

## Canada's wine country: Where to taste and tour in every region

by Susan B. Barnes, Special for USA TODAY | Published on December 3, 2015



American oenophiles, or wine enthusiasts, may be surprised to learn that our neighbors to the north produce some pretty spectacular wines. Here, we look at Canada's wine country, four distinct regions that comprise 29,500 acres and just over 500 wineries, and narrow down where to visit, tour and taste on a Canadian wine excursion.

### British Columbia

British Columbia boasts five designated wine regions throughout its varied terrain, including the Similkameen Valley (14 wineries), Fraser Valley (about 40 minutes from Vancouver with 23 wineries), Vancouver Island (35 wineries), the Gulf Islands (10 wineries) and the Okanagan Valley (first winery opened in 1931 and now there are 132 wineries). The region's grapes are nearly split in terms of what's grown on the area's 929 vineyards: 52% red grapes and 48% white, which means there is likely a bottle to please your palate.

The largest of BC's wine regions is the Okanagan Valley; 84% of BC wine is grown and made here. The valley lies about 1,000 miles north of California's [Napa Valley](#), and is oftentimes referred to as the "Napa of the North." Most of the 100-plus-mile-long valley, found at the northern tip of the [Sonoran Desert](#), runs along the [Okanagan Lake](#) with rolling hills and more days of sun than the Bordeaux region of France, resulting in near-perfect growing conditions. Wineries in the Okanagan Valley range from smaller, family-run vineyards such as [Hester Creek Estate Winery and Villa](#), [SummerGate Winery](#), [TIME Estate Winery](#) and [Tinhorn Creek Vineyards](#), to world-class operations such as [Quails' Gate Winery](#), [Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate](#) and [CedarCreek Estate Winery](#) (twice named "Canada's Winery of the Year" by WineAlign's National Wine Awards of Canada), and even a biodynamic winery: [Summerhill Pyramid Winery](#).

