



The Region

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The Navarra D.O.

Location

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In Spain, each D.O. has its own regulating council (the Consejo Regulador) which stipulates the rules of growing, making and marketing of quality wines in that particular wine region. The Navarra D.O. is divided into 5 regions, each producing wines with unique qualities from their varied climates and soils. For a closer look at the 5 regions:

Baja Montana is a region of stunning mountain views, deep valleys, thick beech and spruce forests, and quiet towns filled with idyllic stone farmhouses and extensive pasturelands with grazing cattle and sheep. Large reservoirs provide for endless water sports fun and the sub-region has incredible monasteries and museums to visit. Lying in the foothills of the Pyrenees in the northeast of the Navarra D.O., it is the coolest of Navarra’s regions with the soaring Pyrenees providing protection from extreme heat and drought. Crisp, abundantly fruity rosé and red wines are the main focus here. The Baja Montana region has the highest percentage of old Grenache vines. The hilly terrain has

gravelly soils containing high levels of calcareous content (high levels of limestone and calcium, providing good water retention as well as drainage). This region includes 19 municipalities and its plantings are 13% of the total D.O. vineyard area. The general climate is dry, and sub-humid with an average yearly temperature of 53 degrees F, and average yearly rainfall of 27 inches.

Tierra Estella is a region of beautifully preserved fortresses, castles and noble houses from the Middle Ages spanning out from the culture-rich town of Estella. Each year an ancient music festival in Estella pays homage to Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque music. This hilly area in the northwest of Navarra is slightly warmer than Baja Montana. The Pyrenees that lie northeast give a cooling relief from the heat. Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot grown here produce deliciously flavorful rosé wines and fruity, easy-drinking reds. This region is also the main area for Chardonnay. Its soils vary within the sub-region itself—in the north, they are mostly marine-based calcareous, and in the south--brown calcareous of non-consolidated material. This region covers 30 municipalities, and its vineyards comprise 17% of the region's total. The climate is sub-humid with an annual mean temperature of 54 degrees F, and rainfall that averages 24 inches a year.

Valdizarbe is the ancient center on the pilgrimage tour to Santiago (Santiago de Compostela). Vineyards flourished here to satisfy these thirsty travelers--and monasteries, built by monks who discovered the beauty of the region while making their pilgrimage, dot the route. It is the most northerly of Navarra's regions, lying between Baja Montana and Tierra Estella. It is the smallest in terms of wine production, with 6% of the region's total. Soils are chalky, and the climate benefits from the cooling effects of the Pyrenees that spread across the northern boundaries of the Navarra D.O. The region covers 26 municipalities and its vineyards comprise 8% of the Navarra D.O. total. The annual mean temperature is 53 degrees F.

Ribera Alta is warmer than the three northern regions above it and dotted with cozy villages, castles and monasteries. It lies in central Navarra, extending south towards Ribera Baja. With streets laid out in Medieval Times and a grand Royal Palace, the town of Olite is home to the Festival of Classical Theatre celebrated each year in open-air stages with an awe-inspiring castle as their backdrop. It is also home to Spain's most advanced viticultural and enological-based research center (EVENA). Locals and visitors alike are treated to deliciously fruity rosé and red wines made with Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Soils are sandy with substantial outcroppings of limestone. It experiences weather influences from the Mediterranean that do not extend as far south as the Ribera Baja region. Twenty-six towns are included in this region, and its vineyards make up 33% of the D.O.s total.

Ribera Baja is the most southern of the regions and nirvana for those loving powerfully dense red wines and sweet wines from Muscat (a small berry Muscat). Bathed in sunshine with rich, fertile land, the region provides all of Navarra with an over abundance of fresh produce—from delicacies such as white asparagus, to piquillo peppers, and artichoke. While it may be warmest, drier and flatter here, it is still perfect grape

growing territory, with a Mediterranean climate. It has the largest area planted to grape vines in Navarra and is home to the greatest number of bodegas in the Navarra D.O. The Ebro River runs northeast from Rioja into the region.

The region covers 13 municipalities and its vineyards comprise 29% of the total D.O. plantings in Navarra. Soils get sandier here, and the climate is semi-arid with an annual mean temperature of 57 degrees F, and average yearly rainfall of 18 inches.

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