Along the wine routes of Portugal

ABOUT

Along the wine routes of Portugal

Portugal by... Condé Nast Traveler
Wine tourism is very fashionable in Portugal.

It’s not just about knowing the vines and tasting the wines, because innovative tourist complexes have been emerging around the vineyards where you can learn and enjoy using all five senses. Wineries, restaurants, wine bars, wine routes and modern wine spas with grape-based beauty treatments are just some of the temptations you can encounter on the wine routes. Vineyards cover the hillsides and plains from the Minho to Faro. Getting to know Portugal through its wines is an enjoyable and different kind of contact with the culture of the country.

1) The North: Vinho Verde
These light, bold, fresh and rather sensual wines are ideal with seafood and fish. The vineyards, which stretch from the Douro to the Minho, climb the trellises near the picturesque town of Valença on the border with Galicia and continue south, through Barcelos, Braga and the stately city of Guimarães, classified as World Heritage by UNESCO.

Casa da Torre
www.adegacasadatorre.com
A recent project that has begun in Vila Nova de Famalicão to combine the wine production of Quinta da Casa da Torre, Quinta do Cruzeiro and Quinta da Senra, all owned by the Sousa Lopes family. The winery, built meticulously in wood, completes a group of buildings with a farm and a wine tourism complex, designed by architects Castanheira & Bastai.

2) THE DOURO: Port and Douro wines
Port wines originate on the banks of the Douro. This is the oldest Demarcated Wine Region in the world, whose prestige has been recognised since 1756. Recently modernised, Douro wines have an enormous reputation, and are made mostly from red grape varieties such as Tinta Roriz (equivalent to the Spanish Tempranillo) and Touriga Nacional. The Douro Valley, declared World Heritage by UNESCO, can be toured by car, train or boat.

Two wineries and a wine hotel
Quinta do Portal
www.quintadoportal.com
Designed by renowned architect Alvaro Siza (winner of the Prizker prize in 1992) this is a modern, innovative winery, one of the most visited in the area, both for its location and the good standing of the wine tourist complex created in the vicinity of the vineyards on the banks of the river Pinhão, a tributary of the Douro. The Quinta produces Douro, Port and Muscatel wines.

Quinta do Vallado
www.quintadovallado.com

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Taking advantage of the facilities of an elegant 18th century estate on the banks of the river Corgo, a modern tourist complex was built in which wine plays an essential role. You can enjoy tours of the vineyards, visit the winery, do some wine tasting, take a cruise on a boat and numerous other activities in a unique natural environment. A highlight is the gastronomic DOC restaurant, headed by chef Rui Paula (see Restaurants).

Aquapura Douro Valley
www.sixsenses.com
This is part of the Quinta do Vale Abraão wine producing farm, with a superbly restored 19th century house. It has 50 rooms and 21 villas surrounded by gardens and vineyards. The entire complex faces the river, in the centre of an extremely welcoming landscape. It offers a complete range of sports and a broad choice of therapies in the spa. Activities related to wine: tastings, tours, courses, etc.

Other wineries worth visiting
Quinta de Nápoles - www.niepoort-vinhos.com
Quinta do Seixo - www.sograpevinhos.eu
Quinta do Noval - www.quintadonoval.com

3) IN CENTRAL PORTUGAL
The River Dão rises between the mountains in the interior, and forms a narrow valley where vines have been cultivated since the 12th century. The main grape is Touriga Nacional and Dão is considered one of the wine regions with greater appeal since its wines are soft and elegant.

Quinta do Encontro
www.daosul.com
An impressive circular wine cellar built with wooden slats, with an image and philosophy very different from what you find elsewhere in Portugal. Designed by architect Pedro Mateus, it has become an important centre of wine tourism in the area. It organises guided tours and wine tastings, and has a modern restaurant serving regional cuisine in a contemporary style.

The Lisbon area
The best muscatels in the country are produced in the Setúbal peninsula, and have been famous since the 19th century. Bucelas is reckoned to have the best whites; while in the vicinity of Sintra, Colares is the only wine producing area in Europe that escaped the phylloxera plague. Its strains, which were not grafted, produce very special wines.
On the banks of the Tagus, the Vinhos do Tejo DO wineries extend along both banks. These are aromatic wines that can be light or very full-bodied.

4) ALENTEJO WINES
The wines of this region have a strong, powerful character and are among the best in Portugal. Castelo de Vide, Marvão, Portalegre, Crato and Alter do Chão are places with history and tradition in northern Alentejo.

3 wine tourism complexes
Herdade do Rocim
www.herdadedorocim.com
A modern winery of contemporary architecture that combines its own wine production with related activities: tastings, meetings, walks... A perfect place to broaden your horizons and knowledge about the wines of the Alentejo.

Herdade da Malhadinha Nova Country House and Spa
www.malhadinhanova.pt
A unique resort that aims to create exclusive experiences using vineyards and wine as the background, while helping guests indulge their own passions. It organises themed weeks dedicated to painting, cookery, horses, photography, wine and countryside adventure. Chef Joachim Koerper has contributed to the menu in its high class restaurant. The spa offers more than a dozen different therapeutic rituals; while the winery offers courses in wine tasting and winemaking. It is also possible to participate in the harvest and farm chores.

L’AND Vineyards Wine Resort
www.l-andvineyards.com
Located in the heart of the Alentejo, this hotel has a contemporary design, the work of Brazilian architect Marcio Kogan, which marks the “before” and “after” of Portuguese wine tourism. Surrounded by many hectares of vineyards and a prime view over the lake and the mediaeval castle of Montemor, it has 22 suites, some with windows above the bed enabling you to sleep beneath the stars (the sky suites). The structure of the building recalls the style of

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Roman or Arab villas in which a central courtyard acts as the hub of the building. The spa, with treatments from the prestigious French brand Caudalie, a pioneer in wine therapy (which uses grapes and their derivatives for skin care) is an activity to consider. The cuisine is another attraction. Its gourmet vocation allows it to offer regional cuisine in a contemporary style, made with ecological or biodynamic products, peppered with Oriental flavours (India, China, Thailand, Japan). The activities include courses in viticulture and winemaking, guided visits to nearby towns and balloon rides over the vineyards and the cork-oak plantations. Guests are also invited to participate in wine tastings and cooking courses and have the opportunity to belong to an exclusive wine club.

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