

Rioja Oriental

Maribel's Guide to the Rioja ©



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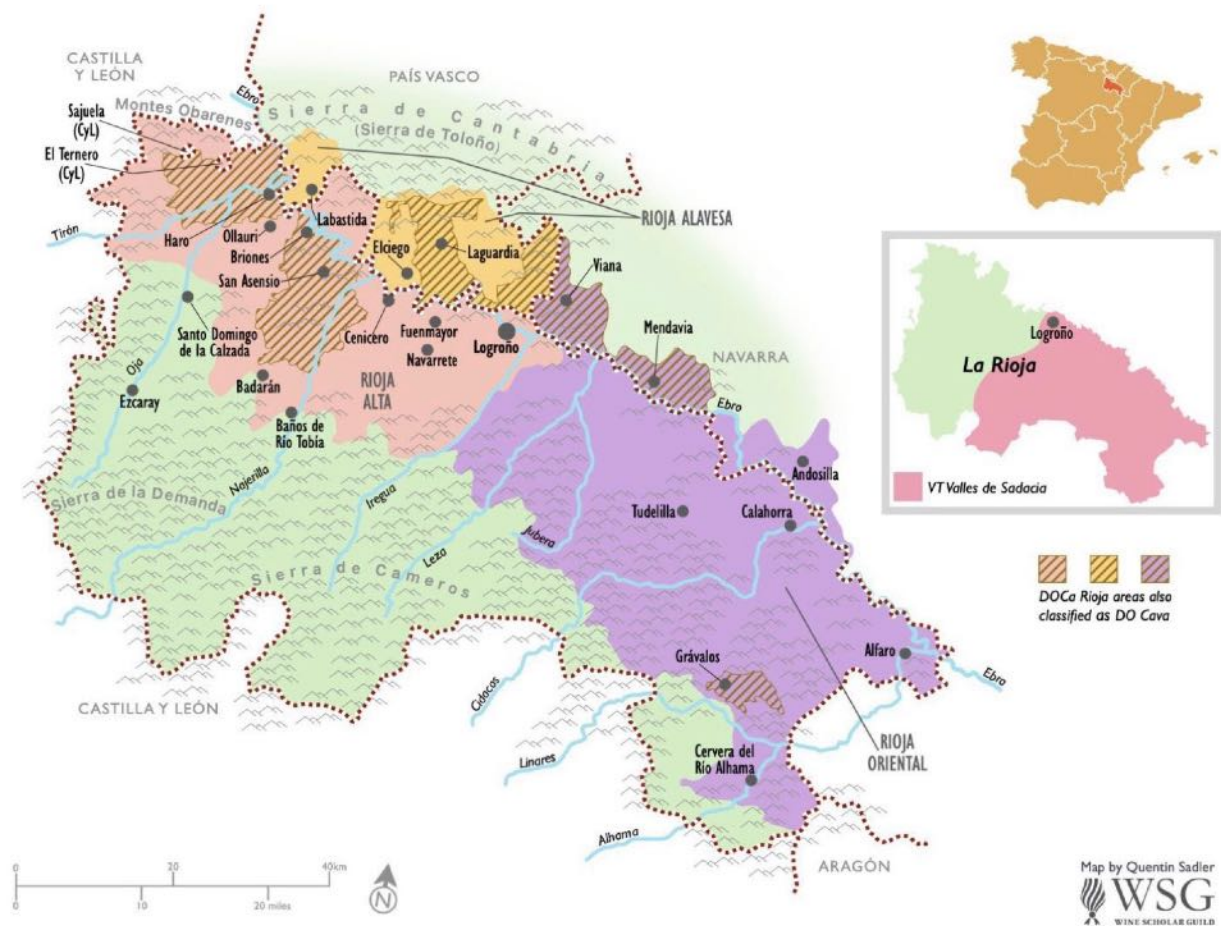
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“Los nuevos proyectos que están surgiendo en Rioja Oriental hacen de ella una región con mucho futuro” “The new projects emerging in Rioja Oriental make it a region with a bright future.” Tim Atkin, April 2023

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The Rioja Wine Region



No adventure in Spain would be complete without a visit to Spain's oldest and best known wine region, considered the "benchmark" of Spanish winemaking. The Rioja is a stunningly beautiful and ancient land inhabited since the Neolithic era where you'll find atmospheric fortress towns sitting on a hill, some with their medieval walls still intact and filled with Noble homes displaying heraldic shields. There are enormous Gothic churches, each with its own amazing, ornately gilded Baroque altarpiece, but seldom seen, because these churches are kept tightly shut other than for mass. Ancient burial markers (*dólmenes*), scattered about the fields and vineyards, intermix with the wineries; traditional, boutique and the larger, industrial wineries. Here is where you'll also find a number of charming family run country inns, along with superb Riojan and Basque cuisine.

Proposed for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage Listing in 2013, it's three distinct sub-zones make up the wine-producing region of Spain's oldest DO - the [Rioja Alta](#), whose capital is Haro, the [Rioja Alavesa](#), that section of the Rioja in the southern portion of the province of Álava, the Basque Country, the smallest of the three sub-zones, and the [Rioja Oriental](#) (formally known as the Rioja Baja), the majority of which lies in the dryer and much hotter southeastern portion of the Rioja, and is the largest sub-zone. A small section of southern Navarra, La Navarre Rioja Alta, often referred to as the "other Rioja", the undiscovered part of the Rioja, also belongs to the Rioja Denomination de Origen, as does a small area of Castile y Leon, on the western edge of the Rioja Alta.

There are 144 municipalities in the DOCa Rioja: La Rioja, Navarra and País Vasco (Basque Country), which runs some 100 kilometers from end to end. Spain's largest, the Rioja DOCa has more than 66,000 hectares of vineyards currently under harvest with nearly 16,700 winegrowers and thousands of wines.

The Rioja Oriental



It used to be that the Rioja Alavesa, with 13,000 hectares of vineyards under production and nearly 400 wineries, and Rioja Alta, covering the western portion of the Rioja with most of the vineyards of its 571 wineries lying south of the Ebro River, held the most interest for wine tourism, as they produce some of the area's most expensive and venerable wines, boasting the most prestigious wineries in the region, but that has now changed somewhat with the introduction of some new wineries in the Rioja Oriental (Eastern Rioja), an area that accounts for some 40% of the total wine production in the Rioja.



In the vineyards near Alfaro, La Rioja Oriental

Planning Your Visit

When to come? Although the Rioja makes an excellent year round destination, for the best weather and the most scenic beauty, you should plan your visit from either early April through May or from September through late October. You will find the vineyards exploding in vibrant colors as fall approaches and will be at their most spectacular by mid to late September. Because of climate change, the fall harvest is beginning earlier, now as early as late August and will be completed in most of the Rioja mid October.

Most wineries in the Rioja offer guided tours, and all but a handful require you to schedule your visit in advance. Tours and tastings are conducted in Spanish, a few in French, with some offering one, if not two tours a day, in English, particularly those wineries in and around Haro, Laguardia and Logroño, which has been thoroughly discovered by English-speaking visitors. Visiting hours are normally restricted; some are open mornings only and nearly all will be closed for lunch

(1:30 to 4:00 pm). Many of the wineries have an online booking request form detailing visiting hours and available languages. Be sure to request a tour in the language you are most comfortable with. Tours and tasting can be as short as 90 minutes, with many exceeding two hours. A few wineries have opened wine bars to accommodate those who don't have the time to take a walk in the vineyard or visit the bodega, but reservations are still required at most of these wineries, with only a few allowing walk-ins.

The closest one gets to doing a “on-the-fly”, à la California's Napa Valley, the “Wine Ghetto” in Lompoc, or hitting the Urban Wine Trail in Santa Barbara are the local food, wine and music events such as the Villabuena Wine Fest in May and Haro's Barrio de la Estación in June. Or you can start the year off with the Uztaberri Eguna in Lapuebla de Labarca in early February when the village welcomes the new vintages with up to 20 wineries opening their doors to visitors.

For several years the area was slowly changing, adapting its mind set with the opening of flamboyant "designer" wineries designed by world class architects or “starchitects” to attract larger scale wine tourism such as Santiago Calatrava's striking pavilion designed for Bodegas Ysios, the over-the-top Frank Gehry designed Marqués de Riscal City of Wine, Bodegas Baigorri by Basque architect Iñaki Aspiazua Iza, and the dramatic and enormous Bodegas Campo Viejo by Ignacio Quemada which sits in the hills outside Logroño. But most wineries in the Rioja remain strictly no-nonsense business operations, not set up for massive wine tourism like many their counterparts in the sherry region of Jerez de la Frontera, or the cava growing region of northeast Spain, the Penedès in Catalunya.

If this is your first time in the Rioja, we recommend doing a private tour and tasting, scheduling no more than two tours in a day, one for mid to late morning and one around noon. You can then add a stop at one of the new wine bars where you can do a tasting without a tour of the cellar and/or vineyard, before enjoying a leisurely lunch Riojan style. And remember, most shops will be shut down until after lunch. Three days in either the Rioja Alavesa, Alta, or the Rioja Oriental, will give you time to visit several wineries, but we feel five days in either the Alavesa, Alta or Oriental is optimum, allowing you to alternate winery visits with cultural tours and enjoy this uniquely beautiful wine region. Just note that here still remains a language issue in areas outside of Haro, Laguardia, Logroño and Alfaro.

Hotels can arrange some tours but don't rely entirely on your hotel staff to do this for you if you have something special in mind, and particularly if you plan on traveling in or around harvest time or during the very busy summer season. And please note that during the hectic harvest season some of the small, family-owned wineries may not open for visits at all, although the "major players", such as Marqués de Riscal, Bilbaínas, Muga, CVNE, López de Heredia, Ysios, Finca Valpiedra and LAN will continue to provide tours. Some wineries will even allow you to join the harvest for a few hours.

We have put together a profile of the bodegas in 69 villages in the Rioja Alavesa, Alta, Oriental and Navarre Rioja Alta, plus 13 more in the 6 villages in the Ribera Baja de Navarra that we consider interesting and worth visiting. We haven't been to all of them ourselves as yet, but have visited a large number over the last twenty plus years. Not all of the bodegas are open to the public, but you will be able to visit the vast majority listed on the following pages, each unique in their own way.

Very few wineries offer a complimentary visit. The cost of a standard tour and tasting can be as low as 8€ to 10€, or as high as 50€, while premium tours and tasting can be easily exceed 150€/person.

If you don't have the time or desire to plan your own tour, to do the needed preparation, then you can put yourself in the hands of [Iberian Traveler](#), as we are superbly well-equipped to help arrange your entire visit to the Rioja and provide you with an excellent, informative English-speaking local guide.



In the vineyards near Aldeanueva de Ebro during the harvest

Getting To The Rioja Oriental

The Michelin Regional Map #573; Basque Country-Navarra-La Rioja, is very detailed and extremely helpful when planning your route to and from the three regions of the Rioja, the Alavesa, Alta and Oriental.

By Car From Madrid

The drive from Madrid to Logroño normally takes about 4 hours without stops if you are taking the A1/E5 north past Burgos. It's a few minutes shorter if you take the E-90/N-111 through Soria and the Cameros, a more scenic drive. If you are driving directly to the Rioja Oriental on the A1/E5 from the Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport after an a long international flight, we recommend stopping overnight then you can stay overnight at the Parador de Soria, or stop a little earlier, spending your first night in Spain in Sigüenza, at the Castle of the Bishops, the Parador de Sigüenza.



Castle of the Bishops, Parador de Sigüenza

By Car From San Sebastián-Donostia

If you're staying in sophisticated, stately San Sebastián, head toward Pamplona on the A-15 then south on the A-12. It will take about 2-1/2 hours. The road through Navarra will take you to Logroño. If you have the time, this route gives you a chance to taste some of Navarra's excellent vintages from Bodega Otazu, Pago de Larraizar, Irache, Arinzano, Castillo de Monjardin, Señorío de Sarría and Bodegas Nekeas, to name just a few.

By Car From Pamplona

If you're planning on staying in Pamplona, Navarra's capital is just over an hour's drive from Alfaro following the AP-15 south. One-day guided tours are also available from Pamplona.

By Car From Barcelona

If driving from Barcelona, the quickest route would be to take the AP-68, which will take you directly to Alfaro. Since the drive is a little over 4 hours without stops

we recommend you take a lunch break before reaching Alfaro in the Rioja Oriental, either in Tudela (Navarra) at Restaurante Treintaitrés or Trinquete, with one Repsol sun. If you want to take a short detour to Cintruénigo, then you can have lunch at Restaurante Maher. In Alfaro, we recommend Graccurreis, Morro Tango or San Roque Asador. When driving from Barcelona we often spend the night at the AC Hotel Ciudad de Tudela so we can explore the city, see what's new. The rather unique Hotel Aire de Bardenas, located outside of the city, is also a good option, especially if you have a couple of days and want to explore the Bardenas Reales.

Arriving By Bus

The Alsa Bus runs from Madrid at Avenida de América, or from the Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport, Terminal T4 to Logroño. Tickets are 24,76€ one-way. The trip takes 4 hr 15 min from the airport or 4 hr 5 min from downtown at Avenida de América, with three stops. There are two departures/day, Monday-Saturday, at 8:00 am and 3:00 pm. Bus service between Bilbao and Haro or Logroño is offered by CuadraBus with at least 4 departures/day. The trip takes a little over one hour to Haro and 1 hr 45 min to Logroño. The cost is between 6€ and 10€, one-way. The bus also stops in the Riojan villages of Labastida, Ábalos, Samaniego and Laguardia. There is only limited bus service from Madrid to Alfaro.

Arriving By Train

Most visitors to the Rioja arrive by car, but there are normally three trains per day during the week, departing Madrid with the first one leaving at 11:27 am, arriving in Alfaro at 3:57 pm. There are also daily departures from Barcelona beginning at 11:00 am. See Renfe to book your tickets.

Flying To The Rioja Oriental

Zaragoza (ZAZ) is the closest international airport to Alfaro, a little over a one-hour drive away. The airport is serviced by Air Europa, Binter Canarias, Iberia, Ryanair, Volotea, Vueling, Wizz Air. Taxi service is available at the airport; Radio Taxi Aragón (+34) 976 383 838, Radio Taxi Cooperativa (+34) 976 757 575 and Radio Taxi Zaragoza (+34) 976 424 242.



Hotel Villa de Ábalos, La Rioja

Where To Base Your Stay

While the temptation exists to choose a base in a city, and the provincial capital of Logroño does have many charms, but if you come to the region by car, we strongly suggest that you base yourself in the countryside in one of the charming medieval stone villages, some of which are surrounded by vineyards, so you can experience the real flavor of this enchanting land. There are several options to choose from depending on the type of accommodation you're looking for. They range from a 5-star luxury property to a more modest Casa Rural.

If you feel you don't want to stay at the Frank Gehry designed Hotel Marqués de Riscal in Elciego, you have a few more excellent options to choose from, including one of our favorite places, the popular but modest 3-star 12-room Hotel Villa de Ábalos where you can dine on the best Riojan gastronomy at “La Cocina de Merche”. Some of the newer upscale properties available in the Rioja are the luxury 9-room Palacio de Samaniego, with its French-Basque restaurant and pool. It belongs to the Rothschild Family. The 16-room boutique Hotel Santa María

Briones, a comfortable, renovated 16th-century manor house, belongs to a local Riojan family. The chef here is Juan Cuesta, a native of Logroño who trained in Etxaurren's El Portal in Ezcaray, Venta de Moncalvillo and Martín Berasategui's MB Tenerife. Hotel Palacio de los Ángeles, a 5-star 18th-century baroque palace, opened recently in the heart of Haro with a restaurant by the Echapresto Brothers of Venta de Moncalvillo.

Options of where to stay in the Rioja for wine touring with a car include bodega hotels Finca de los Arandinos with 14 rooms near Entrena and Eguren Ugarte with 21 rooms in Párganos. Other excellent choices include the avant-garde 35-room Hotel Viura in Villabuena de Álava, Eurostars Los Agustinos in Haro, and the Silken Villa de Laguardia, in Laguardia. And if you're a Marriott-type, the Palacio Tondon, with a wine bar and restaurant, sits along the Ebro River in the small village of Briñas, not far from Haro. The Bodega-Hotel FyA, belonging to Grupo Piérola, is located near Navarrete.

If you need to rely on public transportation, then Logroño is your only practical choice with a few good options including the 54-room Fuerte Ruavieja, 30-room Hotel Calle Mayor, the boutique 41-room Áurea Palacio de Correos and the luxury boutique 4-suite hotel Ibiza Rooms in the "Plaza del Espolón". Although the city itself doesn't exude the feel of a wine town, that all changes with the Rioja Wine Harvest Festival (20-26 September 2024) and the Festival of San Mateo celebrated on September 21, when the city bursts with merriment. You can join in the fun of daily parades, outdoor lunches of grilled baby lamb chops, bullfights, concerts and fireworks, but be sure to book your hotel far in advance of the festival. If you must have easy access to large scale shopping and some nightlife, yes, then choose Logroño. But if you can do without dance clubs, tapas bars at your beck and call and you enjoy communing with nature, driving through vineyards, then you will be happier staying outside the city and do as we do; spend the early evening in Logroño's historic quarter, especially along the famous Calle Laurel dining on tapas, then return to the country for a restful night's sleep. Remember, this is farming country, so it tends to be rather quiet after 10:00 pm, except during fiesta.

For those wanting something different, then you can check out what's available through the Association of Casas Rurales de la Rioja.



Bodegas San Esteban

Rioja Wine Classifications

- Joven - Fresh, young table wine, designed to be consumed today.
- Crianza - Is wine aged a minimum of one year in an oak cask and up to 12 months in the bottle. These are quality wines meant for every day consumption.
- Reserva - Spends at least one year in oak casks and aged a minimum of two years in the bottle.
- Gran Reserva - An exceptional vintage having spent two years in oak casks followed by at least two years of aging in the bottle. Some Gran Reservas can be much older.
- Espumosos de Calidad de Rioja - This is the new sparkling wine designation, which includes such wines as Pandemonium Blanco De Blancas, Lumen Brut Reserva, Cava Conde de Haro Brut Reserva, Vivanco Cuvée Inédita Rosado Reserva Extra Brut, Conde Valdemar Finca Alto Cantabria Brut Nature, Santalba Brut Nature, Carlos Serres Brut and Tres Espumosos.

New Zonal Classifications

In 1912, 44 grape varieties coexisted in Rioja, which by 2000 had been reduced to just seven. In the 1970s, Garnacha accounted for 39 percent of the vineyards planted, whereas today it barely reaches 7.31 percent of the red varieties that make up its 4,435 hectares.

Like the wines of other Spanish regions, Rioja wines have long been categorized based strictly on their aging times, which has made sense given the wonderfully long and vibrant shelf-lives of many of this region's famous Reserva and Gran Reserva wines. However, for the past couple of years, DOCa Rioja has encouraged a shift in its classification system, placing new emphasis on the specific terroir and geographical origins of a given wine, a move that highlights the diversity that can be found in a single region due to different soils, microclimates and vineyard location, among other factors.

The official changes to the DOCa Rioja wine classification system took effect on January 1, 2019 giving both producers and consumers more tools with which to define and differentiate their favorite Rioja wines- long considered some of the world's finest.

- Vino de Zona – grapes grown in the zone, vinified and aged at the winery in the zone.
- Vino de Municipio – grapes grown in municipality.
- Viñedo Singular – wines long established single estate vineyards with the wine made and bottled on the estate.

Wine Associations in the Rioja

[ABRA-Asociación de Bodegas de Rioja Alavesa](#)

[Independent Family Wineries of the Rioja](#)

[Asociación Menudas Bodegas de Rioja](#)

[VIR - Viticultores Independientes en Rioja](#)

[Subsierra, Asociación de Bodegas y Viticultores](#)

[Bodegas de Logroño](#)

[Samaniego In Wine](#)



Laguardia, the fortified bastide town and capital of the Rioja Alavesa

Picturesque Villages of the Rioja

Some of the most picturesque villages can be found following the route of the wine from Haro to Logroño, a journey of some 50 kilometers. There are fewer villages along the road from Logroño to Alfaro, depending on which route you follow; the shorter 75 km route through Calahorra, or the slightly longer route on the north side of the Ebro River, in La Ribera Navarra, that will take you through Lodosa, known for its famous piquillo peppers, and San Adrián, with its ancient monastery dedicated to San Adrián y la Virgen de la Palma.

If you follow the route from Haro to Logroño, we recommend visiting the following historic towns along the way; Briñas, noted for its many mansions formerly inhabited by Haro's wine nobility. Labastida, the historic Basque village and impressive fortress town, which celebrates the traditional 17th-century dances to the Christ Child during Christmas. Briones, one of the most atmospheric and unspoiled villages in the Rioja sits adjacent to the impressive Dinastia Vivanco wine museum, and just across the Ebro River from its former enemy, San Vicente de la Sonsierra, which celebrates Holy Week with a fascinating Maundy Thursday

celebration followed by the Good Friday procession of “Los Picaos”, one of the best known and most important Holy Week processions in all of Spain. In San Vicente be sure to drive up to the top of the village to the Santa María la Mayor church for wonderful views of the area and of the castle of Davalillo lying just to the north of the small village of San Asencio. We also recommend visiting the sleepy and tiny wine villages of Ábalos, home to a dozen small wineries and Samaniego, another wine-making hamlet filled with mansions of warm, golden stone.

Back in the Rioja Alavesa, there is Villabuena de Álava, home to an astonishing 33 wineries, including three of our favorites; Bodega de la Marquesa (Valserrano), Bodegas Luis Cañas and Bodegas Badiola. Our very favorite village in Álava remains Laguardia, the fortified bastide town and capital of the Rioja Alavesa. And finally there is Elciego, where the Frank Gehry-designed hotel complex for Marqués de Riscal, the *Ciudad del Vino*, was inaugurated in September, 2006, which put the Rioja region firmly on the international wine tourism map.

The Rioja Alavesa Tourist Office can be found in the village of Laguardia at Calle Mayor, 52. They have produced an excellent online guide; ‘Rioja Alavesa Wine Route’. The office is open Monday-Saturday mornings from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and in the afternoon from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. On Sundays and public holidays it’s open from 10:45 am to 2:00 pm.

If you begin your visit to the region from Logroño, be sure to pick up the available brochures and booklets at the Tourist Office of La Rioja, Calle Portales, 50, open weekday mornings from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm and in the afternoon from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. The office is open Saturday and Sunday mornings from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and in the afternoons from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. Hours vary during the winter months. They also produce an excellent online guide of La Rioja.

Some of the historic towns in the Rioja Oriental you’ll find along the way from Logroño to Alfaro include: Agoncillo, with its medieval castle *Aguas Mansas*, Cornago, in the Alcarama Mountains, with its 12th-century castillo de Cornago, the mountain village of Quel, with its birthplace of Bretón de los Herreros, one of the most important and prolific comic playwrights of the 19th-century. There is also a 15th-century castle, currently under reconstruction. The 7-day Fiestas de Pan y Queso, the bread and cheese festival in Quel, a centuries-old tradition, runs every

year from 4-10 August. Plan on arriving early. Arnedo, a 20-minute drive southwest of Calahorra along the Cidacos River, a tributary of the Ebro, is the third largest and one of the most prosperous towns in the Rioja. It has a defensive fortification dating from the time of the Moors which overlooks the village. Here they celebrate a one-week long festival in late September, Las Fiestas de San Cosme y San Damián, that you shouldn't miss if you're in the area.

The Michelin Regional Map #573; Basque Country-Navarra-La Rioja, is very detailed and extremely helpful when planning your route to and from the three regions of the Rioja, the Alavesa, Alta & Oriental.



Harvest time in the vineyards in Quel

Wine Touring in Rioja Oriental

The Rioja Oriental, Spain's largest sub-region, and also its newest wine appellation (2018), has been undergoing a winemaking transformation the past several years as a new generation of winemakers have sought to reclaim the long abandoned higher ground, bringing about a rebirth of the native Garnacha grape. Originally known as the Rioja Baja, the Rioja Oriental begins just to the east of Logroño when you cross the Río Leza, continuing southeast along the Ebro River to Alfaro, a distance of some 70 kms. The region to the south and southeast is strikingly different of what you find west of Logroño, with more of the Mediterranean influence than the Rioja Alavesa and Alta. It is the warmest, driest and windiest part of Rioja, tending to have hotter and drier summers and colder winters, which traditionally produce stronger reds. This sub-region, largely flat and expansive, includes a narrow strip of the rich Navarran countryside to the north, the Navarre Rioja Alta, and is the largest wine producing region of Rioja, with over 24,000 hectares of vineyards, or 40% of Rioja's total wine production. It is also an area where vegetables reign supreme on both sides of the Ebro river.

Full of traditional family-run wineries mixed with larger producers, many based in the Alavesa and Alta, the Rioja Oriental offers visitors a wide selection of possibilities, including festivals like the 500-year-old tradition of the Bread and Cheese Festival in Quel in early August, and outstanding gastronomy throughout the region.

The Rioja Oriental has yet to attract any more upscale hotels like those found in the Rioja Alavesa and Alta, but if you are planning on staying in the area while wine touring then you can check out the 3-star Hotel Palacios in Alfama. The 2-star Hotel Ciudad de Calahorra and Parador Marco Fabio Quintiliano are in Calahorra. The Hotel Parras, El Molino del Cidacos, with a pool, and Casa Rural Las Pedrolas (1760) are in Arnedillo. The Hotel Virrey, ibis Styles La Rioja Arnedo and Hotel Restaurante Victoria are in Arnedo. The Casa Rural La Zaranda and the more upscale Casa de la Condesa (16th-century) are both in El Redal, the gateway to the enchanted Valle de Ocón.

Some of the historic towns in the Rioja Oriental you'll find along the way from Logroño to Alfaro include: Agoncillo, with its medieval castle *Aguas Mansas*, Cornago, in the Alcarama Mountains, with its 12th-century castillo de Cornago, the mountain village of Quel, with its birthplace of Bretón de los Herreros, one of the most important and prolific comic playwrights of the 19th-century. There is also a 15th-century castle, currently under reconstruction. The 7-day Fiestas de Pan y Queso, the bread and cheese festival in Quel, a centuries-old tradition, runs every

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Bodegas San Esteban vineyards

Murillo de Río Leza

A 20-minute drive from the center of Logroño will put you in the area where the slow moving Jubera and rushing waters of the Leza rivers meet, and where you will find signs of an ancient Roman encampment. The village of Murillo de Río Leza prospered during the time of the Muslims and their cultivation techniques, and when the continued after the Navarrans arrived in the 10th-century. The church of San Esteban Protomártir, built in the 16th-17th centuries, was declared *Bien de Interés Cultural* in 1979. It was here that the first white Tempranillo grape was grown in 1988, a result of a natural mutation from the red grape.

The village celebrates a number of religious and popular festivals during the year. “*La procesión de los piojosos*” is held in Las Candelas on the first Sunday in February. The festival of *San Esteban Protomartir* (the first martyr of Christianity), used to be celebrated in December is now held the first week of August with an encierro, a running of the vacas, parades, tastings. Market days are Tuesdays and Fridays. Your best options for lunch today would be in Logroño.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Paco García

Francisco García and Julia Pablo founded their family winery in Murillo de Río Leza in 2001 after years of growing grapes for the bulk market. La mano de Paco García, the hand of Paco García on the label, represents the values of the winery. After more than 6 years working, the son and manager, Juan Bautista wanted to make wines for the new generation, a wine that pleases and attracts, wines that were more enjoyable to drink. One of their new projects is aging wine in terracotta containers. Their *Beautiful Things de Paco García*, a blend of Tempranillo and Graciano grapes from their *La Dehesa* vineyards, planted in 1943 (470 meters), and aged for 16 months in French oak is their "Premier Cru" wine.

A 90-minute long visit, with a tasting of two wines, is 25€/person, while the 2-hour visit is 50€/person. If you only want to do a tasting of 4 wines with an aperitivo in the wine bar, that will be 18€/person. You can book your guided tour [online](#), or call (+34) 941 432 372 / 699 082 810, or email hola@bodegaspacogarcia.com to request a visit..

Bodegas San Esteban

This was the first cooperative in the DOCa Rioja (1953) and started with 16 founding members. Today there are 350 members with 500 hectares of vineyards located at an altitude of between 407-420 meters. In the 1980s the winery was extended and modernized and in 2000 they expanded to accommodate the larger production. In 2010 their *Tierras de Murillo* brand was born.

The winery and shop are open Monday to Saturday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm and in the afternoons Monday to Friday from 3:00 to 6:00 pm. You can reserve a tour and tasting [online](#), or call (+34) 941 432 031 to arrange a visit.

Hacienda Grimón

You'll find this winery, founded in 1999 by the brothers Paco and Eliseo Oliván, a few minutes south of Murillo de Río Leza on the LR-261 in the small hamlet of Lagunilla Jubera in the Jubera Valley near the Camero Viejo. The family's 38 hectares of vineyards are at an average elevation of 650 meters, with 24 hectares devoted to Tempranillo. All of their wines are made from their own vineyards and

harvested by hand. They also produce their own olive oil and conservas. German winemaker Alexandra Schmedes, co-owner of Bodegas Más Que Vinos (Toledo), has been involved in the creation of their successful line of wines, including a new barrel fermented Chardonnay introduced in 2017.

Contact them online, email info@haciendagrimon.com, or call (+34) 941 482 184 for more information, or to arrange a visit to the winery.



Winter in the Los Nuevos vineyard, 640 meters elevation

Galilea

This village of less than 400 inhabitants, whose name Galilea is derived from the pilgrims who traveled to the Holy Land during the Crusades, sits atop a hill in the lower Ocón valley, a short drive from Murillo de Río Leza on the LR-259. It's location offers a panoramic view of the Sierra de Cantabria in the distance to the northeast and the beech and pine forests of Sierra Hez in the western Pyrenees. It's one of 11 villages in what is called the Land of Ocón: Aldealobos, Los Molinos, Oteruelo, Pipaona, Las Ruedas, San Julián, Santa Lucía, Corera, El Redal, Galilea and Villa de Ocón, capital of this territory. The valley of Ocón is a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve. The parish church of San Vicente, dating from the 16th-century, is where Diego de Tejada y Laguardia, bishop of Ciudad Rodrigo and Pamplona, and archbishop of Burgos, is buried. His 17th-century house is nearby. The village is also the birthplace of Juan de Balmaseda, Governor of Chile (1768-70). They celebrate the patron saint of the village, San Vicente, on January 22 and San Roque and La Virgen on August 15 and 16.

You can also visit the local olive oil producers, Aceite de Galilea and [Aceites Hejul](#) if you are in the area. Well worth a stop.

For lunch you can try [Bar Restaurante La Alameda](#) in the small village of Pipaona in the Valle de Ocón, just to the south. Serving traditional and seasonal cuisine. Worth the short drive.

Wineries of interest

[Bodegas Nestares Eguizábal](#)

The winery estate is located a ten-minute drive down the road from Murillo de Río Leza in Galilea, in the Ocón Valley. After 15 years of working the vineyards, José Marí Nestares, a viticulturist from Fuenmayor, decided in 1998 to develop his own wines from the families 26 hectares of [vineyards](#) located on the plateau that separates the Ocón and Jubera valleys at an altitude up to 650 meters, and where you will also find almond and olive trees. In 1983 he began planting the vineyards exclusively with Tempranillo grapes and adapted to organic farming.

The winery, now in the hands of Lucía and her parents, Ramón and Marisa, is open during the week from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm and in the afternoons from 4:00 to 6:00 pm. They are members of the small group of [Independent Family Wineries](#) of the Rioja. Contact Lucía [online](#), email them at bodegas@nestareseguizabal.com, or call (+34) 699 253 771 to arrange a visit, or for additional information.



Fall colors in the vineyard of Bodegas Ochagavía

Alcanadre

From Galilea you can take a short 15-minute detour north on the LR-260 to the small village of Alcanadre, whose name in Arabic means "the bridge". It's located along the south bank of the Ebro River and where you will find the Santa María Church dating from the 16th-18th century. Outside of the village are the remains of the 1st-century Roman aqueduct, "*Puente Moros*", with 13 arches and more than 30 buttresses. It's thought that it provided Calahorra with water for hundreds of years before it was abandoned. Every Christmas there is a Living Nativity Scene: on Monte Viso, the living nativity scene of Alcanadre is performed, one of the most traditional and well-known in the north of the country since 1971; with more than 50 people from Alcanadre participating in its representation.

The River Ebro Nature Trail GR-99; Agoncillo - Arrúbal - San Martín de Berberana - Ermita de Aradón, ends in Alcanadre.

For lunch you can head 20 minutes south to La Alameda de Pipaona, or dine at Las Brasas de Baco in Alcanadre, offering a daily and weekend menu.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Aradón

Opened in 1957 between Calahorra and Logroño, Vinícola Riojana de Alcanadre S. Coop, is a union of 240 local winegrowers, now in the third generation who work the 510 hectares of vineyards planted on steep slopes ranging from 350 to 600 meters altitude. Their signature *Aradon Reserva*, a blend of Tempranillo, Graciano and Garnacha from highest vineyards, over 50 years of age, spends 18 months in French oak and another 18 months resting in the bottle. The winemaker is Cristina Alesanco Benito (Logroño) who joined the project in 2009.

Guided tours, with a minimum of 2 people, are available starting at 15€. Visits on Sundays and Mondays are possible. The premium 90-minute tour of the winery and vineyards, Monday to Friday from 10:30 am to 2:30 pm, is now priced at 50€ with a minimum of 4. Visits on Saturdays and Sundays are possible. A visit to their tasting room with a tasting of 3 wines is only 10€/person, and is available Tuesday to Saturday from 10:30 am to 2:00 pm, and again from 5:30 to 7:00 pm. Call (+34) 617 872 688, or [email the winery](mailto:info@aradon.es) at info@aradon.es.

Bodegas Beleluin

This small family winery, with 35 hectares of vineyards between 320 and 550 metres elevation, is located in the village and run by and named after the four sisters; Belinda, Elena, Luisa and Inmaculada, heirs to the family winemaking tradition. Opened in 2009, the new winery was built on the site of the original century old winery and retained the old “Calados”, renovated by their grandfather in 1935. Here the wines are aged in French and American oak at a constant temperature and humidity, from between 14 and 18 months, depending on the vintage.

Guided tours of the vineyards and bodega are available by [contacting them online](#), by email at bodega@beleluin.com, or by calling (+34) 601 350 047.

Bodegas Ochagavía

This small winery founded in 1880 near the railroad tracks at Calle Carretera Estación, 31, is now in the hands of the fifth generation of the Alejandro

Ochagavia Rodriguez family, with the young winemaker Jesús Ochagavía Saez, who joined the business in 2014.

You can contact Jesús online, by email info@bodegasochagavia.com, or call him at (+34) 941 165 010 / 690 668 999 for additional information or to arrange a private tasting.



Ausejo

You will find this small, picturesque town about 25 km southeast of Logroño in the Calahorra district, on the right bank of the River Ebro.

Bodegas Sínodo Vitivinícola

Currently producing 6,000 bottles of red wines, the winery came about when three friends, Roberto Monforte, Juan Antonio Blanco, and Gorka Echevarría, who met at the University of La Rioja, had the idea of saving small plots of old vineyards (some dating from 1982) from being uprooted. They now have approximately one hectare of vineyards, divided primarily between two estates: Raposeras and Los Tollos, located in Uruñuela and Villamediana de Iregua. The Los Tollos estate is the winery's largest and classified as a Singular Vineyard. Raposeras is Sínodo Vitivinícola's oldest estate, with vines over 100 years old. In addition to these estates, Sínodo Vitivinícola also works with other family vineyards located in Sotés and Cenicero. The wineries name in Greek means 'common path'. They harvested their first grapes in 2014 and occupy a small space in the barrel room of the Ausejo cooperative Bodega Cooperativa San Miguel and have won over national and

international critics. They are members of VIR - Viticultores Independientes en Rioja

You can contact them at info@sinodovitivinicola.com for additional information.



In the vineyards of Señorío de Librares

El Villar de Arnedo

Another 20 minutes down the road you'll come to a village founded in the early Middle Ages by settlers from Arnedo but with archaeological evidence dating back nearly 3000 years before Christ. El Villar de Arnedo, located 5 km west of the Ebro river, is primarily farmland filled with vineyards, almond trees, olive trees and cereals, and was once part of the lordship of Fernández de Velasco, the 2nd Count of Haro, who died in Granada toward the end of the Reconquista in 1492. On March 25 the village celebrates Nuestra Señora de la Asunción (*la Virgen de marzo*) with bonfires, dancing, concerts, and encierros (running of the vacas). On September 14 they celebrate Cristo de los Buenos Temporales with bonfires, *degustaciones* (tastings), concerts, encierros and traditional pelota (handball) games. There is a procession on New Year's Eve, followed by a feast of churros, and another festive procession on New Year's Day. Market day is Wednesday. The historic Castillo de Arnedo is located in Arnedo, a 15-minute drive south on the LR-123.

For lunch we recommend heading to Calahorra where you will find some decent options; [Chef Nino](#) at Calle del Padre Lucas, 2 (closed Mondays and Tuesdays), the [Parador de Calahorra](#), Paseo Mercadal, [Coliceo 29](#), Travesía Coliceo 29 (closed Tuesday), [Restaurante Mercadal 21](#), Paseo Mercadal, 21 (closed Monday), and [La Comedia](#) is at Plaza Monte Compatri, bajo 1.

Wineries of interest

[Bodegas Casa La Rad](#)

Not everyone in the Rioja managed to survive the crisis of 2008, and the family estate of *Bodegas Alicia Rojas*, once the summer hunting reserve of Logroño nobility, was one. But luckily the chateau-style estate in the northern foothills of the Iberian Massif, the Valle de Ocón, between Ausejo and El Villar de Arnedo, was resurrected from the ashes by a group of European investors, including some from the Rioja, releasing their first vintage, a limited bottling of the 100% Tempranillo in late 2016. The 800-hectare estate, the largest in the Rioja region, encompasses 110 hectares of vineyards, 15 hectares of Arbequina olive trees, fields of cereals and almond trees, two man-made lakes, rich farmland and a private game reserve. The estate-bottled wine is currently limited to around 90,000 liters and is under the direction of head winemaker Jean-Philippe Pélanne.

Casa La Rad is now open to the general public. You can call (+34) 941 430 010, or email info@casalarad.com for more information or to inquire about a visit.

[Bodegas Señorío de Librares](#)

This small family winery in the village received its first Gold Medal at the Universal Exposition in Paris in 1878 and is now in the hands of the fourth generation of the Pedro María Espinosa family. Their signature wine, *Selección*, uses Tempranillo and Graciano grapes from 40-year old vineyards, while the *Reserva*, 100% Tempranillo, spends 24 months in French and American oak and more than 12 months aging in bottle. Their EVOO *Olivares Tiracanto* was awarded a second place medal at the [IV Concurso a la Calidad Aceite de Oliva Rioja 2020](#).

If you'd like to visit the winery or need additional information, you can contact Clara Espinosa by calling (+34) 638 585 993 or emailing her at slibrares@slibrares.com.

Bodegas Faustino García Martínez

It was in the mid-1940s when Félix García Crespo began making artisanal wine for his own consumption from his own vineyards in his small family winery while also making wineskins to transport the wine. His son Faustino García Martínez opened the new winery in the 1960s. Today it is managed by the 4th-generation of winegrowers, and are the leader in bag-in-box wines.

Call (+34) 941 159 036, or [contact them online](#) for additional information.



Early spring in the vineyards in the High Cidacos Valley

Arnedo

Located 48 kms from Logroño, [Arnedo](#), the third largest town in La Rioja, is also one of the most prosperous. Better known for its shoe industry than its wine, it does produce its share of good wine. Along with its medieval castle, you find the palace of the Baroness of Benasque; [Blanca de Olózaga](#), built 1901 by Minguillot in modernism-art nouveau style. Its restoration was completed in 2000. The place of Archbishop Argaiz (1678), the [Vico Monastery](#), where it is said that the Virgin Mary appeared in 1045, and don't forget the Shoe Museum; Museo de Calzado Basilio García, or the Cave of the Hundred Pillars; [La Cueva de los Cien Pilares](#).

The Castle of Arnedo overlooks the city and dates from the time of the Romans. Rebuilt by the Muslims in the 9th-century, it was the most important castle in the region during the Middle Ages. The 7-day [Fiestas of San Cosme and San Damián](#), a historic rivalry between the towns of Arnedo and Andosilla (Navarra), are celebrated beginning on 26 September each year. The 2-day Kan de Vico Medieval Market is held the 1st week of September. Arnedo is also on the [Route of the Dinosaurs](#).

The city also has its own mineral hot springs, Las Pozas de Arnedillo, a set of three natural pools on the banks of the river that have been in use since the time of the Romans.

For dining in Arnedo, you can try Restaurante Picabea, Calle Virrey Lizana, 1, Gastrohotel Virrey, Paseo de la Constitución, 27, and Restaurante Sopitas, Calle de la Carrera, 4. You can also reserve a table at El Quizal in the nearby Autol, at Calle González Gallarza, 11, or at La Posada del Laurel, in Préjano. You can also reserve a table at the Bodegas Faustino Rivero Ulecia wine bar, which received a Repsol Solete in 2023.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Vico

The winery, Bodega Nuestra Señora de Vico, with 350 hectares of vineyards under cultivation, was founded in 1956 and is currently made up of 300 families who live in villages in and around the High Cidacos Valley, a countryside filled with olive and almond trees, aromatic herbs and vineyards. The mostly 2-hectare size vineyards are located between 400 and 900 meters above sea level, on either the slopes or at the top of ravines. The area is known for its scarce annual rainfall, long hours of sunlight, hot summers and cold winters. The wineries labels include Mocete and Cantoblanco.

Tours and tastings are available Monday-Friday from 11:00 to 1:30 pm and in the afternoon from 5:00 to 8:00 pm, and on Saturdays from 10:00 am until 1:00 pm. You can call (+34) 941 024 420, or email administracion@bodegavico.com if you would like to visit the winery.

Bodegas Faustino Rivero Ulecia

This is the original winery of Grupo Marqués del Atrio, which began its wine growing adventure in Arnedo in 1899 and now has wineries in five DOs; Rioja, Duero, Navarra, Utiel-Requena (Valencia) and Rias Baixas. It was in the 1980s that the 4th generation of the family took over the business and built a new winery on the outskirts of the town, with a cellar large enough to hold 4000 barrels of American and French oak.

Two 2-hour tours are currently available. The basic tour is priced at only 15€/person and finish in the tasting room and are available noon and 6:00 pm. A second 2-hour tour, with a tasting of 5 wines, is 20€. There is also a wine bar, open daily from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and from Thursday to Saturday from 6:00 pm until 8:30 pm. You can [book your tour online](#), email visitas@marquesdelatrio.com, or call them at (+34) 941 380 057 / 611 135 038 to arrange a visit or for additional information.



Bodegas Queirón

Quel

A short 15-minute drive down the road from El Villar de Arnedo on the LR-123 you'll find the ruins of the Castillo de Quel (currently under reconstruction) sitting on the edge of a rocky crag, overlooking the historic village of Quel in the valley along the left bank of the Río Cidacos between Arnedo and Autol. The village's name derives from the Arab word *Qalāti*, meaning 'fortified place'. The village has been celebrating its famous week-long Bread and Cheese Festival since 6 August 1479, one of the oldest festivals on the Iberian Peninsula, when 2,500 loaves of bread and 50 kilos of cheese are thrown from the balcony of the chapel Santo Cristo. There are about 350 individual family cellars in the *Barrio de Bodegas* located in the hillside along the river, most dating from the 18th-century and still in use today. La Almazara, a modern oil mill with 235 hectares of olive trees located just north of the village is open daily for tours. The village is also the birthplace of Bretón de los Herreros, poet and prolific comic playwright of the 19th-century.

For lunch there is the small restaurant La Roca in Quel, closed Sundays, or El Quizal in the nearby Autol, at Calle González Gallarza, 11, should work, or you

can drive up to Calahorra to chef Ventura Martínez's Chef Nino, the cradle of Calahorra cuisine. His other restaurant is Delicatto in Logroño.

Wineries of interest

Bodega Queirón

The Pérez Cuevas family can trace it's history in the area to the middle ages (1327) when they worked the slopes the Sierra de Yerga in the Cidacos river valley.

Gabriel Pérez, a pioneering viticulturist and winemaker, founded Bodegas Ontañón in 1985 after producing wine for the families own consumption since 1980, when there were few commercial wineries in the Rioja Oriental. It was in 2010 that they opened the new winery in the *Barrio de Bodegas de Quel* in old factory that once made alcohol. At the west end of this beautiful winery you'll find a small fountain with a sculpture by Miguel Ángel Sáinz from El Villar de Arnedo, who inspired the design of the new winery and who designed Bodegas Ontañón in Logroño. The winery is currently run by his children, Raquel, Leticia, Rubén (the winemaker) and María. The wines from Queirón adhere to the new Rioja classification "*Vino de Pueblo*" which means the vineyards must be family owned within a named village.

You can request a visit by contacting them online, by emailing info@queiron.es, or by calling Leticia at (+34) 941 234 200. It's well worth the time.



Finca Vistahermosa vineyards

Tudelilla

Another small hamlet with a long tradition of wine making, Tudelilla is a 30-minute drive southeast of the regional capital of Logroño, 15 kms west of Calahorra. Sitting at an altitude of 545 meters above sea level, it covers an area of about 700 hectares of a scrubland of olive trees, almond fields and vineyards. Its rocky landscape produces unique characteristics in its wines; the ancient Garnachas and newer Tempranillos. The village celebrates San Roque on 16 August and San Bartolomé on the 24th. The festival of Santa Bárbara is celebrated on December 4th. Friday is their market day.

For lunch in the area you can try Sopitas Restaurante, Calle Carrera de Vico, 4, or Virrey, Paseo de la Constitución, 27, in Arnedo, both recommended in the Repsol Guide. There is also El Quizal in Autol. Or choose one of our recommendations in Calahorra.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Ortega Ezquerro

The Ortega family's first vines were planted in the year 1896 by Quintín Ortega, a *cosechero*, or harvester, and humble barrel-maker with ambitions. The current head of the family, Carmelo Ortega, runs the winery with the help of his team and winemaker David Bastida Caro.

Call (+34) 941 152 046, email info@ortegaezquerro.com, or contact them online to arrange a visit, or for additional information. The winery is located next to the Fronton in the village.

Bodegas Escudero y Vinsacro

Juan Escudero began making wine in a small cave carved out of a hillside in 1852, the family continued winemaking through the years, with Juan's grandson, Benito, moving into producing Cava in the 1950s. Under the leadership of Bordeaux-trained brother Amador, the brothers, Jesus, Maria Angeles and Jose Maria, founded the French château-style winery Bodegas Vinsacro, and following the advice of their grandfather, decided to start a new project in Grávalos, in the foothills of the Sierra de la Demanda where they planted 12 hectares of vines in 1996, but the key to the success of the modern winery was a small organic vineyard owned by the family for 120 years, the *Cuesta la Reina*, planted around 1945 on the stony southern slope of Mount Yerga between 450 and 800 meters elevation. The underground cellar, where the wines age for 12 to 36 months, holds 4,500 barrels of American, French, and Romanian oak.

In 2000 the family opened a new winery, Bodegas Logos, in the Navarra D.O. near Monteagudo, south of Navarre's Ribera Region, about a 20-minute drive from Tudela.

Bodegas Escudero (Grávalos) is open Monday to Friday from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm and in the afternoon from 4:00 to 5:00 pm. Call (+34) 941 398 008, or email them at visitas@familiaescudero.com to schedule a tour and tasting.

Finca Vistahermosa

The farm, located 35 kilometers east of Logroño, is about 3 km to the northwest of the village of Tudelilla off the LR-381, in the foothills of the Sierra de la Hez.

Starting in 1973 with 87 hectares of vineyards, they planted another 76 hectares between 2004 and 2014, and now has the largest Grenache reserve of old vines in all of La Rioja. Now with 400 hectares of land dedicated mainly to the culture of wine, they also grow cereals and legumes, and tend to the pine and holm oak and the conservation of the land.

Reserve a tour and tasting of two wines for 30€, or three wines for 35€. A three to four hour wine paring in the vineyard is 50€/person with a minimum group of 4. A tour and tasting with a Riojan menu is 55€/person for 4 to 5 people. Call (+34) 628 054 737, email info@fincavistahermosa.wine, or contact them online for additional information.



Bodegas Viñedos de Aldeanueva vineyards

Aldeanueva de Ebro

On the road from Logroño to Zaragoza, about half way between Calahorra and Alfaro, you'll find the small village of Aldeanueva de Ebro known locally as *el pueblo de las tres mentiras*, the “town of the three lies”, as it is not a village, nor is it new, nor is it on the Ebro, but as it is on the Ruta del Vino Rioja Oriental, and home to several premium wineries. The village celebrates several festivals during the year. The first weekend in May is the start of the *Fiestas de la Juventud*, that includes an encierro with wild vacas and other festival events for the children, plus the *Jornadas del Vino u La Viña*, wine tastings at the local wineries for the adults. The week-long Festival of San Bartolomé, the patron saint, begins 23 August. The two-day Fiestas de la Virgen de Los Remedios begins on 7 September and includes an encierro and procession in honor of the Virgin of Los Remedios. The 7-day winter celebrations begin 31 December, ending on Epiphany, 6 January. The winter festivities includes bull runs, gastronomy events, a handcraft fair and wine tastings. The villagers gather for the *hogueras*, the bonfires in the streets for San Antón on 16 January and again on 20 January for the *Hogueras de San Sebastián*.

For lunch in the area try El Quizal, General Gallarza 11, in Autol. Open Tuesday to Sunday for lunch from 1:30 to 4:00 pm. Casa Javi in Rincón de Soto is another nearby option, closed on Mondays. Or you can consider one of our other dining recommendations in Calahorra or Alfaro.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Álvarez Alfaro

Pablo Álvarez Alfaro opened his small family winery in 1890, establishing his first wine sales office in San Sebastián in 1895, selling only wines grown in his own vineyards. The new winery was opened in 1999 a few minutes north of Aldeanueva de Ebro by Pablo Bretón Ruiz and is still in the hands of the family, the 4th generation of artisan winemakers. The aging cellar holds 1300 225-liter barrels of American and French oak, where the wines are racked every four months instead of the usual twice a year. The winery, with 62 hectares of vineyards, is located a few minutes north of Aldeanueva de Ebro along the LR-384.

Email Pablo Ruiz at info@bodegasalvarezalfaro.com or call (+34) 941 144 210 for additional information, or to arrange a visit.

Bodegas Real Agrado

The journey began for Viñedos de Alfaro in 1974 when 100 hectares of vineyards, between 300 and 650 meters above sea-level, were planted between Aldeanueva and Alfaro. In 2005 they began to build a new winery in the middle of the vineyards and started producing their own wines. In 2008 the winery opened then became part of the El Gaitero Family (Galicia) in 2018.

You can email info@realagrado.com or call (+34) 941 142 389 for information or to request a visit the the estate.

Bodegas Viñedos de Aldeanueva

The association was founded in November 1956 by a group of local growers, the partners joining together to unite against the few buyers of bulk grapes who took advantage of the dispersed offering of the growers in the small town. The winery was expanded in 1995 and a new management team took over in 2001. The cooperative, the largest in the Rioja, with 850 members, has some 2850 hectares of vineyards that extend from the Ebro river to the high slopes of Mount Yerga, the

largest plots being the Tempranillo vineyards, 228 hectares, and Garnacha, 152 hectares. There are three cellars holding 15,000 barrels, mostly American oak, for the aging of crianza, reserva and gran reserva wines.

The wineries belonging to the association are Viñedos de Aldeanueva, Fincas de Azabache and Bodegas Viña Herminia, plus Cosecheros y Criadores del Alto Ebro, which bottles the surplus wines of Viñedos de Aldeanueva, selling them at an unbeatable quality/price ratio.

You can request a visit online, or call (+34) 941 163 039 to arrange a tour of the facilities.

Bodegas Fincas de Azabache

Azabache now has its own beautiful modern winery with cutting-edge technology which only adds to the tradition that began in 1956 when a group of local wine growers opened their own bodega to market their top-range organic wines. The new aging cellar holds 12,000 barrels. The new winery also has its own restaurant and a professional tasting room. Officially certified as organic.

Email info@fincasdeazabache.com, call (+34) 941 163 039, or contact them online for additional information, or to arrange a visit to the winery and vineyards.

Bodegas Quinta Avenida

The modern winery with 400 hectares of vineyards was founded in 2000 with the idea of creating a modern, elegant winery. Opening in 2001, it is under the direction of Fernando Martinez and is one of the 10 wineries owned by Manzanos Wines. Their *Quinta Avenida 5 Crianza* is a blend of Garnacha, Graciano, Mazuelo and Tempranillo, spending a minimum of 12 months in new French oak barrels.

Visits to the winery are by appointment only. You can contact them by email at comercial@quintaavenida.es, or by calling (+34) 941 163 655 to arrange a tour and tasting.

Bodegas del Medievo

The winery, managed by Joseba Almaraz, was founded in 2002, and has 130 hectares of vineyards in the highest area of Aldeanueva de Ebro, in the foothills of the Sierra de Yerga, between 400 and 550 meters. The 1000 m² cellar contains 2,500 barrels of American and French oak. Medievo wines are the fruit of the work

of generations of farmers who form this small group of artisans; Bobadilla, Sota and Moreno, and the winemaker Santiago Garde.

Contact them [online](#), email info@bodegasdelmedievo.com, or call (+34) 941 163 141, to arrange a visit to their tasting room with views overlooking the vineyard.

Bodega Viñas Nuevas

This small family winery in Aldeanueva de Ebro is in the hands of the Ruiz Ruiz brothers, Enrique, the oenologist and Francisco, viticulturist, overseeing the production of their new project, *Laetus*, 100% Graciano. Cristina handles everything else. The winery was expanded in 2004 to accommodate the increase in production.

A visit to the winery includes a walk through the vineyards. Call (+34) 629 490 828 or email [Cristina at info@laetusrioja.com](mailto:Cristina@laetusrioja.com) for additional information, or to arrange a tour and tasting.

Bodega Viñedos Ruiz Jiménez

After more than 15 years growing grapes on their 65 hectares vineyards located from 400 to 600 meters of altitude, they began making their own organic wines, and in 1998 founded the winery in Aldeanueva de Ebro. This was the first of only two wineries in La Rioja whose vineyards were certified by International Demeter, the biodynamic certification body, 61 have been certified as organic. Francisco Ruiz, director of the winery stated that *“Today organic viticulture is the exception but tomorrow it will be the norm”*.

The winery is open Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. Contact the winery [online](#), by emailing francisco@vinedosruizjimenez.es, or [Patricia at export@vinedosruizjimenez.es](mailto:Patricia@vinedosruizjimenez.es). You can also call (+34) 941 163 577 for additional information or to schedule a visit.

Bodega Sendero Royal

Located next to Bodegas Álvarez Alfaro is another family of winemakers and breeders, and collector of classic cars. Belonging to the Gonzalo Ruiz Pastor family, the new winery was founded in 1998, and is surrounded by 5-hectares of vineyards with another 60 hectares, which have been in the family for generations,

on the the slopes of Monte Yerga. The aging warehouse holds 600 barrels of American and French oak.

The family offers tours of the winery Monday to Saturday with a tasting of two wines by appointment. [Request a tour online](#), call (+34) 941 743 999 / 696 411 492, or email [them](#) at info@senderoroyal.com to schedule a visit to the winery.

[Bodegas Lucas](#)

Founded in 2007, the Inédito wines from winemaker Luis Arnedo, a fifth generation of a family of winegrowers from Aldeanueva de Ebro, and the first winemaker in his family, are exclusively from their own 38 hectares of vineyards of native grapes, along with Graciano and Garnacha for reds, and Garnacha Blanca, Turruntés (Albillo Mayor) and Maturana Blanca for whites. The vineyards range in age from 10 to 55 years old. Luis is a member of the Rioja 'n' Roll Olivier Rivière.

You can [contact Luis online](#), call (+34) 649 331 799, or email him at inedito@bodegaslucus.com for additional information, or to arrange a visit to the winery.

[Bodegas Viña Herminia](#)

The winery was originally founded in 1949 by Joaquin Casas, who was from a long winemaking lineage, and named the bodega after his wife, Herminia. This is a joint venture between the [Luis Caballero Group](#) (owner of Emilio Lustau) and the major Rioja cooperative Viñedos de Aldeanueva, the winery lies between the River Ebro and the Sierra de Yerga mountain range in the village of Aldeanueva de Ebro, a few minutes drive northwest of Alfaro, just southeast of Calahorra, surrounded by vineyards, which spread up the slopes of Mount Yerga to an altitude of 700 meters, allowing the vines to embrace the sun. The director, José Luis, a 4th generation winemaker, joined Viña Herminia in 2007 and manages the cellar with its 3200 oak barrels.

[Contact them online](#), call (+34) 941 142 305, or email vherminia@vherminia.es to arrange a tour of the winery.

Bodegas Domeco de Jarauta

Built in the style of a French "châteaux" by José Vicente Domeco de Jarauta in 1995, the new winery added to a tradition of wine making that dates back more than 100 years when the family began in the wine business, it's first award coming in Barcelona in 1888. The oldest vineyards surround the winery, which is located a few minutes drive northwest of Aldeanueva de Ebro. The rest of their 100 hectares of vineyards are in Alfaro, Autol and Rincón de Soto. The barrel room holds 700 casks of French and American oak, along with some Romanian and Russian barrel they are experimenting with. Barrels are racked four times/year, and after 24 to 36 months of aging, the wine rests in a bottle for at least 9 months before being released.

Contact the winery online, email info@bodegasdomecodejarauta.com, or call (+34) 941 163 078 to request a tour and tasting of two wines for 10€ or three wines for 15€. Tours available in Spanish, French and English.

Bodegas D. Mateos

What began as a small vineyard on the slopes of Mount Yerga in 1886 evolved after seven generations of the cultivation of the vineyards with the research and development of new grape varieties like Tempranillo blanco. Their vineyards cover nearly 100 hectares with more than half of the vines goblet trained, the rest are trellis trained. The new winery was opened in 2000 and under the direction of Mateo Ruiz, offers great wines with their own distinctive personality and character.

Call (+34) 941 261 897, email info@bodegasmateos.com or contact them online to request a visit to the bodega, open Monday to Friday.

Bodegas Real Rubio

The family had been working the land from more than 100 years when Mariluz Ruiz and Javier Rubio founded their own cellar at the foot of Monte Yerga. The family's modern wine-estate, with over 90 hectares of vineyards, many over 60 years of age, is located along the LR-384, to the south of their neighbor Bodegas Álvarez Alfaro. 26 hectares of their vineyards are set aside as organic for growing Verdejo, Graciano, Chardonnay, Tempranillo and Muscatel varieties.

The bodega is open for you to tour the vineyards and winery and learn about the process, followed by a tasting, or you can enjoy a more advanced tasting.

Email them at info@realrubio.es, [request a visit online](#), or call (+34) 941 163 672 to schedule a tour and tasting.

Bodegas Pastor Díaz

The Pastor Díaz family has been making wine and producing oil since 1890, opening the new winery in 1995 between the Ebro River and the foothills of Monte Yerga. The original winery from 1946 is now a museum and tasting area. Their 120 hectares of vineyards, both goblet and trellis, are located between 450 and 700 meters on the slopes of Monte Yerga.

Visits and tastings are available by [contacting them online](#), by calling (+34) 941 142 390 / 630 957 256, or by emailing comercial@pastordiaz.com.

Bodegas Vinos en Voz Baja

Young winemaker Carlos Mazo and his partner, designer and photographer Isabel Ruiz's project was to develop their nine plots totaling approximately 6 hectares of family vineyards, including four and a half hectares of old bush-vine Garnacha. The vineyards are in the flatlands of Mount Yerga, where the altitude exceeds 450 meters, and the slopes of the Sierra de los Agudos. The winery's name means 'Low-Voice Wines'.

Email carlos@vinosenvoz baja.com or call Carlos at (+34) 661 355 702 for additional information.

Bodegas Finca Montote

The main building of the Rubio Family winery, Finca Montote, which opened in 2018, sits in the center of the Garnacha vineyards in the heart of the Sierra de los Agudos, next to the Moncayo National Park, on the road to Pico de Los Agudos. It is one of the most spectacular recently built wineries in the region.

[Contact the winery online](#) or call (+34) 941 039 387 for additional information, or to arrange a tour and tasting. You can also email jjfernandez@fincamontote.com.

Temerario Vinos

Temerario was born from the need to express unspoken ideas and to provide economic viability to the plots of land that would otherwise be uprooted, with the collective loss of heritage that this represents; Finca Lo Viejo de Lobera covers

1.45 hectares of mostly Garnacha from the 1960s. Finca Los Corritos de Valcaliente totals 0.69 hectares of Garnacha planted in 1988, along with some Tempranillo, and Viura. Finca La Mazuela del Esparragal is a 3.41-hectare estate planted entirely with the Mazuela variety in 1984 in Alfaro. Finca La Viura e la Montesa is 1.24 hectares planted with the Viura in 1977 in Alfaro. Alejandro produced his first wines in 2023. The Alejandro Perfecto's family are members of the cooperative in Aldeanueva de Ebro. A member of Viticultores Independientes en Rioja.

You can contact them by email alejandro@temerariovinos.com or call at (+34) 660 588 796 for additional information.



Stork nests atop the Colegiata de San Miguel Arcángel

Alfaro

The capital of the Rioja Oriental (Eastern Rioja), Alfaro, the city of the white storks, sits south of the Sotos del Ebro nature reserve. The rooftop of its 17th-century Baroque masterpiece, the Colegiata de San Miguel Arcángel in the Plaza de España, is covered with some 400 stork nests, the largest urban collection of stork nests in the world. As you walk through the town, you'll find churches and palaces with centuries of history. Friday is market day in the village. The Festival of San Roque in August fills the town with music, parades of giants and big-heads, bullfights and gastronomic events. The Plaza de toros de Alfaro, which seats up to 5800, was built between 1924 and 1925 by a company from Bilbao. Owned by the city, it was renovated between late 2019 and early 2020.

The nearby Eras de San Martín archaeological site (179 BC), the Roman city of *Graccurris*, sits on a hill to the north of the city, and there are indications that the area had been continuously populated since the 8th or 9th century BC, before the arrival of Tiberius Sempronio Gracco. The Rioja's "Jurassic Park", the

Paleontological Interpretation Center of La Rioja, lies a thirty-minute drive southwest, in the village of Igea, about 87 km from Logroño.

Alfaro is also the home of Tonelería Magreñán, the prestigious Spanish cooperage with a tradition of barrel making dating to 1820 when Rafael Magreñán establish his own cooperage, with barrels crafted from American, French and European stave oak. The company is now managed by the fifth generation; Antonio and Teresa.

Where to dine

Lunch time in Alfaro provides you with the opportunity to enjoy the local regional cuisine. The Bib Gourmand Restaurante Morro Tango, offering seasonal regional cuisine, can be found at Calle Las Pozas 18. The name originally referred to people who only appreciate the best and don't eat just anything. It's also in the Macarfi Guide and Repsol Guide for 2026. The chef/owner, Cristóbal Castillo, worked with Francis Paniego at Echaurren for 12+ years. Closed on Mondays. Asador San Roque 'El Chorrilla', offers an excellent 36,30€ daily menu, and was one of the first places we dined in Alfaro. Restaurante Graccurreis is another good option when visiting Alfaro. It's open for from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm daily. Call to reserve a table.

You will find more dining options outside of the city. Chef Luis Salcedo's El Choko de Remigio, which received a Repsol sun in 2025 and recommended in the Michelin Guide 2026, is located in the center of Tudela. Chefs Marisol Pastor and Ricardo Gill's Treintatrés (Restaurante 33) dating back to 1952, is highly rated with a Repsol sun and recommended in the Michelin Guide 2026. Restaurante Alcazaba, open for dinner Monday to Saturday, is in the Hotel AC Ciudad de Tudela. Pichorradicas - Casa Aitor at Calle Cortadores, 11, is another excellent option, but closed on Mondays. Enriqueta by L&ele, a mix of Andalusia and Navarra cuisine, is in the Hotel Santa Ana in Tudela and has a rooftop terrace.

Chef José Aguado's Restaurante Topero in the Plaza de los Fueros is also another good option in Tudela if you're really hungry. Vegetable-centric. Casa Lola, a Plaza Mercadal 26, with a Repsol Solete, offers a 46€ degustation menu and a 26,50€ menú del día. Restaurante Iruña, next to the Plaza de los Fueros and the Cathedral, is the oldest restaurant in Tudela and offers both a daily and weekend

menu, as well as a seasonal vegetable menu. Closed on Mondays and Sunday nights.

Chef Enrique Martínez's Restaurante Maher lies 15 minutes to the south in Cintruénigo (Navarra). The restaurant at Pago de Cirsus Bodega offers you a spectacular view across the vineyards, as well as a gourmet dining experience and is now overseen by chef Pedro Larumbe. It's a 30-minute drive southeast of Tudela. Closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Where to stay

Although it is the capital of the Rioja Oriental, there are not many options for staying in Alfaro itself beyond the Hotel HM Alfaro, 200 metres from Plaza de España. We like Aire de Bardenas, which is about a 30-minute drive away outside of Tudela (Navarra), the AC Ciudad de Tudela and Hotel Remigio, both of which are in Tudela, are about a 20-minute drive. And of course, the 12-room Pago de Cirsus Bodega, in the middle of the vineyard, is about a 30-minute drive from Alfaro.

Alfaro is a stop on Stage 19.2: Rincón de Soto - Castejón de Ebro, 26,7 km, of the Western Ebro GR-99 Nature Trail.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Ilurce

Before lunch one day, schedule a visit to this 4th-generation Escudero family owned winery on the LR-385, the road to Grávalos. Founded in 1940, the family's modern winery was opened in 2010 and has been working with the noted Jorge Ordoñez Group for several years. Ana Escudero Carra is the winemaker.

90-minute visits to the winery, with the possibility of visiting part of the 60 hectares of centenary vineyards, including those in the Yerga mountains, are available in Spanish, English, French and German. Call (+34) 941 180 829, email info@ilurce.com, or or you can message them at Whatsapp: (+34) 647 922 270 to arrange a visit.

Finca Egomei

The family owned 125-hectare estate of Hermanos Torres-Librada (Finca Estarijo), located on the Alfaro-Corella highway a few minutes south of Alfaro, was purchased in 2007 by Arturo Beltrán Picapeo, owner of the 'Vista Alegre' arena in Madrid and Grupo Bodegas A&B (Navarra), and is now a small modern, avant-garde winery producing only two red wines, both Crianzas

Email info@egomei.es, or call (+34) 902 108 101, to arrange a visit to this prestigious, boutique winery. Open Monday-Friday and Saturday mornings.

Bodegas de Familia Burgo Viejo

With over 200 hectares of vineyards and a hundred years of tradition behind them, the winery was founded in 1987 by six families after producing wine in bulk as a cooperative since 1950s. The vineyards, with some Garnacha, are over 90 years old, spread throughout the area in the foothills of Yerga Mountain. Winemaker Gorka Etxebarria oversees the modern winery, which opened in 2004, to accommodate the increased production and the export market. The winery is located in Alfaro at Calle Concordia, 8, just down the street from the asador San Roque and about a 15-minute walk from Plaza Esperanza.

You can call Gorka at (+34) 941 183 405, or bodegas@burgoviejo.com to arrange a visit to the winery.

Bodegas J Palacios Remondo

The winery had always been among the leading producers of red wine in the Rioja Oriental, noted more for mass-produced wines rather than quality brands, but that was before Álvaro Palacios took over the winery and its jewel, the fabulous La Montesa vineyard, and popularized the change in the name to the Rioja Oriental.

Email info@palaciosremondo.com, or call (+34) 941 180 207 for additional information, or to request a visit to the winery.

Bodegas Campoameno Alfaro

The family winery is located in the Sotos de Alfaro Natural Reserve in an old sugar factory with a nearly 100 meter high chimney that can be seen from the vineyards. If you visit the winery, your tour will take you along the same path that the grapes travel from from the vineyards to the bodega.

One-hour tours, in Spanish or English, are available daily from 11:30 am until 1:00 pm for 15€/person, with a minimum of 10 and a maximum group of 20. There is also a two-hour tour with a tasting of 4 wines on Saturday and Sundays mornings for 10€/person. The tours end with a tasting of three wines. You can book your tour [online](#), email them at info@bodegascampoameno.es, or call (+34) 941 181 207 for additional information or schedule a tour and tasting.

Bodegas Burgo Viejo

This family owned winery, with just over 200 hectares of vineyards, opened in 1950 by six families of Riojan farmers; Castillo Garcia, Galán Garijo, Gurría García, Marques Malumbres, Rivas Marques and Ruiz Casas, and since then have been recognized by Decanter, International Wine Challenge, Wine Advocate and Mundus Vini, as one of the best wineries in Spain. Their vineyards extend throughout the municipality of Alfaro from the Ebro valley to the slopes of Monte Yerga.

You can call them at (+34) 941 183 405, or email bodegas@burgoviejo.com for additional information or to arrange a visit.



After the harvest in the vineyards of Bodegas Escudero

Grávalos

Once the site of a Roman villa, the small hilltop village of Grávalos, with less than 200 inhabitants, sits between the Yerga and Peñalosa Mountains 26 kms southwest of Alfaro on the LR-385 in the far northeast of the Cameros Mountains. Here you will find vineyards, almond trees and cereal. You will also find deer, wild boar, quail, partridge and hare. In the center of the village is the 16th-century parish church of Santa María de la Antigua, and 128 private caves where each neighbor makes their own wine. It's where the first cava was made in La Rioja, the Brut Nature. The spa has been in operation since at least the 16th-century. Here you'll find the Mirador de Peña Herrera and the ruins of the 18th-century hermitage of Santa María.

On 8 September the village celebrates the Santa María de la Antigua, and during Christmas the Festival of the "Brindis" dance on Christmas Day as part of the 8 days of celebration with tabor and bagpipe playing.

The spa hotel Balneario de Grávalos is located just outside the village on the road from Alfaro, the LR-385. Lunch is available in the hotel's restaurant or you can head back to Alfaro.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Escudero , S.L.

Many years ago the great-grandfather Juan started making wine in a small cave dug out of the mountain and over time was joined by his son, Amador. Benito Escudero, the father, after many years of trying, managed to make his own cava, a sparkling wine following the traditional method or Champenoise he had learned of in Bordeaux and Champagne, being one of the first winemakers to form part of the D.O. Cava. The winery, founded in 1852, is now run by the 4th generation, who manage three wineries; Bodegas Escudero (Grávalos) dedicated to the elaboration of Cavas, Bodegas Vinsacro (Pradejón), and Bodegas Escudero (Monteagudo). Their nearly 200 hectares of vineyards, with an average age of 70 years, are located in both the Rioja and Navarra DOs, with most located on the southern slopes of Monte Yerga between 400 and 800 meters about sea level. The main cellar in Pradejón holds 6000 French (50%), American (40%), and Central European (10%) oak barrels

They also own 70,000 Arbequina and Tosca olive trees from which they produce Becquer de Leyenda, Becquer Eterno and Landoliva EVOOs.

You can email info@familiaescudero.com, or call (+34) 941 398 008 to request a visit to the original bodega in Grávalos.



Getting ready to harvest at Lauwa

Valverde

The small village of around 300 inhabitants is about as far to the southeast as you can go in the Rioja; where the Rioja, Navarra, Aragón, and Castilla y León meet. This is also where you can start the last stage (or the first stage if you're just beginning) of the GR 93, Section 10 Cervera del río Alhama-Valverde.

For dining in the area you can head up the N-113 to Cintruénigo.

Lauwa Wines

“Un sueño hecho realidad”! Lauwa is acronym for Laura and Wandert, two scientists who met in Netherlands and arrived in Valverde in 2014, opening the bodega in 2017 after joining Alfredo Bozal, Laura's father. Laura is the winemaker and Tim Atkin rated their first red wine 90 points.

Tours and tastings are available by contacting them online, calling (+34) 664 203 009, or emailing info@lauwa.nl.



Fall colors in the vineyards of the Navarre Rioja Alta near Mendavia

La Navarre Rioja Alta - The Other Rioja

The Rioja Qualified DOC divides the wine region into three sub-zones: Rioja Alta, Rioja Alavesa and Rioja Oriental, which covers three Autonomous Communities: La Rioja, the Basque Country and Navarra. La Navarre Rioja Alta, or La Ribera de Navarra, is often referred to as the “other Rioja”, the undiscovered part of the Rioja DOCa that runs from the border with Logroño to the village of Azagra along the north bank of the Ebro River. With nearly 6220 registered hectares of vineyards under production, this area offers some excellent options for wine touring with winemaking in a region dating back to the time of the Romans. Here you’ll find vines of the prehistoric Vitis sylvestris; wild grapevines that were discovered growing along the Ega River, indicating they were thriving here long before the arrival of the Romans.

Since 2008 the authorized red varieties under production are Tempranillo, Garnacha, Graciano, Mazuelo and Maturana Tinta. The authorized white varieties

are Viura, Malvasía, Garnacha Blanca, Tempranillo Blanco, Maturana Blanca, Turruntés, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Verdejo.

The main villages in the Navarre Rioja Alta include Aras-Ayto, Bargota, Viana, Mendavia, Lodosa, Sartaguda, Cárcar, Andosilla, San Adrián and Azagra.

The area is also the important center of *Productos de Navarra en Conserva*, with products from Conservas Meleta, Juanchu, Adolfo Sadaba, Gilvemar, J. Vela, Palacio S.A.. Conservas Artesanas Rubio is in Cárcar. Conservas DANTZA, El Chaval, Almanaque, Rosara and Aceitunas Sarasa are in Andosilla. One of our favorites, and most pricy, La Catedral de Navarra, is located in Mendavia. You will find El Navarrico and Conservas Ecológicas Monjardín in San Adrián. Conservas Perón, Pedro Luis, Aragonillo, Conservas Baigorri, Bujanda, and Conservas Lodosa Cooperativa, are located in Lodosa, but there are no wineries in the village.



Spring in the vineyards of Bodegas Cadarso Ciordia

Navarra de Aras

The small village of Navarra de Aras, with around 150 inhabitants, is a short drive north of Viana on the west side of the Río de Valdenuevas valley. This an area that was once lush with holm oak forests but is now filled with olive and almond trees, vineyards and cereals. *Ara* means altar or sacrificial stone in Latin and the village was once know as *Tres Aras*, the three altars. The temple's 13th-century pointed half-barrel vault is all that remains. On 20 January the village celebrates San Sebastian, the patron saint, with a small festival and on May 15 there is a pilgrimage to the hermitage of San Isidro, a quick walk to the north of the village along the west bank of the Valdenuevas river. *Las Fiestas Patronales de verano* (summer Patron Saint Festivals) are celebrated beginning the 3rd week of August, with the big summer party, Santa Cruz, on 14 September.

If you're in Aras around lunchtime, you can check out "Las Escuelas" Gastrobar at Calle Mayor, 26. Closed Mondays. There is also Txasanea, Pl. Constitución, 19. It's open daily and busy on weekends and holidays.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Cadarso Ciordia

In 1999 Pedro Luis Cadarso built his small winery in the village of Aras over a cellar the family has used since the 17th-century, producing wines from the family's 30 hectares of vineyards located between Aras and Viana, spread out over 5 plots at a elevation from 480 and 640 meters. They released the first vintage of their small production *Tresaras* wine in 2000. The winery, at Carretera de Aguilar, Km. 7, is now directed by Severiano Cadarso, the 2nd-generation, along with winemaker Jesús Bauza, of Bodegas Bauza in Elciego..

Email info@bodegascadarso.com, call (+34) 948 644 040 / 650 444 377, or contact them online for additional information or to arrange a tour and tasting.



Grupo de teatro Garañango

Bargota

Known for its excellent wines and the legend of the famous *Brujo de Bargota* (Johanes, the clergyman), who lived in Bargota in the 16th-century, each July this small village with less than 300 inhabitants, just to the east of Aras, 7 kms from Viana, becomes the capital of witchcraft for a week when the people of the village dress up the streets with banners, hay bales and old furniture to celebrate the past. There is a mediaeval market, exhibitions and workshops about the world of witchcraft and performances by Grupo de teatro Garañango. They also celebrate the 4-day Fiesta de Bargota beginning on August 29. Bargota's stone houses hide underground wine cellars where for generations each family has made and stored wines.

If you need a coffee in the morning or lunch you can stop by José Antonio Zúñiga Pinto at Calle Monte Yoar, 3. Bars Lanas and Pitxi have a Pintxo-Pote night on Fridays at 8:00 pm. For lunch in Viana you'll find Casa Armendáriz at Calle de Navarro Villoslada, 15, and Restaurante El Portillo at number 28. Or you can head south to Logroño for more lunch options (see our recommendations) .

Bargota is equally well known for its three BTT Routes; mountain bike routes, the most demanding being Ruta 1-Integral de Bargota, covering 33,7 kms. Ruta 2-Mariñanas is 16,2 kms takes you up into the highest and most mountainous area, and Ruta 3-Arbanta is 18,6 km takes you down through dry ravines and past the vineyards.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Biurko Gorri

The Llorens family Bodega's name means "place of two waters" in Basque. Surrounded by its vineyards and olive groves, the winery was built on a hill overlooking the countryside at the base of the Yoar Sierra, the Sierra de Cantabria. The winery started out as a cooperative but then became a private initiative, producing wines that are modern, fruity and balanced, grown from vineyards covering nearly 40 hectares around the village at up to 600 meters elevation, on terraces, gentle sunny slopes, flat fields, and mountain tops. They are a pioneer in the certification of wines.

Contact the family online, call (+34) 948 648 370 or email ocijo@biurkogorri.com for more information or to arrange a tour and tasting. The winery is located a couple of minutes from the village center, off the NA-7253.



A harvest of white espárragos from the fields near Mendavia

Mendavia

This is the Navarre Rioja Alta's largest village along the north bank on the Ebro River and is surrounded by 3000 hectares of fertile land, where in the spring you can find delicious white asparagus, artichokes and other vegetables. In the summer there are pochas (beans), cherries, peaches, pears, watermelons and melon, followed in the fall by piquillo peppers. [Mendavia](#) celebrates the *Hogueras de San Antón* with bonfires in the streets each year in mid-January in the Plaza de los Fueros, while in mid May it's the celebration of the *Día de la Cofradía del Espárrago de Navarra*, Day of the Asparagus Brotherhood of Navarra. The fiesta to honor San Juan Bautista, the village's patron saint, takes place the end of August with parades, the encierro; the running of the bulls, gigantes (giants) and cabezudos (big heads), traditional dancing and the "caldico de madrugada" at dawn, and everyone dresses for the fiesta in white and red.

For dining in Mendavia, you can try chef Germán Montoya's [La Galera](#) at Calle Augusto Echeverría, 26. The dining room is closed Sundays and all of August, but you can have pintxos and mixed dishes in the bar and on the terrace.

The [Circuito de Navarra](#) racetrack is in nearby Los Arcos. Mendavia is also on both [Stage 16: Oyón/Oion - Mendavia](#), 29,6 km, and [Stage 17: Mendavia - Lodosa](#), 18,1 km, of the [Western Ebro GR-99 Nature Trail](#).

Wineries of interest

[Bodegas Barón de Ley](#)

A first stop would be at this classic wine estate, a historic 16th-century castle-fortress monastery thirty minutes drive east of Logroño, on the north bank of the Ebro River, in Mendavia, outside the village of Lodosa, best known for its world-famous Piquillo Peppers. The estate, constructed in 1548 by the Count of Eguía as a castle-fortress, sits on the banks of the Ebro River on land that once belonged to the Kingdom of Navarra but by then had come under the control of the Crown of Castile and Aragón. The monastery and estate would later become part of the Benedictine Order, being used for grazing their wool-producing sheep, but the Benedictines were also experts in making wines and spirits. It remained in the Benedictine's hands until 1836 when it was confiscated by the Spanish government during the "*Mendizábal Disentailment*". It was given to Zurbano, who ended up loosing the estate some years later in a historic card game to a French Count, the estate was finally acquired by the founders of [Barón de Ley](#) in the 1980s.

[Bodegas Maximo](#), located across the Ebro River in Oyón, is also part of the Bodegas Barón de Ley group, as is [El Coto](#), one of the largest wineries in the Rioja. They also own the beautiful [Finca Museum](#) in Cigales.

With the first planting of the vineyards in 1985, the Monastery Estate grew over the years to include more than 1000 hectares around the villages of Mendavia, Cenicero, Carboneras and Ausejo, with the vineyards in Carboneras, one of the highest in the Rioja at 840 meters elevation. The winery is one of the classics in the Navarre Rioja Alta. The chief winemaker is Pablo Tascón, one of Spain's most up and coming winemakers

Guided tours of the Monastery of Imas, completely restored in the mid-1990s, and its cellars, the second largest in the world with capacity for 30,000 casks, with six French-oak "*foudres*", unique fermentation vats, is available by appointment only.

You can email them at info@barondeley.com, or call (+34) 948 694 303 to arrange a tour and tasting.

Bodega Rioja Vega

Originally founded in Haro in 1882 by Felipe Ugalde, who registered the name Rioja Vega in 1921 and is today only one of four wineries that can use the Rioja name in their brand as it predates the creation of the Regulatory Council. They became part of the Príncipe de Viana Group in 1983; Finca Albret, Príncipe de Viana in Navarra, and Bodegas Clunia in Castilla y León. The beautiful new chateaux-style winery, opened in 2002 in the area known as "*La Venta del Jalón*", is surrounded by 70 hectares of vineyards.

A guided tour and tasting is 20€/person and is available Monday to Saturday. For a tour with pintxos, add 10€. The guided tour and tasting, plus lunch at the wine cellar's restaurant is 60€/person for groups of at least 15 people.

Reserve your tour online, by email at info@riojavega.com, or call (+34) 948 646 263 to request a visit.

Bodegas Ondarre

Part of the Bodegas Olarra Group (Logroño), the winery in Mendavia was created with the aim of producing wines with a clear personality reflective of Viana with wines from the small, ancient vineyards on the slopes of the Sierra. The Valdebarón is from grapes found in a series of small valleys just north of Viana, dotted with vineyards, cornfields and ancient olive trees.

Guided tours and tasting are only available at Bodegas Olarra, 'The Cathedral of Rioja', in Logroño.

Bodegas Marqués Del Atrio

Grupo Marqués del Atrio, where wine making has been a family tradition since 1899, built this state-of-the-art family winery in the shape of an "Atrium". Opened by Jesús Rivero (4th generation) in 2003, it includes an aging room with over 10,000 barrels of French and American oak. The other wineries in the group include Bodegas Faustino Rivero Ulecia (the original winery), with wineries in Utiel-Requena, Ribera baja (Navarra), and the Rias Baixas.

Two hour guided tours are available at the Faustino Rivero Ulecia Winery in Arnedo at 12:00 noon and 6:00 pm for 30€/person, 5€ for children 5 to 15.

Email them at marketing@marquesdelatrio.com, or call (+34) 948 379 994 to request additional information or to arrange a visit to the winery near Mendavia.



Winter in the vineyards of Bodega Valdelares

Cárcar

This small farming village of around 1100 inhabitants 10 km east of Lodosa, 40 km from Logroño, on a ridge overlooking the Ega River, began in the 10th-century when Sancho Garcés I built a defensive castle. In 924 the village was burned to the ground by Abderramán III, who had occupied the village in 920. The palace stood until 1277 when the village was once again destroyed, this time by the Castilian army. Be sure to drive up to the Mirador de Cárcar and hike up to Monte San Pedro for sweeping views of the countryside.

As with all of the towns and villages in Navarra, they celebrate all of the traditional holidays, but September is filled with events. The Fiestas de la Juventud, the youth festival with the *encierros de vaquillas*, the running of the heifers, is the first weekend in September. The 9-day Fiestas de Santa Cruz begins on September 14. September 29 is a one-day festival in honor of their patron saint San Miguel. The Pilgrimage to the Virgen de Gracia is celebrated on Pentecost Monday, with the fiesta beginning on Thursday. A procession called “*El Encuentro*” is held on Holy

Wednesday of Semana Santa followed by the Good Friday procession by the three brotherhoods of Cárcar.

For lunch in the village you can try the restaurant in the Hotel Villa de Cárcar, closed on Sundays evening, or Asador Julián la Venta, Paraje la Venta, 11.

Wineries of interest

Bodega Valdelares

Constructed by the brothers Máximo and Rosana Pardo Guillén in 2003, the French “chateaux-style” winery, surrounded by 12 hectares vineyards of Chardonnay, Moscatel de Grano Menudo, Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, specializes in the production of aged reds.

You can call them at (+34) 656 849 602 or contact them online for additional information, or to request a tour and tasting.



Spring arrives in the vineyard of Bodegas Alore

Andosilla

This is another farming village of about 2800 inhabitants a few minutes down river from Cárcar on the north bank, home to the conservas Dantza, El Chaval and Rosara. Like Cárcar, Andosilla was one of the outposts for the kingdom of Pamplona against the Moors during the 10th-century. On the morning of Good Friday the streets of the village are the backdrop for a living representation of *Vía Crucis*, the Way of the Cross. After this solemn ceremony, you can enjoy a typical Hebrew crafts market organized by Napar Bideak, the artisan cooperative. The winter festivities are celebrated in honor of San Sebastián on January 20. The first Saturday in May is the pilgrimage of Santa Cruz, the Holy Cross. Andosilla also celebrates the Fiestas de la Juventud, the youth festival with the *encierros de vaquillas*, the running of the heifers begin on Friday of the first weekend in September. The 7-day festival for the Virgen de la Cerca begins on September 7.

If you want to stay in Andosilla, the 21-room Hotel-Restaurant Villa de Andosilla is in the center of the village at Plaza San Cosme y San Damián, 6, with parking.

For lunch in Andosilla, you can check out the Pintxos Bar and Restaurant Moreno Moro on Calle Hilarión Eslava.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Bagordi

The Luisma family's 58 hectares of Tempranillo, Graciano, Garnacha and Viura vineyards lie along the banks of the Ega and Ebro rivers, between the towns of Andosilla and San Adrián, where, since 1723, 14 generations have worked the land through dry summers followed by cold winters, producing their *Vinos Ecológicos*; Bagordi, Usoa de Bagordi and Navardia wines. The new winery was built in the mid-1990s with a cellar that holds 1000 barrels of French and American oak. The winery is managed by Luis Manuel Cárcar García, and is a member of Bodegas Familiares de Rioja.

The winery is open for visits Monday to Friday and Saturday mornings. Contact them at info@bagordi.com, call (+34) 948 674 860, or contact them online to request a tour and tasting.

Bodegas Navarrsotillo

This is another top organic wine producer belonging to the brothers Andrés and Ramón Serrano Arriezu, who come from a long tradition of winemakers. Their 85 hectares of Rioja DOCa vineyards are divided between Calahorra, Andosilla and San Adrián, in the so-called “Mediterranean Rioja”, with cold winters and hot, dry summers. They also have 35 hectares of vineyards in the Navarra DO, in Andosilla between the Ega and Ebro rivers. The current winery opened in 1992. They have been producing EVOO since 2020.

You can contact them online, by email at info@navarrsotillo.com, or call (+34) 948 690 523 to arrange a private tour and tasting.

Bodegas Alore

This family winery belonging to the Resano and Alonso families is surrounded by 20 of their 40 hectares of vineyards from which they produce four traditional wines, three reds and one white.

A 90-minute visit with a tasting three wines and three tapas is 15€/person, minimum group of 10, available daily from February to December 15. You can

also do a tasting without the visit for 10€, minimum group of 10. A walking tour of the vineyards (3-4 hours) can be arranged for Saturdays and Sundays at 9:30 am for 25€/person, lunch included, October to May only. Take a walk in the vineyard and visit the winery on Saturdays and Sundays at 11:00 am for 35€/each (3 hours).

Email info@bodegasalore.com, or call (+34) 948 919 011 / 681 316 328 / 630 957 590 (Pablo) for information or to arrange a tour and tasting.



Fall colors in the vineyards of Bodegas Luis Gurpegui Muga

San Adrián

Sitting just across the Ebro river from Calahorra, San Adrián is a city of more than 6000 inhabitants which began with a monastery (Almunicer) followed by a defensive castle on a hill offering excellent views of the Ebro plain; a land once crossed by countless armies. In September of each year both patron saints, the Virgen de la Palma and San Adrián, are celebrated, but for eight days beginning on July 24 they celebrate the Holy Relics, the bones of martyrs from the catacombs of Rome given to the village in the 12th-century by Doña Urraca, *Urraca the Asturian*, Queen Consort of Navarre, the illegitimate daughter of Alfonso VII. Everyone dresses in the traditional colors of white and red for the fiesta.

For lunch in San Adrián there is Asador La Reja, or Carlos Oyarbide Bistronomiko, with one Repsol sun.

San Adrián is located on the Western Ebro GR-99 Nature Trail, Stage 18: Sartaguda - San Adrián, 16,3 km, Stage 18.1: Alcanadre - San Adrián, 28,5 km,

Stage 19: San Adrián - Milagro, 29,5 km and San Adrián - Rincón de Soto, 24,7 km.

Wineries of interest

JF Arriezu Bodegas

Founded by winemaker José Félix Arriezu in 1989 originally to sell wine in bulk from his family's 72 hectares of vineyards, in 2013 he started producing his own Tempranillo from the 43 hectare plot 'El Monte' in San Adrián and a Verdejo from his 90 hectares of the "La Sombria" pre-phylloxera DO Rueda vineyards in Pozaldez (Valladolid). The winery is located on the NA-8715, the Andosilla Highway.

Contact them online, call (+34) 696 701 619 / 679 179 550 / 948 672 071 or email info@jfarriezu.com for information and to request a tour and tasting.

Bodegas Luis Gurpegui Muga

Primitivo Gurpegui Muro, a first generation winemaker, opened the winery in San Adrián in the early 20th-century. Upon his death, his son Luis Gurpegui Muga remodeled and expended the winery to include vineyards in the Ribera del Guadiana DO (Extremadura) and Navarra. The winery now contains 12,500 oak barrels for producing Reserva and Gran Reserva wines. It is now part of the Manzanos Wines Group.

Contact them online, email info@manzanos.com, or call (+34) 948 692 500 to arrange a visit to the winery at Calle Luis Gurpegui, 3, in San Adrián, and see all the stages of wine production.



In the cellar of Bodegas Manzanos Azagra

Azagra

The village, surrounded by a sea of vineyards, has been around since the time of the Romans. The Muslims had a military presence in [Azagra](#) and the Navarran king built a fortress, which was destroyed in 1874. The 16th-century Parroquia de San Salvador is late Gothic with Renaissance influences, and whose main altarpiece was the work of sculptor Francisco de San Juan and his son José in the year 1700. The [Basilica of the Virgen del Olmo](#) houses a polychrome Gothic carving of the Virgin from the 14th-century.

A busy agricultural community, Carnival is one of their major celebrations of the year with everyone turning out. The streets are filled on May 1 for Labor Day. A pilgrimage to the hermitage of San Esteban happens the Saturday before Pentecost Sunday. Farmer's Day is May 15 with festivities throughout the day. The one-day Fiesta del Barrio de la Chantrea takes place in July in the neighborhood of La Chantrea. The Fiestas de la Juventud is in August, and the 8-day Patron Saint Festivities celebrating the Virgen del Olmo begins on September 7.

For lunch in the area, head over to Calahorra to Coliceo 29, recommended in the Repsol Guide but open for lunch only Wednesday to Sunday. Mercadal 21 is closed on Mondays while La Comedia is closed on Tuesdays. And of course there is always the Restaurante Parador de Calahorra.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Manzanos Azagra

The Fernández de Manzanos family, whose winemaking tradition dates from 1890, opened this new state of the art winery in 2007 overlooking the Ebro River between San Adrián and Azagra, designed for you to enjoy its views, taste traditional food and wines from the area, and share the moments. It is the flagship of Bodegas Manzanos. With 10 wineries in the Rioja Alta and Navarre Rioja Alta after acquiring Bodegas Luis Gurpegui Muga (San Adrián) and Bodegas Berceo (Haro) in 2016 and three more in the Navarra DO in 2018, the 5th generation of the family (Víctor and David and Victor's wife Laura) now owns 250 hectares of vineyards and manage another 700 in the Rioja DO. In the Navarra DO, they have 50 hectares, managing another 525. Their Las Campanas Rosé was voted the best rosado in Spain in March 2021 edition of 'Mundus Vini'.

They offer different types of guided tours, trips to vineyards, wine tastings, courses, and personalized activities. Reserve your visit online, by email at visitas@manzanos.com, or call them at (+34) 948 692 500.

Bodegas El lagar de la Aldea

Bodegas El Lagar is another part of the Manzanos Family group of wineries, and is located at Calle Navas de Tolosa, 88.

Bodegas Viña Marichalar

This is the first winery that the family Fernández de Manzanos owned in Rioja appellation, and was built when the appellation was founded and is at Calle Navas de Tolosa, 83. Here they only produce only three wines, a Crianza, Reserva and Gran Reserva, aged in French and American oak.

Bodega Viña Zagra

The winery is surrounded by nearly 1400 hectares of trellised vineyards in a 180° arc within a radius of 7 km with 80% of the vineyards located a plateau in the

Turumbalas Ravine at 380 metres, the cooperative, Cooperativa San Gregorio de Azagra. Founded in 1950, it was originally home to nearly half the farmers in Azagra and was last upgraded in 2000 with a mix of cement and stainless steel tanks. *Zurrumba* (Basque), the rumble of water, refers to the waterfalls and ancient echoes of the land. Almost all of their wine is sold in bulk, a small portion is bottled under the *Barranco de Turumbalas* brand, which winemaker Manuel Ruiz Pedreira introduced in 2022 after winning two international medals in 2021, one gold at Mundus Vini, and one silver at the Zarcillo Awards.

You can contact them online, email info@vinazagra.es, or call (+34) 948 692 137 for additional information.

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