

From its pretty pink hue to its refreshing taste on a warm summer day, rosé has become the “it” wine over the last several years, and it shows no signs of fading.

But despite being a social media star and attractive backyard party drink, many people still don't know what rosé is, or where it comes from. There are also some common misconceptions about this blush-colored wine — namely, that it's too sweet (fact: rosé can be dry, too) or a new type of wine (truth: it's been around a lot longer than you probably realize).

Join us as we share the full story of this popular pink drink and everything you need to know before taking your next sip.

What Is Rosé Wine?

Rosé is not a specific type of grape — it's simply a genre of wine, like reds and whites. While it's produced similarly to other red wines, the time it ferments with grape skins is cut shorter. This reduced skin contact is what gives rosé its signature pink color.

Rosé can be made from any red grape and cultivated in any wine region. Although it has become a recent favorite in the United States, it has been a mainstay in France for centuries, with the region of Provence pumping out more rosé than any other style of wine. It's also quite popular in Spain (where it's called rosado) and Italy (rosato).

This rosy wine is usually a blend, meaning it can be made from a variety of grapes. The most common types of red wine grapes used to make rosé are grenache, sangiovese, syrah, mourvèdre, carignan, cinsault, and pinot noir. In some cases, it can be a single varietal made with one type of grape. In California, rosés are known to be single varietal and made with 100% pinot noir grapes.

How Is Rosé Wine Made?

As we briefly touched on before, rosé gets its pink color by skin contact. When grapes are crushed, the juice that comes out of the fruit is clear, and it's the grape's skin that gives the wine its hue.

When the juice and grape skins marry, the color of the grape skins bleeds into the juice, creating the wine's color. In winemaking, this process is called maceration.

For rosé, winemakers only macerate for a few hours, up to a day. Once the juice has turned the desired color, the skins are removed and the juice is fermented.

You may notice that rosés come in different shades of pink, which is due to the varying maceration methods. Many people believe that all rosé is created by mixing red wine with white, but while this style of rosé exists, it's uncommon.

What Does Rosé Taste Like?

Rosé's flavor profile is fresh and fruity. Think a light red, like grenache, with some extra brightness and crispness.

Expect the following flavors when you take a sip:

Red fruits like strawberries, cherries, and raspberries

Flowers

Citrus

Melon

Celery

Each type of rosé will taste slightly different based on the type of grapes used to produce it, ranging from savory to dry to sweet.

How to Choose Between Sweet and Dry Rosé Wines

Rosés can be sweet or dry, but most lean towards dry. Old World (Europe) rosés are typically very dry. Rosés produced in the New World (not Europe) are usually sweeter and fruitier. Aside from grape type, climate and production methods contribute to these differences.

Some of the most common types of sweet rosé wines include:

White Zinfandel

White merlot

Pink Moscato

Dry rosés are often made from these grape varieties:

Grenache

Sangiovese

Syrah

Mourvèdre

Carignan

Cinsault

Pinot Noir

Perfect Pairings: Food and Rosé

Rosé is a winner when it comes to food pairings. Best known for its al fresco-friendly sipping style, this blush wine pairs well with almost everything, including spicy foods, sushi, salads, barbecued meats, roasts, and rich sauces. (For more ideas, check out how to pair wine like a pro.)

Light, dry rosés made from grenache or cinsault grapes from Provence, Burgundy, and the Loire Valley go best with salads, pasta, rice dishes, grilled fish, and seafood.

Medium-dry rosés, like pinot noir, pair well with all of the above or with light, fruity desserts.

Medium-bodied rosés (Southern France and Spain) make bold flavors pop. Pair these with dishes that incorporate the flavors of anchovies, olives, garlic, and saffron. Think paella, grilled chicken, lamb with herbs, or even charcuterie.

Fruity rosés from California, Australia, or Chile can be served with a variety of foods, including spicy curries, barbecue, seared salmon and tuna, or soft cheeses like brie. Try them with ripe peaches, too.

Sparkling rosés are the ultimate party drink and are delicious with desserts and fruit tarts, while rosé Champagne drinks well with grilled lobster, rare lamb chops, or game.

Serving Rosé at the Right Temp

What is rose wine: Bucket of Usual Wines rose wine at a picnic

When it comes to wine temperature, there are some basic rules to follow. After all, the right temperature can bring out the best qualities of a wine and enhance its taste.

For rosé, most sommeliers agree that serving it somewhere between 40-50 degrees is best. That means putting your rosé bottles in the fridge (or an ice bucket) and keeping them there for a few hours to get them ripe for the drinking.

Glassware for Rosé Wine

Rosé is a go-to for fun, casual moments, whether you're having a picnic, celebrating on the rooftop, or chilling on the patio with friends.

Some experts recommended serving rosé in smaller types of wine glasses, usually tulip-shaped Champagne glasses, as a way to maintain a cooler temperature and preserve the fruity flavors. (There are even rosé-specific wine glasses.) But glassware is not always necessary.

Case in point: Usual Wines rosé is perfectly portioned in specially-designed glass bottles that open up the possibilities to enjoy a sip wherever and whenever you want.

To Decant or Not to Decant

Decanting wine exposes oxygen to the wine, bringing out its flavors. Although pouring wine into a decanter before enjoying is usually good practice, it's not necessary with rosé. Use your personal preference here.

Add Rosé to Your Repertoire

What is rose wine: Lovely picnic with Usual Wines bottles of rose

It's not hard to see why rosé is so popular — this pink wine isn't just a light, refreshing, and fruity summer staple, but it's also the perfect choice for year-round sipping.

Although it's been around for centuries, this blush-colored favorite is having a moment that has much to do with its eye-catching hue as it does its versatility and taste.

Contrary to popular belief, rosé isn't just a sweet wine. Depending on which type of red grapes are used, it can be on the fruity or dry side. As for food pairing, rosé holds up to savory, rich dishes as well as light and fruity flavors. Whether you enjoy it dry or sweet, paired with food or sipped solo, there's one thing that most of us can agree on: a chilled rosé is sheer bliss in a bottle.