

Wine Advice: Selecting Wine for Large Gatherings



When does a party become a celebration, event or gathering? When 20 people increases to 100 or more? 

Parties are costly and events referred to as “celebrations” or “gatherings”, implying more people, are even more so - the larger the number of attendees the higher the cost.

There are wines suitable for each occasion. If the event is a celebration, for example, a wedding or retirement, you may want to have a toast, if so, sparkling wine is a must. Consideration factors such as will a meal be served? What type of food? What time of day is the event? Who will be in attendance and what are their drinking preferences?

Decisions regarding wine selections should be determined by food pairing possibilities, wine preferences, amount

of wine required and cost. Well executed wine and food pairing elevates an occasion so identify what food(s) you wish to highlight and pair wine accordingly. For the least costly yet good quality wines look to little known areas and grape varieties that are not mainstream. For example, a full-bodied red wine from Portugal made from the grape variety Touriga Nacional, a variety used for the production of port, with traits similar to the ever-popular Cabernet Sauvignon.

Consider time of day, temperature, season and whether the event will be held indoors or outdoors. Outdoor events held during the summer season have notably more white and rosé consumption as do indoor events, however, more red wine is consumed during the cooler seasons of fall and winter. In addition, less wine is consumed during mid-day events as compared to wine consumption during evening celebrations.

When calculating the amount of wine you require give thought to who will be in attendance and what their drinking

preferences are. The elderly generally prefer spirits while young adults have a preference for wine and cocktails. To calculate table wine requirements purchase ½ bottle of wine per person where the calculation for sparkling wine is between 5-8 pours per bottle. Five generous full-glass pours or eight one-half glass pours. Purchase a few extra bottles of each wine as better too much than not enough, that and one must consider the possibility of faulty wine. Unopened wine can be returned as long as the bottle and label are not damaged in any way.



The majority of events feature one red wine and one white wine selection although those held during the warm weather of summer often include a rosé. More white wine and rosé wine are consumed during warm months than when the thermometer drops, although rosé need not be thought of as simply warm-weather wine. It is becoming ever-popular both as a sipping wine and as a fabulous option for pairing with white fish, salmon, Mediterranean foods, Mexican, Indian and Thai cuisine.

If selecting only red wine and white wine the percentage of each is split equally 50% red wine and 50% white wine, If red, white and rosé are served during the warm summer months then 40% red, 40% white and 20% rosé, while for cooler seasons 45% red, 45% white and 10% rosé is ideal. Much less wine is consumed if served rather than “self-serve” or placed on the table. In addition, and of utmost



importance, when wine is served it will be kept at the ideal temperature as the bottle will be placed on ice between servings. Wine shows best when served at the ideal temperature of 16-18 C for red and 9-11 C for white and rosé wines, this is especially so with less costly wines.

Last but certainly not least, prior to finalizing your wine selection, always sample each wine, ideally alongside the foods that will be served.

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