

# The Best Wine for Thanksgiving

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When it comes to what to pour for Thanksgiving, my advice these days is simple: Forget pairing. Forget wondering what wine goes with turkey. (Seriously, turkey literally goes with every single wine on the planet.) Forget “My stuffing has rutabagas in it, so will a Vermentino from Italy work?” (Because, stuffing with rutabagas? What peculiar planet are you from?) No, there’s simply one thing to consider regarding wine and Thanksgiving, which is that you are going to eat way too much of everything and spend most of the rest of the day cheerfully bludgeoned into a food coma.



Frederick Hardy II / Food Styling by Emily Nabors Hall / Prop Styling by Risha Carnes

So, given that, why on earth would you drink big, rich, heavy wines? The 15.5% alcohol Napa Cabernets and the oaky, buttery Chardonnays? Too much muchness, I say. Instead, my suggestion is to go light. Crisp, bright, moderate-in-alcohol wines that traipse with shimmering elfin transparency across your palate, not the ones that run your taste buds over like a fullback in the NFL game you’re probably going to fall asleep in front of. Think cool climate, think minimal oak, think modest alcohol, think vibrant flavors, and who knows? This turkey day, you may even make it to evening fully aware and, just possibly, hungry for leftovers, too. Here are 14 great choices.

## The reds

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## 2021 Rebellious Pinot Noir (\$20)

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A remarkable deal for a California Pinot, this new wine has abundant berry fruit but stays light on its feet at the same time — possibly due to the unusual addition of small amounts of [Sangiovese](#) and Chardonnay (yes, that's right) to the blend.

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## 2021 Luis Seabra Xisto Ilimitado (\$28)

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Winemaker Luis Seabra assembles this peppery red from a jigsaw puzzle of native Portuguese varieties: [Touriga Franca](#), Tinta Amarela, Tinta Roriz, Rufete, and others. It's darkly fruity yet so fresh and bright that you don't notice its intensity.

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## 2015 Paraschos Merlot (\$28)

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The cool Friulian climate makes this northern Italian [Merlot](#) much more lithe and red-fruited than California versions. It's made with organic grapes, no sulfur additions, and no new oak; [natural wine](#), essentially, but not too far on the funky side.

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## 2021 Lang & Reed California Cabernet Franc (\$29)

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Cabernet lovers should look to this lively red for Thanksgiving — [Cabernet Franc](#) is the lighter, more savory parent of Cabernet Sauvignon, and winemaker John Skupny has been a long-term cheerleader for the variety.

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## 2021 Dial Tone Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir (\$30)

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Partners in winemaking and in life Morét Brealynn and Adam Lee are the talents behind this finely focused, cherry-inflected red. If you want to splurge, their next-step-up Busy Signal [Pinot Noir](#) (you get the theme) is even better.

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## 2021 Calera Central Coast Pinot Noir (\$32)

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Calera's single-vineyard Pinot Noirs are California benchmarks but are quite expensive. This regional bottling has vivid cherry-strawberry flavors that shine through from the use of almost exclusively neutral oak for aging.

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## 2021 Thacher Cinsault (\$45)

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Winemaker Sherman Thacher focuses on lighter reds, though he's based in [Paso Robles](#) (known for oomphy [Zinfandel](#) and Cabs). He uses whole-cluster fermentation for this wine: "We get nice white-pepper character from the stems," he explains.



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## The whites

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### **2021 Soalheiro Alvarinho (\$22)**

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Soalheiro is a top winery in Portugal's Vinho Verde region, and this stony, bright Alvarinho (Albariño in Spain) shows why it has that reputation. Also, the entire estate has been farmed organically since the mid-2000s and biodynamically since 2021.

### **2020 Edouard Delaunay Septembre Bourgogne Chardonnay (\$25)**

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As Burgundy prices climb and climb, it's refreshing to find an appealing white Burgundy for a modest amount. This one's lemon-pear flavors feel lifted by the modest amount of new French oak it was aged in.

### **2022 J. Hofstätter Pinot Bianco (\$23)**

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Martin Foradori Hofstätter makes brilliant wines in Italy's mountainous Alto Adige region, among them this apple-scented white. Pinot Bianco typically has a little more savoriness than its cousin Pinot Grigio; top versions make great dinner-party wines.

### **2021 Feudi di San Gregorio Greco di Tufo (\$26)**

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Southern Italy may be hot, but you'd never know it from the cool, stony clarity of this Campanian white. Tufo is a town (hence Greco di Tufo), but it's also the kind of volcanic ash soil that vines there grow in, which helps give this wine its distinct character.

### **2022 Sokol Blosser Willamette Valley Pinot Gris (\$28)**

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Attention, Chardonnay fans: On Thanksgiving, consider Oregon Pinot Gris instead. It has all the appealing fruit character but is more crisp and usually less oaky. Sokol Blosser's peachy, vibrant version is a standout.

### **2022 St. Supéry Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc (\$28)**

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This longtime Napa Valley producer was early to the game of making equally good Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc here. This estate bottling, full of melon flavors, avoids the green-pepperness Sauvignon Blanc can sometimes have.

### **2022 Dutton-Goldfield Shop Block Pinot Blanc (\$33)**

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Winemaker Dan Goldfield is a Pinot Noir specialist, but he also makes this secret-weapon white with Pinot Blanc from the Russian River Valley. It's made without any oak influence and balances its pear and citrus flavors effortlessly.