



California's San Joaquin Valley Wine Region

The San Joaquin Valley is agriculturally rich and drenched in sunshine. Farms in the San Joaquin Valley grow a host of agricultural products including cotton, grains, vegetables, fruits and nuts. But for wine lovers, the valley is where the grapes grow. The majority of California's wine, table and raisin grapes are grown in this valley. For visitors, the San Joaquin Valley is a rural retreat from the fast-paced city and for its residents, farming and agriculture is the way of life. Read on to learn more about the "fruit basket of the world!"

Description: The Heartland

The San Joaquin Valley is comprised of the counties of Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kings, and Kern and is home to four American Viticultural Areas (AVAs). It measures about 220 miles in length and 40 to 80 miles in width, extending from around Modesto in the North to the Tehachapi Mountains in the South.

History: Deeply Rooted

The San Joaquin Valley was discovered by Spanish explorers in the 1500s but remained virtually uninhabited until the 1849 California Gold Rush. The first grapes were planted in the 1850s to quench the thirst of the Forty-Niners who migrated to California during this period. Irrigation was introduced in the 1880s, and the agriculture industry in the region began to flourish. The San Joaquin Valley is not only agriculturally rich, but culturally diverse as well. Tagalog, Hmong, Spanish, English, Cantonese, Russian and Italian are all spoken here.

Climate: Those Hot Summer Nights

Deep in the San Joaquin Valley, vineyards experience little rainfall and few frosts during the winter and hot summers. As a grape growing area, vineyards are artificially cooled by the irrigation techniques utilized by growers to temper and take advantage of the ample heat.

Geography: Fertile Land

The San Joaquin Valley is filled with fertile and rich soils, which are among the richest and deepest in the world. The mountain ranges in this region drain into the San Joaquin River, and the river deposits the deep loam (equal mixture of sand and silt) soils, which are characteristic of the region. The combination of soil and regional weather creates growing conditions that are often ideal and create vines that are naturally vigorous.

Varietals: Fruit- Fruit - Fruit!

The San Joaquin Valley specializes in fruit-forward, heat tolerant varieties similar to those found in southwest Australia, Spain, and Southern Italy. Chenin Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon do very well, and reds such as Grenache, Tempranillo and Zinfandel shine.

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 San Joaquin Valley.

Fresno County

Fresno

Madera County

Madera

Stanislaus County

Diablo Grande

Salado Creek

Tracy Hills

Explore the San Joaquin Valley

Follow the links below to explore the San Joaquin Valley:

Bakersfield	www.bakersfieldcvb.org
Central California Winegrowers Association	www.ccwinegrowers.org
Fresno	www.fresnocvb.org
Fresno County	www.gofresnocounty.com
Madera Vintners Association	www.visitvisalia.org
Madera Vintners Association	www.maderavintners.com
Modesto	www.visitmodesto.com
Tulare County	www.co.tulare.ca.us/visitors/