

# Wine Regions of the World:

## Argentina



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Argentina is the world's fifth largest wine producing country. Most of the wine produced in Argentina is also drunk in Argentina. So we must settle for what little manages to get exported. Argentina's best wine growing regions border the Andes Mountains, which provide plenty of water and the perfect climate. Warm, sunny days and cool nights. Just what wine grapes want.

Argentina is known for its grass fed beef, and few wines go better with beef (sorry all you vegetarians) than Malbec. Malbec is the wine Argentina is famous for. Mostly used as a blending grape in French wines, Malbec has become the signature red wine from Argentina.

What Malbec is to Argentina's red wine, Torrontés is their white. Aromatic, spicy, and lively body. Torrontés is the unique signature white wine from Argentina.

Argentina is one of the most exciting wine producing countries in the world. The climate goes from rainforest to frozen wasteland. Argentina's vineyards were originally established by Spanish monks when they arrived in the 1500's.

### The Verities

Reds: Malbec, Barbera, Bonarda, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Pinot Noir, Tempranillo, Sangiovese

Whites: Torrontes, Chardonnay, Chenin, Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, Riesling, Viognier, Gewurztraminer

### Wine Regions of Argentina

Argentina's wine regions are spread out from the north to the south, but basically confined to a narrow strip on the western side of the country, bordering the Andes mountains. The climate is mostly semi desert with an annual rainfall barely above 9 inches (compared with the Bordeaux region in France which has an average annual rainfall of 33 inches). The lack of humidity reduces the risk of fungal related diseases.

#### Salta

The northern most wine producing province. Producing some very high quality and distinctive wines. Its northern location would normally be too warm for growing wine grapes, but the vineyards are high in the foothills of the mountains. The high elevation causes the region to be cooler. Some of the highest vineyards in the world can found here. In the Cafayate area, Torrontés Riojana white grapes are grown. This area produces some outstanding, full-bodied dry white Torrontés wine.

#### Catamarca

Typical grapes from the Catamarca region are:  
Reds: Malbec, Syrah, Barbera.  
White: Torrontés.

#### La Rioja

The oldest wine producing province of Argentina, and home to the Torrontés Riojana grape.

### **San Juan**

The second largest wine producing region. Hotter and drier than Mendoza, with summer temperatures over 100 degrees. Most of Argentina's brandy and vermouth comes from this region. More recently growers in San Juan have started to plant varieties such as Bonarda and Syrah.

### **Mendoza**

The main wine producing province of Argentina. Is on the eastern side of the Andes mountains. The Mendoza region produces about 70 to 80% of all Argentina's wine. The Summer is warm, and the winter is mild with sunny days, cool nights and low humidity. The rivers from the Andes are channelled through irrigation canals which have created three long oases in the virtual desert. These are North Mendoza, the Uco Valley, and South Mendoza. The average vineyard lies at an altitude of between 1500 to over 5000 feet above sea level. Some of the highest elevation vineyards in the world. Because there is no rainfall, the vineyards have to be irrigated.

### **Patagonia** (Neuquén and Río Negro)

The most southern region. Very cool because of its proximity to Antarctica. Mostly a fruit growing area, this region is still being tested and developed. There is interest in investing in new vineyards in this region. The climate, soil, and a long, warm ripening season under clear skies, make it ideal for white wine grapes, especially Torrontés and Sémillon, and for base grapes for making sparkling wine.

So the next time you find yourself looking for a good wine. Try some of the gems from Argentina. You will be pleasantly surprised. Don't let the lower prices fool you. There are some great finds in Argentina's wines.

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