



## **Food and beverage combinations**

– Sommeliers' perspectives and consumer patterns in Sweden

av

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## Abstract

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As beverage intake can play an important part of choosing a healthy diet, it is important to increase awareness of the contribution of beverages to overall energy intake for consumers.

The professional sommelier has for a long time served as a cultural intermediary, providing guests with good food and beverage combinations. Here, a clear gap was identified between health and the current practice of sommellerie.

The aim of the thesis is to develop knowledge about food and beverage combinations by investigating the consumption patterns of a Swedish population. The thesis will also explore the sociocultural understanding of taste and the practices of professional sommeliers.

The understanding of energy contribution and beverage patterns were linked to health, which led to the suggestion that sommeliers should gain from nutritional knowledge – in particular focused on beverage. Furthermore, sommeliers talk about ‘good’ combinations as a matter of refined taste, acquired through long-term practical engagement with wine and food. Foods expressed as ‘unrefined’, could also be becoming legitimate as cultural capital when combined with the right beverage. Also, performing food and beverage combinations was a routinised activity surrounded by rules, competence and materiality and was driven by the will to satisfy guests. It was also a part of shaping of sommeliers’ identity through a continuous striving for improved competence.

Altogether, nutritional knowledge, acquisition of taste, goods re-evaluation and legitimacy as well as identity shaping gives sommeliers an extended knowledge when combining food and beverage, providing guests with not only the desired taste but also the possibility of serving healthier combinations. This extends the range of workplaces for sommeliers in the restaurant industry, but also to elderly care, hospitals and the like, as all people in those environments should have the opportunity to enjoy good meals according to both taste and health considerations.

*Keywords:* Bourdieu; craft drinks; food pairing; meal; restaurant; riksmaten; sommelier; practice theory.

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