

# Sparkling feast!

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*Food and beverage aficionados are now marrying Indian fare with sparkling wines or champagne! Amin Ali reports.*

Did we hear biryani and bubbly? Bring it on. Pairing Indian food with champagne or sparkling wine is the new hot trend globally. Murgh makhni tikka or yakhni pulao is being gobbled up with fresh nonvintage bubbly, a vintage brut is adding fizz to butter chicken or bhuna gosht and demi secs or sweet champagnes are sweetening payasams and rabris.

Sommelier Magandeep Singh feels sparkling wine and Indian food pairing was waiting to catch on and will be the big food trend to watch out for. “Champagne has a fresh and bubbly effect that regular wines and whiskeys do not have. It is perfect for cutting the greasiness of Indian dishes. One just needs to stop thinking of champagne only as a celebratory drink and start raising a toast with Indian meals,” he says.



If champagne sounds too expensive an option with every meal, then Magandeep suggests you try out proseccos or sparkling wines “also popularly referred to as poor man’s champagne” and follow only two rules. First, that the drink is not served too chilled and second, only sweet ones are served with desserts.

Chef Vinod Saini feels that the ability of sparkling wines in enhancing the taste of certain dishes (due to their own acidic nature) is making them a preferred accompaniment. Indian restaurants in the US and Europe are serving a range of wine, called Mirza Ghalib, that’s prepared specifically to be paired with Indian food! Developed by a team of sommeliers, led by wine expert Frederic-Jean Hogue, this French range is available in white, red and a sparkling rose. The fruitiness or sweetness of each wine is moderated as per a set of dishes and each wine comes with a pairing suggestion to the extent of stating which one is apt for bhajia and samosa!

So, the next time you order a kebab platter, don’t be surprised if the sommelier suggests you pair it with sweet French sparkling to counter the tangy side chutneys. It is burra and blanc de noirs all the way!