



California's Central Coast Wine Region

Because of its proximity to the ocean, the Central Coast is the perfect place for a midday picnic in the vineyards and a toast on the beach at sunset. Visitors also enjoy major attractions such as Hearst Castle, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and 11 Spanish missions. Thanks to the Santa Ynez Valley's starring role in the film *Sideways*, the region's rolling hills and winding roads have become a popular escape from the chaos of the city. Explore this region where life is always grape!

Regional Description: A Toast to the Coast

The Central Coast is comprised of the counties of Alameda (Livermore Valley), Contra Costa, Monterey, Santa Barbara (Santa Ynez Valley), San Benito, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo (Paso Robles), San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz (Santa Cruz Mountains). The region is home to 30 American Viticultural Areas (AVAs). Although similar in climate and topology, each has a slightly different microclimate which affects the varietals grown and the styles of wines produced.

History: Humble Beginnings

This region's wine heritage dates back nearly 200 years, when the first vines in the region were planted by Franciscan monks in Carmet (Monterey County) and San Antonio (Santa Barbara). Used primarily for sacramental wines, the grapes were also made into brandy to serve as a revenue source. As gold seekers from all over the world settled into the valleys around Santa Barbara, the agriculture industry blossomed. Vineyard acreage grew dramatically, with most of the vineyards planted with cuttings brought over from Europe. In the past decade the Central Coast expanded and matured into a well-known, world-class wine region. Today growers sell much of their grapes to wineries throughout California, and many premium award-winning wines are produced in the region.

Climate: Microclimates are Key

California's Central Coast wine region is known for its proximity to the Pacific Ocean. The cooling flow resulting from fog and afternoon ocean breezes spilling into coastal valleys allows for a long growing season and the slow, even ripening of varietals such as Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Conversely, many areas along the Central Coast are geographically protected from these cooling effects. Their warm, dry day-time temperatures are ideal for ripening full-bodied Rhône and Bordeaux varietals of amazing intensity.

Geography: Bottoms Up!

Much of this area between Los Angeles and San Francisco is former ocean bottom. A high concentration of sand and limestone combined with the rocky soils deposited by the runoff from the surrounding mountains create a unique soil composition. Excellent drainage and low nutrition combine to encourage root development, reduced vine growth, a lower water-to-sugar ratio and highly concentrated flavors.

American Viticultural Areas

American Viticultural Areas, or AVAs, are delimited grape growing areas distinguishable by geographic climatic and historic features – which are sometimes notes on bottles of California wine. AVA boundaries have been delineated in a petition field and accepted by the U.S. Government. Following is a list of the AVAs in the Central Coast:

Alameda County

Central Coast
Livermore Valley
San Francisco Bay

Contra Costa County

San Francisco Bay

Monterey County

Arroyo Seco
Carmel Valley
Central Coast
Chalone
Hames Valley
Monterey
San Antonio Valley
San Bernabe
San Lucas
Santa Lucia Highlands

San Benito County

Central Coast
Chalone
Cienega Valley
Lime Kiln Valley
Mount Harlan
Pacheco Pass
Paicines
San Benito
San Francisco Bay

San Francisco County

Central Coast

San Francisco Bay

San Luis Obispo County

Arroyo Grande Valley
Central Coast
Edna Valley
Paso Robles
Santa Maria Valley
York Mountain

San Mateo County

Central Coast
San Francisco Bay
Santa Cruz Mountains

Santa Barbara County

Central Coast
Santa Maria Valley
Santa Rita Hills
Santa Ynez Valley

Santa Clara County

Central Coast
San Francisco Bay
San Ysidro District
Santa Clara Valley
Santa Cruz Mountains

Santa Cruz County

Ben Lomond
Central Coast
San Francisco Bay
Santa Cruz Mountains

Explore the Central Coast

Follow these links to learn more about the Central Coast:

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| Central Coast Vineyard Team | www.vineyardteam.org |
| Central Coast Winegrowers Association | www.ccwga.org |
| Contra Costa | www.visitcontracosta.org |
| Independent Grape Growers of Paso Robles Area | http://iggpra.com |
| Livermore Valley Winegrowers Association | www.livermorewine.com |
| Monterey County | www.montereyinfo.org |

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| Monterey County Vintners & Growers Association | www.montereywines.org |
| Paso Robles | www.pasorobleschamber.com |
| Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance | www.pasowine.com |
| San Benito county Winegrowers' Association | www.sbcwinegrowers.org |
| San Luis Obispo County | www.sanluisobispocounty.com |
| San Luis Obispo Vintners & Growers Association | www.slowine.com |
| San Mateo County | www.sanmateocounty.com |
| Santa Barbara | www.santabarbara.com |
| Santa Barbara County Vintners Association | www.sbcountywines.com |
| Santa Clara | www.santaclara.org |
| Santa Cruz | www.santacruzca.org |
| Santa Cruz Mountains Vintners Association | www.scmwa.com |
| Santa Ynez Valley | www.syvva.com |
| Viticulture Association of the Santa Cruz Mountains | www.vascm.org |
| Wine Artisans of Santa Lucia Highlands | www.santaluciahighlands.com |