

Portugal Wine

Sources:

Essential guide to wine, Wine Folly, 2015
Wine Searcher, Internet site
Wikipedia, Internet site,
Wine A Tasting Course, Marnie Old, 2015



Portugal has undergone something of a wine revolution in the past couple of decades, updating its winemaking technologies, styles and attitudes. This archetypal Old World country has long been famous for little more than its fortified wines (**Port and Madeira**) and

tart, light **Vinho Verde**. But it is now attracting a great deal of attention for its new wave of rich, ripe, table wines – particularly reds from the Douro Valley and Dão Regions.

Some of Portugal's many vine varieties and their countless regional synonyms, are endemic to Portugal (e.g. [Touriga Nacional](#)), while others are shared with neighboring Spain (e.g. [Tinta Roriz/Tempranillo](#)) and an increasing number are the ever-popular '**international varieties of French origin (e.g. [Cabernet Sauvignon](#) and [Chardonnay](#))**. Happily, the current success of Portuguese wines has not become dependent on the latter category - a fact that has played to its favor; by retaining their indigenous grapes, Portugal's winegrowers have maintained certain uniqueness in their wines, which is a valuable asset in the world's increasingly demanding and competitive wine market.

The country's portfolio of [terroirs](#) is not as broad as that of, say, France or Italy, but there is significant variation nonetheless between its mountains, river valleys, sandy littoral plains and limestone-rich coastal hills.

Douro Valley Wines

The Douro River winds treacherously through a rugged, mountainous section of northern Portugal before it dumps into the Atlantic Ocean at Foz in Porto. The Douro is famous for Port wine, but many Port producers are starting to use their port grapes to make a dry regional red wine. The region is hot and dry and the vineyards produce incredibly concentrated, red wine grapes on their schist rock and clay soils.

Wines with Touriga Nacional tend to be more lush and opulent whereas wines with higher proportions of Touriga Franca tend to be more spice and cinnamon.

Minho Wine

Portugal's northernmost wine region – is known for one wine style above all others: crisp, light, white [Vinho Verde](#). It is located on the Portugal's Atlantic coast to the north and east of Porto, Portugal's second-largest city and the home of [Port](#). It occupies a roughly rectangular area about 100km from north to south, which reaches 50km inland.

The key grape varieties to be found in white Minho wines are [Alvarinho](#), [Avesso](#), [Loureiro](#), [Pederna \(Arinto\)](#) and [Trajadura](#). Their red counterparts are based on [Alvarelhao](#), [Espadeiro](#), [Caino Tinto](#) and the globally popular [Cabernet Sauvignon](#).

Aside from the Vinho Verde DOC, Minho has to its name the regional [Minho IGP](#) title, whose looser production laws allow more diversity in the average winery's portfolio.

Setubal Peninsula Wine

The Setúbal Peninsula is the Portuguese wine region immediately southeast of Lisbon, across the Tajo estuary. The terroir in the area ranges from sandy coastal plains to the craggy, limestone-rich Serra Arribida hills. The Setúbal Peninsula's two DOC titles cover a similar area, but encompass different styles of wine. Palmela covers both the sandy plains and the hills, while Setúbal covers the land on the hills. The Castelão grape that comprises the majority of Palmela wines performs admirably on the dry, sandy soils, which is one of the few terroirs in Portugal where it can reach full ripeness. The variety must make up 67 percent of the wines, while other Portuguese and international varieties like [Cabernet Sauvignon](#), [Touriga Nacional](#) and [Syrah](#) are planted on the hills and make up the remainder of the wines.

This gives Setúbal wines a distinctively floral character.

Dao Wine

Dão is one of Portugal's most prominent wine regions, located just south of the famous [Douro Valley](#). International wine media attention and improvements in production (and marketing) have helped the region to start shining. The top Dão wines are now some of the most highly rated in Europe, winning consistent praise on both sides of the Atlantic. The Dão viticultural region is in the north of the country.

To the north, south and east of the Dão Valley are the Granite Mountains of eastern Beiras. As a result of this protected position, the climate along the Dão is relatively mild, stable and consistent between vineyard sites.

Arguably, the finest red wines from Dão today are deep reds made from [Tinta Roriz](#) and [Touriga Nacional](#), two of the key grapes used to make port wines. Jaen and Alfrocheiro Preto are two other common red wine grapes here, along with large quantities of lesser grapes such as [Bastardo](#) and [Baga](#) that dominates plantings in [Bairrada](#) to the west.

Bairrada Wine

Bairrada is a DOC of the Beiras region in the central northern area of Portugal. It is known for producing rich, deeply colored red wines made from [Baga](#), [Castelão](#) and [Rufete](#) grapes, although it has not quite reached the level of fame enjoyed by its inland neighbor, [Dão](#).

Beiras stretches from the Atlantic coast right to the border with [Spain](#). Bairrada is located in the western, coastal half of Beiras, and enjoys the moderate climate influenced by the Atlantic Ocean. In terms of soil profile, the majority of Bairrada vineyards have limestone-rich clay soils. This [terroir](#) continues eastwards into the Dao wine region, where some of Portugal's most highly prized vineyards are found.

Baga is Bairrada's key red grape variety, making up around 75 percent of red-wine plantings. The late-ripening variety does well in the terroir here, although rain and winds in autumn from the nearby Atlantic coast can play havoc at harvest. Baga's small berries and thick skins make for an intense, tannic wine, and Bairrada vignerons are adding [Merlot](#), [Cabernet](#) and [Touriga Nacional](#) to their vineyards to give wines softness and depth.

Some Portuguese wines dominant flavors

Alvarinho.

Crisp, aromatic and often somehow spritz wine.

Flavors: Lemon, Grapefruit, Nectarine, Peach, Melon, Wet gravel

Aromas: Melon and grapefruit

Pairings: Thai, Moroccan and Indian cuisine

Touriga Nacional

Black Fruit flavors, bold tannins and subtle floral aroma of violets

General

Violets, Blueberry >Sugar Plum >Blackberry Mint > Wet Slate

Douro

Blueberry >Black Currant >Violets >Vanilla >Roasted meat >Fine gravelly tannins

Dão

Red fruit flavors > Bergamot >Violets >Spicy acidity

Cabernet Sauvignon

Black Cherry, Blackberry, Black currant, Red bell pepper, Baking spices and Cedar

Tinta Roriz or Aragonez (Tempranillo)

Smoky red fruit flavors, cinnamon, and bittersweet chocolate

Cherry, Dry fig, Cedar, Tobacco and Dill. Dried blackberry and Raisin

Port

General

Ripe Blackberry, Raspberry Sauce, Cinnamon, Candy Apple, Star anise

Young Port. Late bottled vintage (LBV)

Red and Black fruit flavors, spice and cocoa with high tannin and acidity

Tawny Port

10 year: Raspberry, Dried blueberry, cinnamon, clove, and caramel

20 year: Fig, Raisin, caramel, orange zest, and cinnamon

40 year: Dried apricot, Orange zest, Caramel and coffee

Age worthy Port

Vintage Port

Single Vintage Ports from exceptional years. Expect to age for a minimum of 10 years and ideally 30-50years

Crusted Port

A multi-vintage port designed to age just like vintage Port. Wines often develop a “crust” and need to be decanted with a filter screen