

# Rioja Wine Classification & Food Pairing Guide

STYLE	WINE EXAMPLES	AROMAS & FLAVORS	FOOD PAIRING IDEAS
<p><b>Stainless-Steel Fermented Rioja Blanco</b> A light, crisp, modern-style fermented in stainless steel and released after a few months of bottle aging. Extraordinary value and consistency. Made primarily with the native Viura grape, occasionally supplemented by Malvasia and Garnacha Blanca.</p>	<p>El Coto Blanco CUNE Monopole Cortijo Blanco Dinastia Vivanco Blanco Bodegas Riojanas Puerta Vieja Blanco</p>	<p>Clean and citrusy with aromas of fresh stone fruit (peach, apricot), ripe pears and green apples.</p>	<p>Grilled chicken salad with Arugula and lemon pepper dressing; roasted beets and goat cheese salad; shrimp cocktail</p> <p>Enjoy as a super-quaffable pre-meal aperitif on its own or with a splash of crème de cassis to make a light and lovely kir.</p>
<p><b>Barrel-Fermented Rioja Blanco</b> Modern oak-aged white Riojas are fermented and/or aged in 225-liter French oak barriques, and often kept on their lees resulting in a tropical fruity richness and Champagne-like yeasty complexity.</p> <p>Classic white Rioja is fermented in enormous seasoned American oak cubos, with up to 10 years in bottle before release.</p>	<p><i>Modern:</i> Bodegas Muga Blanco Conde Valdemar Blanco Bodegas Ontañon "Vetiver" Marqués de Murrieta "Capellania" Bodegas Perica "Olagosa"</p> <p><i>Classic:</i> López de Heredia Viña Tondonia Blanco Gran Reserva</p>	<p><i>Modern:</i> Aromas of vanilla, coconut, butter, tropical fruit, and honey. A rich, sometimes creamy mouthfeel, pineapple-like acidity and a dry finish.</p> <p><i>Classic:</i> Heady and seductive aromas of honey, almonds, coconut, pineapple, and an almost petrol-like minerality.</p>	<p><i>Modern:</i> A great Chardonnay substitute. Try with richer fish (salmon, tuna), shellfish and stronger flavors like garlic (think codfish with garlic and clams), dishes with fruit (mango salsa, couscous with blond raisins and stewed chicken—think North African), and of course, dessert.</p> <p><i>Classic:</i> Great with mushrooms, asparagus, lobster, grilled white fish (turbot, Dover sole, halibut). The aged-whites of Rioja are some of the most food-compatible wines in the world.</p>
<p><b>Rioja Rosado (Rosé)</b> Usually unoaked and frequently made with Garnacha and Tempranillo (or a blend), Rioja Rosados have a barely perceptible touch of textural astringency (the result of minimal grape skin contact) and good acidity, making them surprisingly versatile food wines.</p>	<p>Marqués de Riscal Rosado Marqués de Cáceres Rosado Muga Rosado El Coto Rosado López de Heredia Viña Tondonia Rosado Gran Reserva</p>	<p>Exuberant aromas of red berry fruit—think cherry and strawberry—with a dry finish.</p>	<p>Perfect for quenching your thirst on a hot day (or for conjuring summer on cold days), we like Rioja Rosados with North African vegetable purées, peppered tuna sashimi and with fresh goat cheese. Be sure to look for the most recent vintage. With very few exceptions, Rosado is not meant to age.</p>
<p><b>Rioja Cosecha (Young Red)</b> Exuberant reds with minimal (under 12 months) or no oak aging.</p> <p>Increasingly, producers of ultra modern Rioja are opting out of classic age designations (below) in favor of a generic Rioja seal. Typically sourced from old vineyard sites with highly specific terroir profiles, these wines often see all new French oak and hit the market as early as 3 years after harvest.</p>	<p><i>Cosecha/Young:</i> Viña Zaco Tempranillo Viña Equia Tempranillo Bodegas Beronia Cosecha Bodegas Palacios Remondo "La Montesa"</p> <p><i>Ultra Modern:</i> Telmo Rodriguez Lanzaga Artadi Pagos Viejos</p>	<p>The fruitiest red made in Rioja. Very summery aromas: strawberries and cherries.</p> <p>Highly extracted, with lush mouthfeel, abundant tannins, super-concentrated red or black fruit. Complex aromas of chocolate, baking spices, licorice, tar, fresh tobacco and sweet flowers.</p>	<p>Great as a sipping wine (in other words, what you drink while you're cooking dinner) and a summer barbecue wine, also great for red sangria and marinades. Pair with beef or turkey chili, Chinese food, vegetable curry.</p> <p>Try with a sweet cow's milk blue cheese (Stilton, Fourme d'Ambert), roasted loin of venison with prunes, grilled ribeye steak, cassoulet, beef bourguignon, pasta Bolognese.</p>
<p><b>Rioja Crianza (Red)</b> An easy drinking style, Crianzas tend to emphasize fresh fruit above all else and spend less time in bottle than Reservas. Aged for a minimum of 2 years, one of which must be in oak barrels. Crianza Blancos must be aged in barrel for at least 6 months.</p>	<p>Bodegas LAN Crianza Bodegas Sierra Cantabria Crianza Campo Viejo Crianza Marqués de Cáceres Crianza Calma Crianza</p>	<p>Big aromas of strawberries, cherries with varying degrees of toasty, vanilla flavors and aromas (from the oak) depending on producer and the type of oak. Typically fruity, clean and super quaffable.</p>	<p>Rioja's everyday wine. As an aperitif on its own, but great with spicy food, whole roasted fish and lasagna. Crianza's fruity freshness also makes it a perfect foil for aged sheep's milk cheeses like Manchego, acting almost like a schmear of fruit jam on top of a buttery, slightly piquant cheese.</p>
<p><b>Rioja Reserva (Red)</b> Aged for a minimum of 12 months in oak and at least 24 months in bottle before release, Rioja Reserva is the benchmark Rioja, the age classification on which most bodegas stake their reputations. For whites, the aging period is a minimum of two years, with at least 6 months in cask.</p>	<p><i>Classic:</i> Bodegas Riojanas Monte Real Reserva Bodegas Montecillo Reserva Bodegas Muga Reserva Especial Bodegas Ramón Bilbao Reserva</p> <p><i>Modern:</i> Marqués de Riscal Baron de Chirel Cosme Palacios y Hermanos Reserva Privada Viñedos del Contino Reserva</p>	<p><i>Classic</i> Reservas are aged in American oak barrels, and frequently longer than the DOCa requires. Evolved, earthier aromas with less noticeable fresh fruit but more complexity and finesse.</p> <p><i>Modern</i> Reservas tend to have flavor profiles with chocolate, sweet spices and what the Spanish call sabores balsamicos – fennel, anise, licorice, etc.</p>	<p>A wine to bring to a dinner party or to enjoy at home during a multi-course Sunday meal. Great with shellfish paella, roasted leg of lamb, wild mushroom risotto, lamb tagine, grilled chorizo, barbecued beef brisket, ratatouille and moo-shoo pork.</p>
<p><b>Rioja Gran Reserva (Red)</b> Made only in the best years and aged for a minimum of 5 years (2 in oak and 3 in bottle). Many bodegas choose to age them much longer. Wines of superlative elegance and finesse, ready to drink upon release or cellar. For whites, a min 4 years aging, at least 1 year in cask.</p>	<p>Marqués de Murrieta Castillo de Ygay Gran Reserva Faustino I Gran Reserva Ramón Bilbao Gran Reserva Marqués de Cáceres Gran Reserva Campo Viejo Gran Reserva</p>	<p>A seductive, complex blend of subtle spice and soft fruit: blackberries, dried cherries, and cinnamon overlain with very developed, tertiary flavors that are the hallmark of the Old World style: cigar box, leather, wet earth, mushrooms, truffles, and faded flowers.</p>	<p>A special occasion wine. Excellent with fall and winter stews, sautéed mushrooms, duck confit, chestnut soup and roasted squab or pheasant. This is a wine to linger over and return to over the course of a meal, offering the patient drinker something different with each visit to the glass.</p>