

FOOD&WINE

The Best Bitter Liqueurs to Match Every Valentine's Day Mood

From Malört to Amaro Nonino, the bitter bottles our editors reach for on Valentine's Day

By Lauren Buzzeo, Dylan Ettinger, Dylan Garret, Ray Isle, and Prairie Rose

Valentine's Day is a mixed bag for couples and singletons alike. So why not lean into the mood? Embrace the bite. Pour something unapologetically bracing — pungent tonics that cut through the sugar rush and help you digest the whole heartspllosion just a little better. Enter the dark, layered world of spirits with an edge: bitter liqueurs.



Credit: Food & Wine / Grappa Nonino

Amaro Nonino Quintessentia is the perfect Valentine's Day bitter liqueur. If you're on a date or just hanging out with some friends, cool, everyone will love it no matter how you choose to enjoy it (sip it neat, enjoy over ice, or fall in love with it in a Paper Plane, my favorite). But if you're leaning into some Galentine's vibes, it's an absolute no-brainer: Helmed by the inimitable Nonino sisters, the iconic amaro is the ultimate toast to female power, heritage, and style.

And did I mention it's utterly delicious? Though technically a bitter liqueur, it's surprisingly approachable (read: not gag-inducing), with harmonious notes of orange peel, caramel, baking spice, and gentle herbs. It's the kind of amaro that wins you over fast, and unlike a bad date, it leaves only the greatest of impressions behind. Smooth, balanced, and unforgettable – just how I like my Valentine's. – Lauren Buzzeo