

4 wines to serve with Moroccan vegetable COUSCOUS

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This month, the wine panel jumped on the Moroccan trend, choosing wines to pair with a fragrant vegetable couscous.

Variations on this classic have been turning up everywhere – [Cooking Light](#), [Better Homes and Gardens](#), [Saveur](#), [Bon Appétit](#). We opted for a streamlined version of this remarkable stew with couscous. It's by the late cookbook author Sheila Lukins.



EVANS CAGLAGE/DMN

Seven- Vegetable Couscous might have a long list of ingredients, but don't let that intimidate you. The exotically flavored dish comes together quickly.

Exotically seasoned with cinnamon sticks and ground spices, this stew carries loads of flavor without fat. Serve it solo for a light vegetarian meal (double up on the chickpeas if you want more protein) or team it with a rotisserie chicken from the supermarket and some deli hummus or eggplant dip for a feast.

Don't be intimidated by the long ingredient list; the dish is quicker and easier to prepare than almost any stew. The active cooking time is even faster if you measure out your spices as you buy them from the bulk bins at specialty markets (a cheaper and fresher option that ensures good flavor).

For this tasting, we sampled 14 wines costing less than \$18 – four whites and 10 reds – in search of wines to handle the dish's sweet and savory notes. Our panel pick was an earthy, slightly sweet white with a hint of citrus.

Because this is a light-bodied dish with complex flavors, finding compatible red wines was trickier. Some excellent reds had too much muscle for the dish, and some lighter wines lacked depth or finish. Our winning reds were bursting with fruit flavor.

Tina Danze is a Dallas freelance writer. She writes about the wine panel the last Wednesday of every month.

THE MISSION:

Find wines costing less than \$18 to pair with Seven-Vegetable Couscous

THE FOOD:

Seven-Vegetable Couscous, a Moroccan vegetarian stew served over couscous; the vegetables are simmered in a broth seasoned with sweet and savory spices and studded with dried fruit and chickpeas.

THE TASTERS:

Blythe Beck, executive chef, [Central 214](#)

George Howald, Serendipity Wine Imports

Paul Pinnell, sommelier; owner and general manager of [Dalí Wine Bar and Cellar](#)

James Tidwell, certified wine educator; master sommelier, [Café on the Green](#), Four Seasons Resort and Club in Las Colinas

Cathy Barber, Taste editor

Tina Danze, freelance writer

THE WINES:

2008 Domaine Pichot Vouvray, France