

## 42. VINE TOURISM SOUTH AFRICA

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Wine tourism is a relatively new form of tourism. It can be included under:

- Agri tourism;
- Eco & Sustainable tourism;
- Culinary tourism.

It incorporates vineyards, winery and cellar door visitations, tasting events, festivals and shows.

It is interesting to note that the way food and wine is prepared and stored, as well as the preparation of the quantity and composition of the meal, its flavors, habits and traditions of serving, make the food and wine unique and exceptional for each country. Moreover, they have an important place in promoting the destination as interesting and worth visiting and staying. In this line, the climate, culture and history are integral parts of the surface, shape and character of the food and wine.

South Africa's diverse and distinctive wine tourism offering is best experienced on its wine routes.

South Africa boasts 18 official wine routes and 2 brandy routes – 99% of them in the country's wine capital – the Western Cape. The bloodlines of the South African winemaking industry, their wine routes reflect not only the development of their winemaking tradition, but like a fine vintage, South Africa's maturation into a full-bodied, flavorful democracy.

Every journey has a beginning – even if only in thought, and it was the idea of Jan van Riebeeck, the first governor of the Cape, to plant a vineyard in 1655. On 2 February 1659, Oom Jan wrote in his diary, “Today - God be praised – wine pressed for the first time from Cape Grapes”.

All South African wine routes fall under the auspices of the Wine of Origin Scheme. Production is divided into official regions, districts and wards. There are 5 principal demarcations – Coastal, Breede River Valley, Little Karoo, Olifants River and Boberg, covering 21 districts and 61 wards. Stylistically, South African wines fit somewhere between Old World and New.

Vines are planted across the Western Cape as far as the Hemel-en-Aarde valley in the Southern Cape, Bamboes Bay on the West Cape coast, Hartswater in the Northern Cape and Rietrivier in the south western Free State. Unofficially, South Africa's northernmost vineyards are in Bronkhorstspuit, east of Pretoria in Gauteng.

The most popular wine routes are those in Stellenbosch, Franschhoek and Paarl, with Robertson and Durbanville areas emerging as new favourites.

No trip to the Cape vineyards can miss out on Stellenbosch, the unofficial capital of wine tourism, home to the university where future South African winemakers study and the nation's most famous grape, pinotage, a unique cross of Burgundy's pinot noir with Châteauneuf-du-Pape's cinsault, or hermitage, was created in 1925. For a taste of tradition – and great pinotage vintages – stop off at an historic, traditional estate, such as Kanonkop. But if you only choose one winery, then Tokara is the future for this region. To begin with, wine tastings are free (almost unheard of in Stellenbosch); the modern cellar features startling avant-garde art and architecture; and dynamic oenologist Miles Mossop makes refreshing, modern wines. Sadly the majority of Tokara's pinotage vines were destroyed recently in a fire, but be sure to try the powerful syrah and the outstanding sauvignon blanc.

Wine tourism is a new kind of tourism. It is developed in many countries, including Southern Africa. Country's wine capital is the Western Cape. Tourists in this place can try a variety of wines, to visit local restaurants, as well as get acquainted with the culture of the country.

### **References:**

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