

## Sangria: A Drink for Fitness and Cheerfulness

Raaz K Maheshwari<sup>1</sup>, <sup>2</sup>Manish Kumar, Manish Maheshwari<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Chemistry, SBRM (PG)GC, Nagaur, Rajasthan

<sup>2</sup>Academy for Environment and Life Sciences, Agra, UP

<sup>3</sup>Department of Zoology, NREC (PG)C, Khurja, Bulandshar, UP

From its humble roots in Spain, Sangria (- is a drink from Spain, Portugal and Argentina consisting mainly of wine, chopped fruit, a sweetener, and a small amount of added brandy. Chopped fruit can include orange, lemon, lime, apple, peach, melon, berries, pineapple, grape, kiwifruit and mango. A sweetener such as honey, sugar, syrup, or orange juice is added. Instead of brandy, other liquids such as Seltzer, Sprite or 7 Up may be added.) has grown to become a popular, refreshing party drink around the world. In the United States, Sangria was first tasted at the 1964 World's Fair in New York. The Spanish World area served this fruity wine punch to its visitors, and history was made! Sangria is based on the traditional red wine punch popular across Europe for hundreds of years. The punch base would be *claret*. Claret is the British term for Bordeaux wine from Bordeaux, France. This red wine is traditionally made from a blend of cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc and merlot. Brandy and fruit would be added to the red wine punch for flavor. In the 1700s and 1800s, Claret Cup Punch could be found at parties of all sizes. This would be the drink of choice for Jane Austen heroines, for example. Going back even further in time, *hippocras* is a well documented drink concoction enjoyed in the middle ages. This was traditionally a wine with various spices added in - ginger, cinnamon, and so on.

Why the emphasis on wine?

Remember that until modern times water was often unsafe to drink. Milk was considered a "baby food" only. That meant - even for toddlers - that the only safe liquid to drink had at least some alcohol in it. The alcohol would take care of any bacteria in the drink. Most households made some wine from fruits and berries in the area. It was very natural to "liven things up" by adding more spices, fruits, and other items to the wine to give it a different flavor.



Looking more specifically at Spain, this region was actively planted with vineyards by the Romans when they swept through about 200BC. A very active wine shipping trade promptly began, with the beautiful wines of Spain supplying much of Rome's drinking desires.

### Red wine grapes on vine & wineglass

Red grapes grew very well here and have been enjoyed ever since. The locals named their wine punches, in all their varieties, as *Sangria*. Sangria is traditionally a red wine punch. Spanish people from all walks of life enjoy this drink, creating it primarily with Rioja and other Spanish reds. Sangria can also be made with white wine. With white wine the sangria is then known as 'Sangria Blanco' (white sangria).

The Cava (Spanish sparkling wine) producing area soon created a sparkling white version. In the south of Spain Sangria is often called *zurra*. This version of sangria is created with peach or nectarine. Sangria is typically created from red wine, fruit juices, soda water, fruit and sometimes brandy.

**Wine** is an alcoholic beverage made from fermented grapes or other fruits. The natural chemical balance of grapes lets them ferment without the addition of sugars, acids, enzymes, water, or other nutrients. Yeast consumes the sugars in the grapes and converts them into alcohol and carbon dioxide. Different varieties of grapes and strains of yeasts produce different types of wine. The well-known variations result from the very complex interactions between the biochemical development of the fruit, reactions involved in fermentation, and human intervention in the overall process. The final product may contain tens of thousands of chemical compounds in amounts varying from a few percent to a few parts per billion (ppb).

Red table wine					
Nutritional value per 100 g (3.5 oz)					
Energy	355 kJ (85 kcal)				
Carbohydrates	2.6 g				
- Sugars	0.6 g				
Fat	0.0 g				
Protein	0.1 g				
Alcohol	10.6 g				
10.6 g	alcohol	is		13%vol.	
100 g	wine	is	~100 ml	(3.4 fl	oz.)
Sugar	and	alcohol	content	can	vary.
Source: USDA Nutrient Database					

Studies have found that red wine contains polyphenols and these are thought to be particularly protective against cardiovascular disease. A chemical (an antioxidant) in red wine called resveratrol has been shown to have both cardioprotective and chemoprotective effects in animal studies. Low doses of resveratrol in the diet of middle-aged mice has a widespread influence on the genetic factors related to aging and may confer special protection on the heart. Specifically, low doses of resveratrol mimic the effects of caloric restriction—diets with 20–30% fewer calories than a typical diet. Resveratrol is produced naturally by grape skins in response to fungal infection, including exposure to yeast during fermentation. As white wine has minimal contact with grape skins during this process, it generally contains lower levels of the chemical. Beneficial compounds in wine also include other polyphenols, antioxidants, and flavonoids. To benefit fully from resveratrol in wine, it is recommended to sip slowly when drinking. Due to inactivation in the gut and liver, most of the resveratrol consumed while drinking red wine does not reach the blood circulation. However, when sipping slowly, absorption via the mucous membranes in the mouth can result in up to 100x the blood levels of resveratrol.

When making your own Sangria, use a good quality wine, and if at all possible let it chill overnight. This lets the fruit flavors blend into the drink. If you can, use Rioja to get the authentic Spanish flavor, but definitely choose something you like - you're the one drinking it! In the morning, pour your sangria into a pitcher full of ice cubes, garnish with fresh fruit, and enjoy. Traditional sangria pitchers have a pinched lip so that the fruit and other solids do not plop into the glass and splash.

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**Citation of Article:** Raaz K Maheshwari, Manish Kumar, Manish Maheshwari. Sangria: A Drink for Fitness and Cheerfulness. *Int. Arch. App. Sci. Technol.*, Vol 4 [3] September 2013: 76-77