



## 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 more than 200 years ago, when the first vines in the region were planted by Franciscan monks in Carmel (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 Rhone 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 noted 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:

Central Coast Vineyard Team	<a href="http://www.vineyardteam.org">www.vineyardteam.org</a>
Central Coast Winegrowers Association	<a href="http://www.ccwga.org">www.ccwga.org</a>
Contra Costa	<a href="http://www.visitcontracosta.org">www.visitcontracosta.org</a>
Independent Grape Growers of Paso Robles Area	<a href="http://iggpra.com">http://iggpra.com</a>

Livermore Valley Winegrowers Association	<a href="http://www.livermorewine.com">www.livermorewine.com</a>
Monterey County	<a href="http://www.montereyinfo.org">www.montereyinfo.org</a>
Monterey County Vintners & Growers Association	<a href="http://www.montereywines.org">www.montereywines.org</a>
Paso Robles	<a href="http://www.pasorobleschamber.com">www.pasorobleschamber.com</a>
Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance	<a href="http://www.pasowine.com">www.pasowine.com</a>
San Benito County Winegrowers' Association	<a href="http://www.sbcwinegrowers.org">www.sbcwinegrowers.org</a>
San Luis Obispo County	<a href="http://www.sanluisobispocounty.com">www.sanluisobispocounty.com</a>
San Luis Obispo Vintners & Growers Association	<a href="http://www.slowine.com">www.slowine.com</a>
San Mateo County	<a href="http://www.sanmateocounty.com">www.sanmateocounty.com</a>
Santa Barbara	<a href="http://www.santabararaca.com">www.santabararaca.com</a>
Santa Barbara County Vintners Association	<a href="http://www.sbcountywines.com">www.sbcountywines.com</a>
Santa Clara	<a href="http://www.santaclara.org">www.santaclara.org</a>
Santa Cruz	<a href="http://www.santacruzca.org">www.santacruzca.org</a>
Santa Cruz Mountains Vintners Association	<a href="http://www.scmwa.com">www.scmwa.com</a>
Santa Ynez Valley	<a href="http://www.syvva.com">www.syvva.com</a>
Viticulture Association of the Santa Cruz Mountains	<a href="http://www.vascm.org">www.vascm.org</a>
Wine Artisans of Santa Lucia Highlands	<a href="http://www.santaluciahighlands.com">www.santaluciahighlands.com</a>