



# SPICE UP YOUR COOKING WITH WINE

*Think of wine as a great ingredient you can use for cooking! Unlike salt, wine is a flavour enhancer that you don't have to avoid*

Here are some tips on the use of wine in cooking. Let's start with the basics! Be careful with the amount of wine you use - too little adds nothing to the flavour, while too much may be overpowering.

### **It's not the alcohol content that creates the magic**

Reducing the wine by heating concentrates its flavours. And the flavour that wine adds to cooking is derived from the grapes, not the alcohol.

Because alcohol has a lower boiling point than water, most of it evaporates before other cooking liquids, and very little is left in the completed dish. Even people who must abstain from drinking wine can use it for cooking... but if you want to avoid all alcohol, you can find a variety of interesting non-alcoholic wines at many food stores.

A study conducted by the US Department of Agriculture's Nutrient Data Laboratory calculated the percentage of alcohol remaining in a dish based on various cooking methods. For example, when wine is added to a dish and left to simmer for 30 minutes, 35% of the original volume of alcohol would be retained in the final dish.

While the numbers in the chart may seem high the actual amount of alcohol in the completed dish is really very low.

### **Preparation Method**

### **Percent of Alcohol Retained**

Alcohol added to boiling liquid and removed from heat	<b>85%</b>
Alcohol flamed	<b>75%</b>
No heat, stored overnight	<b>70%</b>
Baked, 25 minutes, alcohol not stirred into mixture	<b>45%</b>
Baked/simmered, alcohol stirred into mixture:	
• 15 minutes	<b>40%</b>
• 30 minutes	<b>35%</b>
• 1 hour	<b>25%</b>
• 1.5 hours	<b>20%</b>
• 2 hours	<b>10%</b>
• 2.5 hours	<b>5%</b>

### **Cook with wines you enjoy**

Start with a good quality, dry red or white wine that you enjoy drinking. Don't use wines that are heavily oaked (flavoured with oak chips) as they tend to impart a bitter flavour. Avoid cooking with wines that are extremely fruity or sour, as these flavours will only become more pronounced during cooking.

Avoid the so-called "cooking wines" you may find on supermarket shelves. These are wines of poor

quality which often have salt and sometimes other ingredients added to them. Sherry, port and vermouth are fortified wines with a higher percentage of alcohol and very intense flavours, so take care when using them for cooking.

*The term “COOKING WINE” originated in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Salt was added to wine in the kitchens of aristocratic households to deter servants from drinking it.*

Unless you want to experiment and explore new combinations, stick with the “tried and true” advice of using white wine for fish, chicken and pork and red wine for red meats. The wine you use to prepare the meal is not necessarily the wine you have to serve with the food. Don't overlook Canadian wines. Many of them are reasonably priced and are becoming more and more popular. Your local wine seller will be happy to advise you on the best choices.

*Wine is transformed into vinegar through the oxidation of ethanol that is present in the wine. This occurs when the bottle has been left uncorked for an extended period. As a rule, the more wine that is left in the bottle, the longer this process will take. You can transfer unused wine into a smaller bottle, cork it, and keep it in the fridge to prevent this from happening.*

### **Wine can be used in many ways**

You can use wine to marinate, deglaze, or to add the finishing touch to almost any dish.

The acidic nature of wine gives it its crispness and vitality. When wine is used in a **marinade** this acid helps to tenderize the meat and reduce cooking times. Marinades can also be used as a base for many sauces.

Wine is most often used to **deglaze** a pot or pan in which the meat course has been cooked. Adding wine to the hot pan dissolves the tasty residues that remain. The result is a rich, brown, and very tasty sauce.

*For best results, wine should not be added to a dish just before serving. The wine should simmer with the food, or sauce, to enhance the flavour of the dish.*

### **Take your time**

When wine is heated, it reduces and enhances the flavour of the food to which it is added. If the wine is introduced late in the preparation process, flavours may be hindered instead of improved. Remember that wine needs time to do its magic. It's a good idea to wait at least 10 minutes to taste your creation after adding wine. You can always use more if it's needed.

### **Wine for the final touch of taste**

Wine, especially fortified wines like sherry, port and vermouth, can be used when finishing a sauce to add that final touch of rich flavour. When a recipe calls for water, you can almost always use wine instead. Wine can also be used to baste meat by combining it with oil and other flavourful ingredients. Wine is very versatile and is a great way of adding zest to your renal diet. To get started, try the recipes on pages 6 and 10 in this issue. Explore and enjoy!

## **How to deglaze**

1. Remove the meat from the pan and pour off the excess fat.
2. Add wine to the heated pan and stir to release the flavourful browned food particles stuck to the bottom. Continue to heat until the liquid is reduced by half. Add broth or water as required to produce the amount of sauce desired.
3. Add herbs and spices, thicken if necessary, and your sauce is ready to serve!

#### **Note:**

*Lemon juice or water may be used instead of wine.*