



Paradise Pantry's European Vacation 2020



Spain

With its extensive coastline and variety of elevations, Spain is the third major wine producing region that we'll be visiting during our 2020 excursion. Unlike Italy or France, Spain has risen to prominence as a major producer relatively recently in comparison. The country boasts the largest vineyard acreage in the world, but yields smaller amounts of wine overall due to often drier conditions and necessary spacing for their most well known varietal vines.

Like Italy and France, Spain attempts to maintain a hierarchy of organization for quality and regional accuracy (DO, DOP, IGP) but the often freewheeling and more carefree attitudes of winemakers tend to flout the rules, and excellent wines can be found throughout the country from large and small producers alike.

In this edition, we'll explore some of the highlights from the Paradise Pantry shelves to illustrate some of the truly excellent regions in España.

Andalucia

For more than 20 centuries, Andalucia has been synonymous with one of Spain's greatest (and oldest) wines: the often misunderstood sherry. Specifically, the regions of Malaga, Sanlúcar, Montilla and Jerez have gathered increasing acclaim for producing some truly excellent vintages. This week we're presenting a manzanilla—the style of which is widely considered to be the best expression of a sherry currently on the market—from Jerez, one of the most celebrated 'sherry towns' in Spain. The area has been a celebrated producer of sherry for over 2000 years

As with most great regional European wines, the local fare goes hand in hand with wine that stands beside it. The Andalusian region is renowned for its excellent seafood, and likewise sherry from the region pairs exceptionally well with oysters and shellfish as well as cured meats and olives. Despite its richness (often served in a tulip, similarly to porto) sherry is sometimes compared to Champagne, due to the typically high chalk content in which both grape varieties thrive.

Besides sherry, this southernmost region is known for its quintessentially Spanish bodegas and tapas often served alongside the wines within them, as well as the locals enjoying a glass of *fino* (sherry) in the *tabanco* (sherry taverns). Bodegas (stylized wine cellars and storage facilities) provide not only a 'tasting room'-style environment for customers, but also a space for the region's wines to mature in racks that are often twenty feet or more high. Here the barrels are continually turned, rotated and mixed with newer blends in the traditional solera system of continuous mixing and tasting until they reach the ideal state for imbibing.



An aerial photograph of a coastal city in Galicia, Spain. The city is built on a hillside overlooking the ocean. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, and a sandy beach is visible in the foreground. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The city features a mix of modern and traditional architecture, including a prominent tower on the left side.

Rias Baixas

In contrast to Andalucía's port-cities and booming maritime economy, Galicia sits at the Northwestern-most tip of the peninsula, just north of the Portuguese border. With a climate more prone to rain than Mediterranean warmth, the hilly, pine tree-lined landscapes of the rías (similar to fjords) present a climate more akin to Pacific Northwest of the United States than many other parts of Spain.

A handful of heartier, more thick skinned grapes do especially well in this climate, with Albariño being the reigning king of the region. The combination of higher than average rainfall and regular sea breezes imparts Rias Baixas Albariño with a noticeable salinity and nuanced fresh melon and citrus.

Similarly to Andalucía, seafood (especially Mussels) are a staple of the local economy, and Albariño produced in Rias Baixas is an excellent pairing for the local fare. Try this week's recommended Albariño with some shellfish, or if you're feeling ambitious, a traditional Spanish-Basque Paella!

Ribera del Duero

Although the region of Rioja is widely considered to be the red wine Mecca of the nation of Spain, the Ribera del Duero is the up-and-coming new kid in town. Barely known as late as the 1980s, the region is only sixty miles from Rioja, and similarly to Rioja, has become exceedingly well known for one of Spain's most highly regarded exports: the sturdy and bold Tempranillo. The region has become so highly esteemed in fact, that Wine Spectator named it the Wine Region of the Year in 2012. Besides Tempranillo, this area also produces excellent Cabernet, Malbec and Merlot. Curiously, the only white grape that is allowed to be planted en masse in the region is Albillo, which is typically produced predominantly to be eaten, not pressed.

Ribera del Duero (or Ribera for short) refers to the Duero River, which concurrently flows to Portugal and become the Douro— the home of port. The north-central location is not all that Ribera shares with Rioja; both production regions use the classifications of “Crianza” equate to two years aged with twelve months in oak, “Reserva” connotes three years with twelve months in oak, and finally “Gran Reserva” refers to five years of aging with two of those years in oak barrels. Both regions produce exceedingly high-quality and cellar-worthy wines, and have become highly regarded throughout the Europe and the world.





Catalonia

At the center of Spanish culture lies the fiercely independent Catalonia, its four autonomous regions include Barcelona, and in recent years the movement for Catalan independence has increased in prominence across the world. Besides the current flashpoint of political upheaval, Catalonia is also arguably the national seat of Spanish culture writ large. With a cultural heritage that spans as far back as the Paleolithic period, this region has been heavily involved in countless major turning points in European history, and at the eastern border of the peninsula it is quite literally the gateway to the whole of Europe.

Considering the relative gravity of Catalonia in the overall scope of Spanish culture, it comes as no surprise that the region also produces some of its finest wines. With a climate that varies dramatically from north to south, there are a number of large DOs (Denominación de Origen, a classification similar to France's AOC) producing spectacular domestic varietals. The most important Catalan production region is Penedes, both in terms of overall production and diversity. With a consistently warm and accommodating Mediterranean environment, Penedes produces both white and red wines (as well as rosés) including several

varietals native to Spain, including Garnacha, Carinena, Monastrell and Tempranillo. However, arguably the most important contribution from the region is in the nationally treasured Cava—Spain's flagship sparkling wine. Although Cava is typically blended from a variety of white grapes, since 2017 it has been required that Cava can only be rendered from organic grapes, making it the first 100% organic sparkling wine appellation in the world. This week, we offer a fantastic Cava that provides an ideal snapshot of the best that Penedes has to offer.

Featured Wines

ORLEANS BORBÓN

Manzanilla Sherry

Jerez

2018

This deeply aromatic sherry has a depth of acidity that makes it feel almost citric. A complex Manzanilla blended from wines five years of age, it has the freshness of the sea breeze in Sanlucar, making it an ideal aperitif. Straw in color with tangy aromas of the sea rounded out by fruity lemon curd, almond skin, toasted bread and yeasty notes on the palate.

LEIRANA

100% Albariño

Rias Baixas

2018

This is a wine that is unmistakably of the sea and of the maritime zone of Salnes. Using forgotten techniques and generational viticultural knowledge, the producers recreate the Albariños of yesteryear, with a wine of power, elegance and salinity. The salinity of Leirana makes it a natural pair for oysters and shellfish of all kinds. A perfect seafood pairing as the summer winds down.

TOTUS TUUS

Cava Reserva Brüt

Penedes

2019

Aged for 20 months before it is released, this estate-bottled Cava is a Spanish equivalent to “Grower Champagne” for a fraction of the cost. This Cava has very expressive floral, clover, citrus and mineral aromas that are a great match for meat, fish and chicken tapas. Expect a bright, dry, lively mineral character that will compliment sweet, savory or spicy flavors with equal facility.

JC VIZCARRA

100% Temperanillo

Ribero del Duero

2015

Bright and elegant with restraint in its natural power and impeccable balance, JC is a vin de garde in the classic Ribera vein. The dark fruit and savory, herbal notes in JC Vizcarra are a natural pair with grilled, braised and roasted red meats. For a classic Ribera pair, try it with grilled leg of lamb...but braised short ribs or a rib roast would all make beautiful companions for JC Vizcarra.

Price: \$100 for the four pack \$150 with the added bonus wine

Featured Cheeses

MANCHEGO 1605 Raw Sheep

Named for the year the novel "Don Quixote" was written. Natural rind and aged for 6-9 months. Tasting notes: sweet, earthy milk with warm spices. Bring on the big tannin, bold reds for this beauty. This cheese will pair beautifully with the temperanillo featured above.

PATA CABRA Raw Cow's Milk

This washed rind cheese has a smooth, pungent flavor. The rind turns from a reddish color to a pale orange-brown color as it ages. Use this cheese on your cheeseboard or add it to your favorite mac 'n cheese recipe. Serve with dry white wine such as a dry Riesling, thin slices of Serrano ham and Marcona almonds both available in our Market.

LEONORA Goat Milk

Semi soft ripened bloomy rind cheese. Produced in the mountainous region of Leon in northwestern Spain. Made from the pasteurized milk of Murciana goats.. The cheese balances acidity and richness, with a mushroomy creamline that develops as it ripens.

Includes: 1/8 lb. of Serrano ham, Torres Selecta potato chips, Aintzia Basque Peppers and Benfumat White Anchovies **\$40**





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