

8 TOP TIPS FOR VISITING WINERIES & DISTILLERIES



SO YOU LOVE WINE, WHISKEY AND TRAVELING... CHECK OUT THESE TOP TIPS!

4 TOP TIPS FOR VISITING WINERIES

one

Plan ahead. Most of us are used to associating wine with the evening—dinner, post-work drinks—but when planning a day tasting and touring your way through the wine country and visiting wineries, it is best to get started as early as possible. Many wineries close daily at 4 pm and very few stay open past 6.

While most wineries with tasting rooms are open for walk-in tastings or tours, some, including many of the high-end wineries, require appointments.

Be prepared for micro-climates

two

Often, wine regions or vineyards are selected because they have a specific climate. This means in two vineyards that are very near to each other, one may be chilly and windy and one may be calm and sunny. You could go from high altitude to foothills, to sweating in just a few hours.

Oftentimes, you will be walking through vineyards or tasting outside. Be sure to protect your skin and protect yourself from bugs.

Best time to travel

three

Spring is great for travelling to wine regions; everything is fresher and brighter. The previous season's wines will be settling down in their barrels or tanks, and might even be available to sample. Summer wine regions certainly shimmer with a dramatic atmosphere in the heat of midsummer. Vines will be verdant and grapes will be formed, but won't yet have taken on their final colouration.

Autumn brings beautiful colours, ripening grapes, bubbling ferments – but it is harvest time for many. Winter wine travel can be difficult because many wineries are traditionally closed to guests over winter. But wine tourism is fast becoming a year-round activity, and winter wine tourism has some unique benefits. The lack of tourists brings the opportunity to indulge in local cuisine and stunning views.

Don't be afraid to spit

four

The spit buckets and/or sinks are there for a reason! If your goal for the day is to actually taste and evaluate as many wines as possible, spitting may be a good idea to avoid dulling the senses. If your goal is to have a carefree day in wine country, then, by all means, ignore the buckets!

4 TOP TIPS FOR VISITING DISTILLERIES

five

Plan ahead. Today your choices are many—both in the number of distilleries and the types of tours you can experience. From the opportunity to fill a bottle straight from a cask in the warehouse, or even to blend your own version of whiskey. Distilleries provide tours at multiple levels, such as introductory, expert, or VIP, that offer special experiences.

What about attire and tour areas?

six

Dress appropriately for the time of year: stillrooms can be extremely warm when distillation is taking place, but outside be prepared to encounter sun, rain, wind, or snow, sometimes all within the same day! Wear sneakers or walking shoes for comfort: you may need to climb steep stairs and stand on industrial open mesh steel flooring. Production areas of many distilleries are not wheelchair accessible, though access is improving. It's uncommon for old distillery buildings to have elevators between floors, be sure to notify us if you require extra assistance.



Tasting etiquette

seven

No matter how curious you are, be patient and don't swallow the whiskey right away. Listen and learn: your guide will walk you through the different stages of whiskey appreciation and will point out the key flavors in each dram.

Tasting isn't the same as drinking. Evaluate and enjoy the whiskey. Observe the color. Give it a smell, gently. Sip small and savor. Don't forget the finish. Let it linger, evolve and then fade away.

What questions should I ask at a distillery or should I ask anything?

eight

- How many bottles/cases do you produce per year? Remember though that size does not equate to quality.
- Do you ferment all of the alcohol that you distill? Tricky question. Just look out for the distilleries' intent and philosophy.
- What spirit do you enjoy making the most? Smaller distilleries may be easy to figure out but the larger ones might surprise you.
- Do you have any new/upcoming releases? They might not tell you or you might actually get a small sample.
- How did you (or the distiller) get into distilling? This is your opportunity to dig and really hear their story.



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