



# Spanish Rioja – centuries of tradition at its best!

## Warm sunny climate

Spain produces about 34 million hectoliters of wine a year and is the third largest wine producer in Europe. The grapes of the most famous wine, La Rioja, grow in the Basque countryside, west of Logrono.

Spain's dry, sunny climate and yellow earth provides extraordinary conditions for high quality wines such as the Rioja wines.

The district of Rioja can be divided into two parts: *Rioja Alta* and *Rioja Bajas* in the Basque region and *Rioja Baja*.

In Spain, Rioja wines, with its high acidity and soft tannin, are considered to be the market leader of Spanish wines.

## Red and white

Rioja wine has a history with a long red wine tradition dating back to the late 17th century. But Rioja does not only consist of one grape alone. It is a blend of several different grapes.

The most well known grapes are the black *Tempranillo* grape, with a more fruity vanilla taste or the lighter but harsher *Garnacha* grape. But there are also grape varieties like the *Mazuela* or the *Graciano*. Most white wines are blended of the *Malvasía* or *Viura* grapes and are stored for a very short time only to give them a fresher and fruitier taste. Amongst the more known white grapes are *Crianza* and the *Reserva* grape, bearing the taste of vanilla, citrus or strawberry, a wine that will pair itself famously with either meat or fish.

## Aging with grace

To ensure their high quality Rioja wines undergo a long barrel aging process which gives the Spanish wines their exceptional, popular and savory taste flavour. The heat then gives the wine its high alcohol content.

The *Vino Joven*, their youngest wine, has a fresh, fruity taste and is very often not stored at all. Also, the *Vino Joven* is not suitable to be stored in its bottle. It should be drunk directly.



Rioja wines come in four different quality levels:

The young wine *Vino Joven*, the *Crianza* a typical two year old oakstored white Rioja grape, the *Reserva*, which is oakstored for

at least three years and at last but not least, the *Gran Reserva*, a quality wine stored for a total of five years, first in oak barrels and then in bottles.

## A trendy vino

The Rioja wine has old traditions but the modern winemakers of today make a new range of Spanish Rioja wines, the *Vinos de alta Expresion*.

This new wine is fresher and fruitier than before with a flexibility in storage and suited to their own style and impression with an individual taste and flavour of each winemaker or wine house.



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