



# VALLE DE GUADALUPE MEXICO'S WINE COUNTRY



The word is getting out that the *Valle de Guadalupe* may be the best kept secret amongst local wine enthusiasts and foodies. For now, it remains an under-the-radar destination.

• Just 90 minutes south of the border, Baja's wine country offers a combination of boutique wineries, gourmet restaurants, and smart bed and breakfast style lodging, in a quiet, rustic environment. Here, visitors will feel more like they've travelled off the beaten path to southern Italy, than Mexico. With roughly 50 wineries in the vicinity, French educated enologists are committed to making quality wines in wineries that are full of character, and architecturally unique.

• Half the size of Napa Valley, the wine growing region is approximately 15 miles long by 5 miles wide and lies roughly 10 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean, extending Northeast of the port city of Ensenada along Highway 3.

With a coastal Mediterranean climate ideal for grape growing, and its fertile soil, several relatively new artisanal wineries are determined to make their mark in the world of wine.

• Vineyards were first planted in the valley in 1834, but the high quality wine industry only began to develop after 1987 when Mexico lowered tariffs on imported wines, and local wineries had to compete with foreign wines. The industry has grown significantly since 2004, when winemaker Hugo D'Acosta created a winemaking school in the valley called *La Escuelita*, "The Little School" which has since sparked the creation of over a dozen wineries by individuals who were trained there.

• According to the Mexican Winemakers Council, volumes have doubled since 2000 to about 18 million gallons and values have tripled. That ranks the valley's wine production above Slovenia's, the Czech Republic's or Israel's, but represents but a small fraction of the volumes produced by top world producers such as France, Italy, the U.S., or Spain.

## QUICK FACTS:

- Distance from Orange County: 3 ½ hours by car.
- Wines price range: \$7-120 per bottle.
- Accommodations: \$150-\$240 per night.

**WINERIES:** Winery visits are typically a much more personalized experience than in wine growing areas in California because they are less crowded. In many cases, the owner will conduct the wine tasting and may give a personal tour of the property. Contact each winery in advance to make a reservation.

- **Some Boutique Wineries (small production):** Paralelo, Viñas de Garza, Mogor Badan, Vinisterra, Hacienda la Lomita, Torres Alegre, Viñas Pijoan, Alximia.
- **Medium Sized Wineries:** Chateau Camou, Monte Xanic,
- **Large Wineries:** L.A. Cetto, Domecq, Santo Tomás.

## WHERE TO EAT:

- At **LAJA**, Chef Jair Tellez, a pioneer of BajaMed cuisine, uses local ingredients and vegetables picked daily from the on-site garden to create contemporary Mexican dishes. Open Wednesday through Saturday. Closed Sundays.
- **CORAZÓN DE TIERRA** is a foodie's delight and a treat for the senses. Chef Diego Hernández is known for his use of exclusively local organic ingredients, creativity, and minimalistic style.

## OUTDOOR "AL FRESCO" RESTAURANTS INCLUDE:

Finca Altozano, Deckman's at Mogor, and Silvestre.

## WHERE TO STAY-BOUTIQUE B&BS:

- Adobe Guadalupe, Encuentro Guadalupe, La Villa del Valle

## TRAVEL TIPS:

The newly inaugurated border crossing facility at San Ysidro has reduced wait times from over 2 hours to approximately 30 minutes in regular lanes. Keep in mind that your car insurance policy will not cover you during your visit to Mexico. Check with your insurance company or online to purchase the appropriate insurance.

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