

## Wine Tasting Party Tips

Birthdays, anniversaries, retirements, reunions and "just because". Anytime is a great time to throw a party.

Let's say you're a little too mature for a keg party, but aren't the stuffy cocktail party type. A wine tasting party is the perfect compromise for you and your friends. Wine tasting is a craft that can be learned and enjoyed by everyone, and you don't need to be a true connoisseur to be able to appreciate a delicious white or red. Hosting an informal wine tasting party is a great way to introduce you and your friends to the incredibly expansive world of wines.

The "rules" for hosting a successful wine tasting party are not carved in stone. You can follow what others have done, or you can push the boundaries and do something completely out of the ordinary. Exactly how you will arrange your wine tasting set up is completely up to you, but it is recommended that you have a wide variety of different wines to choose from. One of the best ideas for a successful (and cost-effective) wine tasting party is a sort of "potluck" theme. Ask each guest to bring a bottle of his or her favorite wine. This way, you will be able to offer many different wines to your guests, and you will be able to save some money to spend on extra food and party accessories.

A successful wine tasting party needs great food, and plenty of it. The right foods will enhance the wines, and allow your guests to experience the full flavour and bouquet of each wine sampling. An array of different types of cheese, crackers, fresh fruit and nuts are all good choices. Make sure that you have an equal amount of salty and sweet choices, to accommodate the preferences of both red and white wine drinkers. This is no time to scrimp on quality though; a great wine tasting party will have no trace of processed cheese or bargain-brand crackers. Consult gourmet cooking, wine or entertaining guides or websites for more direction on choosing the right foods to complement your wine tasting party.

If possible, try to act as "wine master" and pour the samplings yourself. As a responsible host, you have an obligation to keep your guests from over-imbibing. Remember, this is a wine tasting, not a drunken free-for-all. Pour "sample size" glasses for tasting, and be on the lookout for guests who have reached their limits. Offer coffee, soft drinks, water and other alcohol-free beverages in addition to your selection of wines, and never allow a guest to drink and drive.

There are wonderful wines available from all corners of the world. California, Ontario, British Columbia, Australia, Chile, and of course Italy and France are all famous for the wines they produce. Treat your guests # and yourself # to a wine tasting party, and discover a world of great taste!