

It is important to understand the differences between dark, milk, and white chocolate.

Dark Chocolate is a form of semisweet or bittersweet chocolate. It usually contains about 50% to 70% cocoa. The actual cocoa beans flavor reflects the environment where they are grown. They can be fruity and bright or earthy. Dark chocolate that is from single origin can also have a roasted flavor like coffee, nuts, or have spicy tones.

Pair your dark chocolate with a sweet Sherry or ruby Port. Look for a wine that offers a fuller body like Zinfandels or Cabernet Sauvignon, which makes a natural pairing. Also consider a Pinot Noir or a Merlot. Serve with blue cheese appetizers for a wonderful party starter.

Milk Chocolate is the chocolate liquor combined with sugar and milk or cream powder. In the United States, it must be at least 15% cocoa, but higher quality producers go up to about 45%. Most delicious milk chocolate contains all the flavors of dark chocolate, but the milky caramel overtones are often dominate.

Pair milk chocolate with Parmigiano-Reggiano and some rye bread for an appetizer. Wine pairing suggestions might be a sweet Riesling or dessert wine. It will also pair with Pinot Noir or a medium bodied Merlot. Of course, a sparkling wine or Champagne is always welcome.

White Chocolate is really chocolate. It must contain at least 20% cocoa butter, 14% total milk solids, 3.5% milk fat and a maximum of 55% sugar or other sweeteners. It's a combination of cocoa butter with sugar, vanilla, milk or cream powder. A delicious white chocolate will taste sweet like caramel and have complex flavors.

Pairings are excellent with strawberries, nuts. or a cup of matcha green tea. A recommended wine to serve with white chocolate is Pinot Noir. It acts as the fat that delivers sweet flavors of red cherries, strawberries, and raspberries found in the wine. Also, a full-bodied white wine like a fruity Chardonnay or medium dry sparkling wines are excellent suggestions.

Some Wine Pairing Suggestions from: Hershey's Wine Pairing Class, February 2018.

For More Information See: Megan Giller, the author, *Bean to Bar Chocolate: America's Craft Chocolate Revolution*. <https://www.winemag.com/2018/02/09/craft-chocolate-guide/>