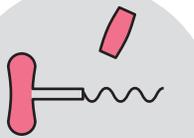


# A Field Guide to the Food & Wine Classic in Aspen

*From what to wear to a strategy for the Grand Tastings to party hopping, a seasoned Classic attendee shares tips for what she calls “the world’s best 72-hour cocktail party.”*

STORY BY LUCY LEA TUCKER



**1 PREGAME:** Build up your tolerance, of course. Hone your skills by trying flights of wine for comparison tasting. Practice spitting by expectorating a smooth arc of liquid in the shower—it’s what the pros do.

**2 WEAR WITH ALL:** Summer sundresses for women, dress shorts and collared shirts for men. By day three, looser waistbands and flowy dresses help counteract the excess of eating and drinking.




**3 FOOTLOOSE:** Ladies, now is not the time to try out those brand-new kitten heels or stilettos. Snazzy but comfortable flats or wedges handle both the grass in the tent and cobblestones around town with aplomb.



**4 BRING IT:** Fill an attractive tote or backpack with supplies that will keep you looking fresh from a 10 a.m. seminar to wee-hour parties: travel toothbrush and paste, brush/comb, sample-size sunscreen, makeup, face spritzer, Band-Aids, moleskin, and extra layers like a cardigan and rainwear.



**5 TENT STRATEGY 101:** The early bird doesn’t necessarily catch the worm. Appear at the tent casually late and stroll right in without waiting in line. Then branch out from what you know—strike up conversations with the experts, ask what’s trending, and try new tastes and flavors.

**9 HOW TO** drink all day and night: Rehydrate often with water, club soda, or anything besides alcohol. According to the Institute for Altitude Medicine, at higher elevation, you should plan to drink an extra 50 ounces of water daily. Take breaks from imbibing to stroll around town or run errands. Try an espresso martini at Campo de Fiori, L’Hostaria, or Marble Bar Aspen to switch up your palate and catch your second wind.



**8 BE SEMINAR SMART:** Don’t over-program yourself. Arrive early so you get a seat. Be kind to the volunteers, and they will usher you to the best one.

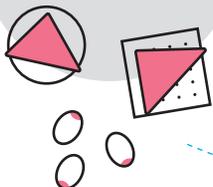


**7 PACE YOURSELF:** Slow your roll and turn white wine into a spritzer by adding club soda and ice—fruit and straw optional. Heed the “shampoo effect”: like shampoo on a second rinse, you only need a small amount of booze after a big night of drinking to catch a buzz.

**6 HOW TO** politely avoid small talk in the tent: My tactic is to wear a large-brimmed hat with equally large sunglasses. I’m focused on seeing it all, sipping it all, and keeping chatting to a minimum.



**10 FILL UP** on free food: While the Grand Tasting tents serve limited food, Classic-related parties offer delicious fare. I still dream of the acorn-fed Ibérico hamburguesa baguette sandwich from José Andrés that I once ate at a Wines of Spain party.



**11 NAP:** Set your alarm and don’t snooze for more than 25 minutes, or you may be done for the day. No bed available? Find a chaise longue poolside at a hotel.



**12 CULTIVATE** party invites: The art of getting on lists or into “it” parties is all about who you know, so cast your net far and wide before the big weekend. Meet as many new people as you can right before the Classic starts.



**13 STAY ORGANIZED:** I always print out my invites and keep them stacked in order by date and time, so I know what’s up next and what not to miss, plus who the key sponsors and players are prior to arrival.



**14 PARTY PICKS:** Definitely party hop—unless you’ve found the ideal libation in the perfect venue, surrounded by your favorite friends. Don’t miss any house party you hear about or any party at the Little Red Ski Haus, with snacks and drinks in the semi-secret downstairs bar.

**15 THE HANGOVER:** Pick your pleasure, whether it’s greasy, carb-heavy food; New Age remedies like charcoal pills; the “hair of the dog” Bloody Mary routine; or old standbys like Alka-Seltzer or Berocca. Or get some fresh air and go for a stroll on the Rio Grande Trail.

