

# Wine

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## Celebrating the MOMENT

One of the most memorable moments in any wedding involves the Champagne toast. The image of Champagne itself evokes thoughts of celebration, romance, and special occasions. The truth is that nothing signifies a special occasion more than opening a bottle of Champagne.

Champagne is actually only one of many types of sparkling wine. In reality, any sparkling wine can be an excellent substitution for Champagne. There are many options available to fit any budget, without sacrificing taste and quality. Some of the most popular sparkling wines include Champagne (produced only in a specific region 90 miles north of Paris), Prosecco (fruity, crisp wine from a white grape variety grown in northeastern Italy), Asti (a sweet Italian sparkling wine with a lower alcohol content), and Cava

(a Spanish sparkling wine made the same way that Champagne is produced, but with different grapes).

Sparkling wines also have varying levels of sweetness. Understanding these descriptions on the label can help you choose which wine would be best for your event: Brut Natural (bone dry), Extra Brut (very dry), Brut (very dry to dry — most popular), Extra Sec (medium dry — second most popular), Sec (medium sweet), Demi-Sec (sweet, more of a dessert wine) and Doux (luscious, also a dessert wine).

Before the event, it may be a good idea to taste a couple of types to help you decide what to choose. Don't be afraid to ask the venue manager if this is a possibility. When buying sparkling wine for a large crowd, you don't want to break the bank; to help you find a Champagne that offers good value, consider

going to a local wine shop for recommendations.

If the event is scheduled during the day or is outdoors, many prefer Prosecco, Cava, or even a sparkling Rosé. But if the toast is at night or inside, look toward richer styled sparkling wines such as Blanc de Noirs, Blanc de Blancs, Italian Metodo Classico, or classic French Champagne.

*Another tip: While Brut is considered the classic choice, if you plan to use Champagne for cocktails, choose the more versatile extra sec Champagne. If serving a glass of Champagne with the wedding cake, consider the sweeter demi-sec Champagne.*

So how many bottles should you purchase for the big event? To be on the safe side, you should plan for two glasses of Champagne per guest. Keep in mind that a standard bottle of Champagne fills around six glasses. And how much wine is needed for the toast? A simple guideline is to divide your guest count by 7 to 9, and provide this number of bottles. This should ensure at least a half-glass for everyone to take part in the toast.

But regardless what you choose, always remember that ultimately any sparkling wine will provide a feeling of celebration for your special day. Cheers!