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CULTURE / WINE

9 of the World's Best Wine Regions for Cycling

From Tuscany's gravel roads to South Africa's mountain passes, these wine regions reward cyclists with scenic rides and fantastic bottles.



BY LYDIA PRICE · SEPTEMBER 25, 2026

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It's no wonder travelers are increasingly combining serious cycling and wine. The same geographic attributes that make for exhilarating pedaling—steep hills, sweeping vistas, and landscape diversity—also define some of the world's most acclaimed wine regions.

“Our Porto to Lisbon cycling trip has seen bookings increase 31% year over year, while our Lisbon to Algarve trip is also seeing growth, with bookings up 40%,” says Katy Rockett, regional director of North America at tour operator [Explore Worldwide](#). “Traveling by bike puts you directly into the landscape, riding through vineyards, agricultural areas, villages, and smaller communities, so there's a much stronger connection between the wine you're tasting and the place it comes from.”

“Pairing cycling with wine tourism answers a growing demand for immersive, active experiences,” adds Dagmar Lombard, general manager of [Hôtel Crillon le Brave](#) in southeastern France. “The rise of the electric bike has made it far more accessible – both for exploring the vineyards around us and for taking on a challenge like the ascent of Mont Ventoux.”

From the hilltop villages of Provence to the coastal trails of South Africa's Stellenbosch, these are nine of the best wine regions to enjoy world-class cycling.



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Provence, France

Bike through fragrant lavender fields, hilltop villages, and ancient Roman roads in the bucolic hills of southeastern France. Grueling Mount Ventoux, an occasional host to the Tour de France, offers a challenging climb culminating in sprawling views of the Rhône Valley. Apart from its storied reputation, cyclists are drawn to the mountain's moon-like summit, with its otherworldly expanse of white limestone. In its foothills, **Hôtel Crillon le Brave** inhabits the site of a 17th-century village and caters to cyclists with on-site equipment, rental deliveries, secure storage, and a full spa for soothing muscles post-pedal. The property is certified Accueil Vélo, France's national designation for cycle-friendly businesses. Of course, the wine flows in **Provence**, cherished for its fresh, mineral-tinged **rosés**.



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Douro Valley, Portugal

The steep hillsides of this UNESCO World Heritage Site couple challenging terrain with dramatic scenery. Vines are planted along plunging slopes that border the **Douro River**, home to **Port** and quality DOC table wines. This is a destination for cyclists who are ready to sweat, with constant climbs and descents beside the terraced vineyards that cling to the valley's schist-cut slopes. Adventurous spirits are rewarded with sweeping views of the storied valley and renowned selections at the area's countless historic wine estates, known as quintas. **Symington Family Estates** runs some of the most famous, including **Quinta do Vesúvio**, which claims 800-plus acres in the Upper Douro Valley and dates back to the 16th century. With coveted vintage Ports and increasingly acclaimed dry table wines, this grand destination provides a fitting proverbial carrot during punishing gradients.



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Stellenbosch and Franschhoek, South Africa

In the Cape Winelands of South Africa, a thriving outdoor-adventure community makes the mountainous coastal landscape its playground. **Stellenbosch** offers cyclists their pick between road, gravel, and hundreds of miles of mountain bike trails. Pedal the Helshoogte Pass through the Simonsberg Mountains to Franschhoek, where you'll find more leisurely routes on smooth, vineyard-lined lanes. There are several wine estates to visit on the way, including **Delaire Graff**, which offers suites and villas with private pool terraces and floor-to-ceiling windows for savoring mountain vistas. Once you've made your way to Franschhoek, the breathtaking **Boekenhoutskloof** is a historic winery where you can taste some of the region's best Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, and Semillon.



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Sonoma Valley, United States

With 19 distinct AVAs spread among mountainsides, coastal trails, vibrant valleys, and redwood forests, **Sonoma** is a diverse getaway for wine lovers and cyclists alike. (Not that it's a competition, but the Northern California region is larger and claims more bike-friendly roads than its neighbor, Napa.) Both casual and advanced riders will find a well-positioned base in the **Healdsburg** and Dry Creek Valley area in North Sonoma. Quiet roads wind up and down gentle hills, passing over a dozen wineries on the roughly 10-mile West Dry Creek Road. Stop for lunch at **Lambert Bridge** for a picnic basket stuffed with local cheeses and charcuterie, best enjoyed in the winery's pristine gardens. **Riesling** fans should also break to sample the trio at **Reeve Wines**. For an extended journey that delves into challenging terrain, venture into the adjacent valleys of Alexander Valley and Russian River Valley or the Mayacamas Mountains.



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Loire Valley, France

Central France has much to offer the epicurean outdoor adventurer. The 560-mile trail known as **La Loire à Vélo**, or Loire Valley by Bike, starts in Cuffly, a small village in Burgundy, and winds towards the Atlantic Coast at Saint-Brevin-les-Pins, passing Renaissance châteaux, quaint riverside villages, and world-class vineyards. Take the Via Allier south of the official Loire à Vélo to reach the singular Côtes d'Auvergne AOC, where vines and bike routes share the same volcanic hillsides. Known for its Gamay and Pinot Noir reds and rosés, like those from fifth-generation producer **Desprat Saint Verny**, the AOC offers a rare chance to pair cycling through volcanic landscapes with a distinctive wine culture that dates back to Roman times.



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Barossa Valley, Australia

Perfect for casual riders and serious oenophiles, the **Barossa Trail** is a 25-mile sealed cycling and walking path weaving through the heart of Australian wine country. Gentle gradients make for easy pedaling, while public restrooms and water stations keep breaks convenient. Of course, no journey is complete without plenty of pit stops at cellar doors, cafes, and farm stands. Take the connecting Gomersal Trail from Lyndoch to visit **Seppeltsfield Wines**, the makers of a **100-point red blend** that blew away Wine Enthusiast Writer-at-Large **Christina Pickard**. The sealed detour traverses local farm roads under vast Australian skies, leading to an expansive, palm-lined winery complex with a rich history.



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Girona and the Empordà, Spain

Girona has earned an international reputation as a cycling hub, but the roads surrounding the **Catalan** city also lead to one of Spain's most distinctive wine regions. In DO Empordà, cyclists can ride through cork forests, medieval villages, and sea vistas before stopping for tastings of Garnatxa Negra and Carinyena, the region's signature grapes. Road cyclists tackle the region's rolling secondary roads, while gravel riders have extensive unpaved terrain to explore, including sections of the 217-mile Pirinexus loop. The **official DO Empordà Wine Route** includes over thirty wineries, and it can be followed on two wheels. For a particularly scenic ride, take the route toward Cap de Creus, where vineyards stretch from the Mediterranean to the foothills of the Pyrenees.



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Willamette Valley, United States

Oregon's Willamette Valley Scenic Bikeway is the perfect two-to-three-day cycling adventure punctuated by farm stands, waterfalls, and Pinot Noir tastings. The nation's first **official Scenic Bikeway** covers 134 miles of agricultural landscape, winding through the fertile valley between the Coast and Cascade ranges. It runs directly past **Ankeny Vineyard**, where cyclists can stop to sample Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and wood-fired pizza. Elsewhere, the mostly gentle ride follows quiet country roads past hop fields, hazelnut orchards, Christmas tree farms, and the Willamette River, with plenty of refueling options along the way.



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Tuscany, Italy

For red wine lovers, no destination tops **Tuscany's** storied winemaking history and diversity of bottles, all set against the backdrop of its famous rolling hills. But cycling is nearly as ingrained in Tuscan culture as its world-renowned Sangiovese. **Cyclists flock** to its white gravel roads lined with cypress trees, relishing scenic rides through medieval towns, olive groves, and vineyards. There are options for every type of athlete among its **9,000-plus miles of routes**, from peaceful paths along the centuries-old Via Francigena to the famously arduous climb from Castelnuovo di Garfagnana to San Pellegrino. And with celebrated wine regions like Chianti Classico and Montalcino woven into the landscape, cyclists can easily pair a day in the saddle with a well-earned tasting.

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