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Discovering France's Beloved Wine & Cheese Pairings

With 27,000 wineries and 1,600 different cheeses, including 40 *Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée*, or **AOC** cheeses (a French food-labeling term that protects the style, ingredients, and origin of a product), France has unlimited wine and cheese pairing options.

Here is a tailored selection of unique French cheeses made from cow, goat and sheep's milk. For a comprehensive tasting, we recommend at least one cheese made from sheep's milk, one cheese made from goat's milk and one of each of a soft, semi-hard and hard cheese made from cow's milk.

We can't wait to pair and discuss some of these impeccable French wines & cheeses with you!

Fromages (by Region):

Normandie:

- **Brie de Meaux** (soft / cow) - mild cheese with velvety, sweet and buttery texture and nutty notes. It has a delicate rind covered in white mold and the best time to eat it is when the cheese is ripe, soft, with an interior color of straw.
- **Camembert** (soft / cow) - ripened as a small round cheese, it is often compared to Brie, but its ratio between rind and paste makes camembert stronger and softer with more sour and earthy mushroom notes.
- **Pont L'Evêque** (soft / cow) - produced in the deep roots of Calvados and square in shape, with a soft, smooth and pale yellow central *pâte* and a pungent aroma. It is surrounded by an edible washed rind that contributes to its full-bodied flavor.

Aveyron:

- **Roquefort** (semi-hard blue / sheep) - classic blue mold cheese easily recognized by its blue veins stretching across a moist and crumbly body. Made in Aveyron, south of France, under strict rules, the Lacaune sheep's milk gives the cheese its sharp, tangy and aromatic scent and flavor.

Savoie:

- **Reblochon** (soft / cow) - soft washed-rind cheese with a saffron yellow crust and a slight scent of cellar produced in the Alpine region of Haute-Savoie. It has an intense nutty aftertaste that lingers on the palate and is an essential ingredient in Savoyarde cuisine.
- **Tomme** (semi-hard / cow) - made in the Rhône-Alpes region of Savoie, Tomme is a mild cheese with a beige interior and a thick brownish-grey rind. Produced year-round, Tomme has earthy and straw notes on top, but has a slightly different character and aroma - either vegetal or dried fruit- depending on whether the cows are fed winter hay or summer grass.

Franche-Comté:

- **Beaufort** (hard / cow) - associated with the gruyère family, Beaufort is an Alpine cheese from the Savoie region that is pale yellow, with a smooth and creamy texture that lacks holes. Aged on shelves lined with spruce, it has a very distinct pungent aroma reminiscent of the pastures on which the cows graze.
- **Comté** (hard / cow) - made in the Massif du Jura, Comté has a pale creamy yellow pâte and a dusty-brown rind. The taste is mild, slightly sweet with fruity tones and aromas of roasted hazelnuts and caramelized butter. It is the most produced French AOC cheese.

Loire:

- **Crottin de Chavignol** (semi-hard / goat) - the most famous goat cheese in the Vallée de la Loire. Crottin de Chavignol has a white or ivory paste covered with a thin, natural and flowery rind. Its texture is firm and compact and its nutty flavor is subtle but becomes stronger as it matures.

Auvergne:

- **Fourme d'Ambert** (*semi-hard blue / cow*) - *this blue cheese is produced in Auvergne in the mountains of Puy-de-Dôme. The richness and biodiversity of the land give this cheese its subtle and delicate perfume. Creamy with a light blue veining, it is the sweetest of blue cheeses.*

Dordogne:

- **Trappe d'Echourgnac** (*semi-hard / cow*) - *Trappist nuns produce and ripen this artisanal cheese in l'Abbaye d'Echourgnac, in Périgord. It is not an AOC but has its own strict rules and methods of production. The interior paste is pale straw in color while the exterior rind is a dark, rich brown, a result of a walnut-liqueur wash. Flavors are mild yet full and rich with smoky bacon notes and a distinctive aroma of walnuts.*
- **Rocamadour** (*semi-hard / goat*) - *made in the Périgord region, it has the shape of a small disc that appears white to ivory cream and its striated skin has a slightly velvety appearance. Fondant and creamy, it releases subtle tastes of nutty butter with a slight goat scent.*

The following is a selection of classic white and red wines listed by region that will pair well with the different cheeses you might select. When selecting your wine, look for the term, “*Mis en bouteille au Chateau*” (or “*au domaine*”), which means that the wine is bottled by the producing estate and therefore respects the strict rules imposed by its producer. In the same vein, avoid wines with the term, “*Mis en bouteille par...*”, which means that it was bottled by another party.

Vins Rouges:

Bourgogne (*Pinot Noir*) – This is the original pinot noir grape. Try wines from the heart of Burgundy: the Côte-d'Or department, such as Beaune and its surrounding communes - Pommard, Nuits-Saint-Georges, Aloxé Corton, Vosne-Romanée, Gevrey-Chambertin, etc.,

Pair with soft cow cheese; soft goat cheese

Beaujolais (*Gamay*) – Not to be confused with Beaujolais Nouveau, this small territory located in the south of Burgundy has its own identity. Moulin-à-Vent and Brouilly are Parisians' favorite bistro wine!

Pair with hard or soft cow's milk cheese; semi-hard goat cheese

Bordeaux (*Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc*) – Blends vary, but all are unique depending on where they grow. If you like cabernet sauvignon and merlot, choose a Saint-Julien, a Saint-Estèphe or a Margaux from the left bank of Gironde. If you like merlot and cabernet franc, try a Saint-Emilion or Pomerol from the Eastern side of Bordeaux.

Pair with hard cow's milk cheese.

Rhône (*Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre*) – Châteauneuf-du-Pape is one of the most renowned appellations of the southern part in the Rhône Valley. Its signature blend contains 13 different grapes!

Pair with blue cheese (sheep or cow) and Gouda

Vins Blancs:

Loire Valley (*Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc*) – Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé (Pouilly-sur-Loire) are located in the center of France and both well-regarded for their sauvignon blanc.

Pair with goat cheese

Alsace (*Gewürztraminer, Riesling*) – After Riesling, Gewürztraminer is the second most planted variety in the region. It is an aromatic grape typically recognized for its exotic fruit notes.

Pair with blue cheese (sheep or cow)

Bourgogne (*Chardonnay*) – Try any of the original Chardonnay from these three distinct Burgundy areas: Chablis (north), Meursault (center), or Mâcon-Villages (south)

Pair with soft and hard cow's milk and goat cheese

Bordeaux (*Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Muscadelle*) – made from the region's rare white grapes, Sauternes and Barsac represent the sweet side of Bordeaux and are also the most complicated wine to produce.

Pair with blue cheese (sheep or cow)

Savoie (*Jacquère, Roussette*) – Apremont or Roussette are low in alcohol and rich in natural carbon dioxide, ideally suited to mountain gastronomy – think *fondue!*

Pair with soft and hard cow's milk and fresh goat cheese