foil and let rest for 20 to 30 minutes before carving. If desired, reserve the pan drippings for making gravy. Serves 12 to 14.

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### Classic Mashed Potatoes

Put the potatoes and the 2 tsp. salt in a large pot, add water to cover the potatoes by 3 inches and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium-low and gently cook the potatoes until they are tender when pierced with a fork, 15 to 20 minutes. Drain well in a colander.

Set a potato ricer or a food mill over the pot and pass the potatoes through in batches. Alternatively, return the potatoes to the pot and mash them with a potato masher. Add the butter and gradually add the half-and-half, beating constantly with a large spoon, until the potatoes are smooth and creamy. Season with salt and white pepper and transfer to a warmed serving dish. Serve immediately. Serves 8 to 10.

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# Pan Gravy

This gravy recipe includes a quick version of turkey stock, although in its place you can use 7 cups of high-quality, reduced-sodium chicken stock (available in *specialty-food stores).* 

To make the turkey stock, in a stockpot over medium-high heat, warm the oil. Add the drumettes and brown well, turning once or twice, about 15 minutes. Stir in the onions, carrots, celery, parsley, thyme and bay leaves. Reduce the heat to low, cover and cook for about 15 minutes, occasionally scraping the browned bits from the bottom of the pot. Add the broth, sherry, salt and pepper and bring to a simmer. Cover partially and cook for 35 minutes. Strain the stock through a fine-mesh sieve set over a large bowl. If using the stock immediately, spoon off the visible fat or pour through a fat separator. Otherwise, let the stock cool for 30 minutes, then cover and refrigerate for up to overnight. Using a large spoon, remove the solid fat from the top and discard. (You will have about 7 cups turkey stock; it can be refrigerated for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 3 months.)

To make the gravy, after roasting the turkey, pour the drippings from the roasting pan into a fat separator and let stand for a few minutes until the fat rises to the top. Pour the pan juices into a large glass measuring cup; reserve the fat in the separator. Add enough turkey stock to the juices in the measuring cup to equal 7 cups. Reserve the extra stock for another use.

Place the roasting pan on 2 burners over medium heat. Measure out ½ cup of the reserved fat and add it to the pan, adding melted butter as needed to make up the difference. Sprinkle in the flour, whisk well and cook, whisking, until the raw flour smell is gone, about 2 minutes. Increase the heat to medium-high, add the stock mixture and bring to a boil, stirring to scrape up the browned bits. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, whisking often, until the gravy has thickened, about 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, pour into a warmed sauceboat and serve the gravy alongside the turkey. Serves 12 to 15.

Note: Some cooks find the drippings from a brined turkey to be too salty for making gravy. If so, you can follow this basic recipe but discard the pan drippings and fat; instead, begin deglazing the pan with the turkey stock.

Adapted from Thanksgiving—Recipes for a Holiday Meal, by Lou Seibert Pappas (Weldon Owen, Inc., 2007).

# Green Beans with Lemon-Butter Bread Crumbs & Toasted Almonds

In a small fry pan over medium heat, melt 2 Tbs. of the butter. Add the panko and toast, stirring constantly, until golden brown and crisp, about 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the lemon zest, lemon-herb seasoning and a pinch of salt. Set aside.

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### Ingredients for Pan Gravy

- 3 Tbs. canola oil or peanut oil
- 2 turkey wing drumettes
- 3 cups chopped yellow onions

Notes

- 2 cups chopped carrots
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 bunch fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 2 fresh thyme sprigs
- 2 bay leaves
- 8 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 3/4 cup dry sherry
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Melted unsalted butter as needed

⅓ cup all-purpose flour

### Ingredients for Green Beans with Lemon-Butter Bread Crumbs & Toasted Almonds

- 5 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 3/4 cup panko or other plain dried bread crumbs

Zest of 1 lemon

½ tsp. Williams-Sonoma lemon-herb seasoning (optional)

Kosher or sea salt, to taste

- 1½ lb. green beans, stem ends trimmed
- 1½ Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- ½ cup slivered almonds, toasted

Freshly ground pepper, to taste

# Thanksgiving Wine Guide

TYPE OF FOOD	WINE MATCH	WILLIAMS-SONOMA Wine Club RECOMMENDATION
Turkey	Crisp whites or spicy, medium bodied reds Sauvignon Blanc, Zinfandel, Syrah, Pinot Noir	2008 Á Côté La Fenêtre Pinot Noir
Ham or other smoked foods	Fruity, medium-bodied white or red wines Riesling, Gewürztraminer, Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir	2008 Betts & Scholl Riesling 2009 Martinborough Vineyard Pinot Noir, Russian Jack
Roasted red meats	Full-bodied reds Cabernet Sauvignon	2006 Vinoce Cabernet Sauvignon, Solar Hill Vineyard
Rich foods such as creamed soups	Full-bodied white or red wines Chardonnay, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah	2008 Twenty Rows Chardonnay, Napa Valley, Lone Acre Vineyard
Acidic foods such as salads	High-acid white or red wines Sauvignon Blanc, Zinfandel, Chianti	2008 Stephen Test Sauvignon Blanc, O'Neel Ranch 2006 Robert Craig Zinfandel
Desserts	Sweet wines that taste as sweet as the dish Sauternes, Vin Santo, Muscat	

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Thanksgiving Entertaining, by Lou Seibert Pappas (Free Press, 2005).

# WILLIAMS-SONOMA Wine Club

Enjoy the benefits of the Williams-Sonoma Wine Club—it's an easy way to order wine for your holiday entertaining and also makes the perfect holiday gift.

We brought together five of America's most distinguished sommeliers and chefs as the Wine Club's Advisory Board. Drawing from a wealth of experience, they guide us as we seek out the finest varietals from the world's most celebrated wine regions.

- Each collection features six hand-selected wines, many from vintages of fewer than 500 cases.
- You choose how often you wish to receive wine—once a month, every other month or every three months.
- Each collection includes a booklet with sommelier tasting notes plus Williams-Sonoma recipes selected to complement each wine.
- Enjoy a members-only discount of 10% on cases of 6 or 12 bottles of any wine.
- If any wine does not meet your expectations, we will replace it.
- There is no membership fee or commitment.