Portugal

Denominação de Origem Controlada (DOC)

In line with other countries of the EU, Portugal will re-classify its quality wines as either Denominação de Origem Protegida (DOP) or Indicação Geográfica Protegida (IGP).

Indicação de Provenienza Regulamentada (IPR) will be eliminated, and former IPRs upgraded to DOC status.

Vinhos Regional (VR) may in future be reclassified as Indicação Geográfica Protegida (IGP),

All VR wines must include a minimum 85% of grapes grown in the stated region. A wide range of grape varietals is permitted in each VR, and a minimum alcohol content is stipulated. VR wines are often produced in DOC regions, but fail, or their winemakers choose not to meet all of the DOC requirements.

Vinhos Regional Districts. (Aug 2011)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Minho</th>
<th>Lisboa</th>
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<td>Transmontano</td>
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Wine produced in Portugal that does not meet any of the above criteria is considered Vinhos de Mesa, or simply Vinho—table wine.

If produced as vintage-dated DOC or VR, Portuguese table wines may be labelled as Garrafeira ("private wine cellar"), indicating a minimum period of aging prior to release.

Tinto Garrafeira wines must age for a minimum 30 months, including at least 12 months in bottle.
Branco and rosado Garrafeira wines must age for a minimum 12 months, with at least 6 in bottle.

Vintage Garrafeira Port style as pioneered by Niepoort has a separate regulation - following a few years’ aging in cask, the Port is matured for a period of at least eight years in glass demijohns.
Map: Wines of Portugal

VR Minho
1 DOC Vinho Verde

VR Transmontano
2 DOC Tras os Montes

VR Duriense
3 DOC Douro
3 DOC Porto

VR Terras de Cister
4 DOC Tavora Varosa

VR Terras do Dao
5 DOC Lafoes
6 DOC Dao

VR Beira Atlantico
7 DOC Bairrada

VR Terras de Beira
8 DOC Beira Interior

VR Lisboa
9 DOC Encostas d Aire
10 DOC Obidos
11 DOC Alenquer
12 DOC Arruda
13 DOC Torres Vedres
14 DOC Lourinha
15 DOC Bucelas
16 DOC Carcavelhos
17 DOC Colares

VR Tejo
18 DOC do Tejo

VR Peninsula de Setubal
19 DOC Setubal
20 DOC Palmella

VR Alentejo
21 DOC Alentejo

VR Algarve
22 DOC Lagos
23 DOC Portimao
24 DOC Lagoa
25 DOC Tavira
Still Portuguese table wines of designated origin may also be labelled *reserva*, indicating an alcohol content of at least 0.5% higher than the legal minimum established by the respective DOC or VR; however, stricter requirements in individual DOCs may supersede this standard.

For traditional method sparkling wines, *reserva* indicates a minimum period of 12 months on the lees prior to *dégorgement*. 

**Colheita Seleccionada** indicates a minimum 1% higher alcohol content than that established by the regional appellation. All of these terms may be applied to wines produced in any of Portugal’s demarcated regions.

**Red Varietals**

The most widely grown red varietal is Castelão, producing full-bodied, tannic wines with red-fruit aromas.

Touriga Nacional, accounts for approximately 10% of Portugal’s vineyard acreage, producing dark, full-bodied, wines. In the Dão region plantings of Touriga Nacional have been overtaken by Jaen (Mencía) and it also only represents a small proportion of the Douro’s total acreage. Touriga Nacional, is a low-yielding vine producing small berries, which add concentration in the red table blends of Dão, Douro, and Alentejo. Modern premium red wines often contain a percentage of Touriga Nacional, treated to new French oak.

**Synonyms** - Bical Tinto, Mortágua Preto.

Alfrocheiro, Trincadeira (Tinta Amarela), Baga, and Aragonez Tinta Roriz, (known as Tempranillo in Spain) are other widely cultivated red grape varietals.

**White Varietals**

Fernão Pires, is known as Maria Gomes in Bairrada,. It is the most planted white varietal in the country. An early-ripening, aromatic grape found throughout Portugal, but it is concentrated in Bairrada and the southern plains of Tejo. A varietal, producing simple, honeyed wines that are often prone to oxidation and low acidity.

Nobler white wines are produced from the Encruzado grape in the Dão, an elegant, balanced grape yielding floral and citrusy wines that gain complex nutty, resinous aromas with age. Oak is sometimes used in fermentation.

Arinto, one of Portugal’s oldest indigenous varietals, produces mineral-tinged whites and is grown throughout the country, although its best examples are from the coastal regions, and from Bucelas in particular. The aromatic, Antão Vaz is one of the most important white grapes in Alentejano, Alvarinho (Spain’s Albariño) is highly regarded by the producers of Vinho Verde.

Cercial (Sercial), highly prized for dry Madeira, is preferred throughout Portugal for its acidity and delicate aromas; in some areas it is known as Esgana Cão:
Minho and Vinho Verde

Located in the northwestern corner of the country, the Minho VR and **Vinho Verde DOC** share the same geographical boundaries. A cool, rainy, Atlantic-influenced climate prevails; grey rot can be problematic during the growing season.

Traditionally, vines in the region have been trained high off the ground in a system called **enforcado**. Vines grow up the trunks of trees, telephone poles, and stakes, creating an overhead canopy. This lessens the risk of fungal disease, The method is being gradually displaced by trellising systems. **Vinho Verde**—“green wine”, is the largest DOP in Portugal and represents 15% of the nation’s total vineyard acreage, producing red, white, and rosado wines from an assortment of grapes. The region’s is planted with nearly 60,000 hectares of vines and shares landscape features and some grape varietals with Rías Baixas, -Vinho Verde’s neighbour to the north. Slopes of granitic soils are predominant, although steeper, terraced vineyards are found in the mountains further inland. **Alvarinho, Trajadur (Treixadura), Loureiro, Avesso and Pedernã (Arinto)** are the principal white varietals authorized for Vinho Verde.

Red and rosato wines, are produced from grapes like Espadeiro, Borraçal, Vinhão and Alvarelhão,. The light, white wines of the region have lively acidity and low alcohol levels, and are slightly sparkling—the result of carbon dioxide injection prior to bottling. The red wines, also **pétillant**, gain their sparkle from malolactic fermentation in the bottle, a process usually avoided for white wines. The wines are at their best in the year after release.

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**Vinho Verde DOC sub-regions (listed from north to south)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monção e Melgaco</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lima</td>
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<tr>
<td>Câvado</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basto</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ave</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sousa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amarante</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baião</td>
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<td>Paiva</td>
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Transmontano

Transmontano VR is located to the east of Minho along the Spanish border to the north of Duriense. Within the region are three sub-regions of the Trás-os-Montes DOC: Chaves, Valpaços, and Planalto Mirandés. The region is dry, hot, and mountainous, and the wines produced are ripe and full-bodied, although the cooler, higher-altitude vineyards preserve acidity. Most important red grapes - Touriga Nacional, Tinta Roriz, Bastardo (Trousseau), Touriga Francesa and Trinca-deira. Most planted white grapes - Fernão Pires, Síria, Viosinho, Gouveio, Malvasia Fina and Rabigato.

Terras de Cister

The VR Terras de Cister encompasses the DOC of Tavora Varosa. The white wines of Távora-Varosa have traditionally been used in Portuguese sparkling wine as part of a base cuvée. The wines of the former Encostas da Nave IPR are very similar to the wines of the Douro region. The principal grapes of the Távora-Varosa region (including the former Encostas da Nave IPR) include Alvarelhao, Arinto, Borrado das Moscas, Cercial, Chardonnay, Fernao Pires, Folgosao, Gouveio, Malvasia Fina, Mourisco Tinto, Pinot blanc, Pinot noir, Tempranillo, Tinta Barroca, Touriga Francesa and Touriga Nacional.

Duriense: Douro and Porto

The Duriense VR is a region that encompasses the eastern, Douro River Valley south of Transmontano. It includes the DOCs of Douro and Porto. The Douro was Portugal’s first demarcated wine region. Schist, the preferred soil type for Port, is found throughout the zone, The Douro Valley experiences a continental climate of severely hot summers and cold winters, when temperatures often dip below freezing. The region’s mountains act as barriers to the humid Atlantic winds, and the Douro becomes progressively drier toward the Spanish border.

There are three subzones in Douro; Baixa Corgo to the west has the highest density of plantings, Cima Corgo has the highest total vineyard acreage, Douro Superior, which stretches to the Spanish border, is the largest, most arid, and most sparsely planted region in Douro.

Table wines and the occasional licoroso (fortified) Moscatel do Douro are produced as Douro DOC; Fortified Port from the Douro region is released as Porto DOC. Approximately 50% of the
region’s wine is released as Porto.

Douro table wines may be red, white, or rosado. The list of approved grape varietals is extensive, but the best red wines are usually produced from Touriga Nacional, Touriga Franca, Tinta Roriz, Tinta Cão, and Tinta Barroca.

These grapes are equally suited to Port production, although clonal choices and preferred mesoclimates may differ for table wines.

White varietals include Malvasia Fina, Viosinho, Rabigato, and Gouveio. Both white and red wines may be subject to new oak treatment.

Moscatel Galego is used for fortified Moscatel wines, which may carry an age designation in the manner of tawny Port.

In the Douro, reserva wines must achieve a minimum alcohol of 11.5% for white and rosado wines or 12% for red wines, instead of the standard minimum 10.5% (white/rosado) or 11% (red) for the appellation.

White reserva wines must be aged for six months; red reserva wines must be aged for one year.

The IVDP must certify all Douro wines; those that meet reserva criteria and score well in blind tasting may use the term grande reserva. Espumanto do Douro (sparkling wines) and Colheita Tardia (late harvest wines) may be produced as Douro DOC.

The Minho region separates the Douro DOC from Oporto. The major port houses have historically used the port city as a commercial centre for the trade. Until 1986, all Port wines were required by law to be aged and shipped from Vila Nova de Gaia. Removing the restrictions has enabled small quintas to produce and ship Port and table wines from their premises in the Douro.

Ferreira, launched the table wine Barca Velha in 1952, pioneering the style. The Port houses of Niepoort, Quinta do Crasto and Ramos Pinto are also at the forefront of table wine production. The 270-hectare Cima Corgo estate Quinta do Vale Meão, has established itself as one of the region’s top wines.

Beiras Atlantico

Beiras Atlantico IGP lies to the south of Duriense and Minho. Within the region, there is one DOC zone: Bairrada.

Bairrada DOC, predominantly produces red wines, although white and rosado wines are authorised. The late-ripening, astringent Baga, the principal red grape of the region, thrives in the barros (clay) soils, whereas white grapes, including Maria Gomes and Arinto, are usually planted in sandier soils. The appellation requires a minimum 50% of Baga for red wines, which may be blended with Touriga Nacional, Camarate, Castelão, Jaen, and Alfrocheiro.

Wines with a minimum 12.5% abv, rather than the 11% required by the DOC earn the right to label wines as “Bairrada Clássico”.

Terras de Beira

Includes the **DOC Beira Interior**, a large appellation near the Spanish border. Despite its size, the region has relatively few growers, and much of the winemaking is performed by cooperatives. Beira Interior contains three subzones: **Beira Castelo Rodrigo, Cova da Beira, and Pinhel.**

Terras do Dão

**Dão DOC** and **Lafões DOC** lie within the Terras do Dão VR, which borders Minho VR to the north and claims a large part of the central, inland territory formerly assigned to Beiras VR.

Some of Portugal’s best dry reds are produced in Dão DOC. In recent years, Dão’s producers have worked to emphasise freshness and fragrance. Touriga Nacional is a major component of Dão blends; the wines are typically more elegant, sharper, and more floral than wines produced in the Douro. The region is hot and dry in the growing season, but receives adequate rainfall in the cold winter months. Altitude helps to preserve acidity, and the best vineyards are often located between 400 and 500 metres above sea level, on granitic soils. There are seven sub-regions, each with distinct mesoclimates: **Serra da Estrela (named for Portugal’s highest mountain range), Alva, Besteiros, Castendo, Silgueiros, Terras de Azurara, and Terras de Senhorim.**

Dão wines may be red, white, rosado or espumante; but red wines account for over 75% of the total output. Approved red grapes are **Touriga Nacional, Jaen, Touriga Franca, Alfrocheiro, Aragonez, Bastardo, Rufete, Trincadeira, and Tinta Cão.**

Approved white grapes include (but are not limited to) **Encruzado, Bical, and Cercial.** Certain experimental grapes, such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Sémillon, can be utilised but may not comprise more than 40% of a blend.

**Red nobre** wines must contain a minimum 15% Touriga Nacional and a maximum 85% of Jaen, Rufete, Alfrocheiro, & Aragonez. And must undergo a minimum three years aging prior to release and contain a minimum 12% alcohol.

**White nobre** wines must contain a minimum 15% Encruzado and a maximum 85% of Cercial, Bical, Malvasia Fina, & Verdelho. One year of aging prior to release and must contain a minimum 11.5% alcohol.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Min Alcohol</th>
<th>Minimum ageing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tinto</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Cannot be released before May 15 following harvest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinto Reserva</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>24 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinto Garrafeira</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>36 months (inc 12 months in bottle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinto Nobre</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>36 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinto Nobre Reserva</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>42 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinto Nobre Garrafeira</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>48 months (inc 9 months in bottle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branco</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branco Reserva</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branco Garrafeira</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>12 months (inc 6 months in bottle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branco Nobre</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branco Nobre Reserva</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>Branco Nobre Garrafeira</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>18 months (inc 18 months in bottle)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Lisboa

The coastal Lisboa VR runs southward from Beiras Atlantico

Lisboa contains nine individual DOCs: Bucelas, Colares, Carcavelos, Arruda, Torres Vedras, Alenquer, Óbidos, Lourinhã, and Encostas de Aire.

Encostas de Aire. Collectively, the region releases a larger volume of wine than any other in Portugal, but it has long carried a reputation of low quality, dominated by co-operatives and Vinhos de Mesa production. However, the southern DOC zones nearest the city of Lisboa have produced exemplary wines, and Alenquer and Encostas de Aire in the north show promise. Lourinhã produces aguardente rather than wine.

The three DOCs nearest the capital—Bucelas, Colares, and Carcavelos—are slowly disappearing due to the pressures of the expanding urban population. Bucelas produces dry white wines from a minimum 75% Arinto. Colares wines may be red or white. The sandy soils of Colares provide protection against phylloxera, and the vines of the region are traditionally planted in trenches to protect them from the salty marine winds. Ungrafted Ramisco and Malvasia make up a minimum 80% of Colares’ red and white wines, respectively. A second, harder soil type, chao rija, is located further inland in the Colares DOC. Castelão comprises a minimum 80% of any red wine sourced from chao rija soil.

Carcavelos has suffered from suburban development, only 25 hectares of vineyard remain. Red wines are produced from a combined minimum 75% Castelão and Preto Martinho, and white wines are a blend of Arinto, Galego Dourado, and Ratinho.

The wines are fermented dry, then fortified and sweetened with vinho abafado, a partially fermented must preserved with alcohol. After fortification, Carcavelos wines are aged in barrel for at least two years, followed by at least six months in bottle.

Península de Setúbal

The Península de Setúbal VR includes the DOC zones of Setúbal and Palmela, located across the Tagus estuary from the city of Lisboa.

The VR encompasses the peninsula, of the Tagus and Sado estuaries, and a section of the Atlantic Coast.

Palmela DOC comprises two distinct areas: low-lying, sandy plains spreading eastward from the hilltop town of the same name, and the clay-limestone lower slopes of the Arrabida Mountains.

The sandy plains provide the best terroir for Castelão, the principal grape of Palmela reds—a minimum 66.7% is required.
White wines are blended with a high proportion of Fernão Pires and Arinto. Rosado, espumante and licoroso wines are also authorized. The DOC’s encépagement includes a number of international varietals for both red and white wine production, including Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Sémillon, Syrah, Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot, and Tannat.

The vinhos licoroso of Setúbal

Sweet white and red fortified wines are produced, from a minimum 67% Moscatel de Setúbal (Muscat d’Alexandria) or Moscatel Roxo, respectively.

In keeping with EU regulations, the wine may be labelled by varietal if either grape comprises a minimum 85% of the blend. The wines have a pungent, floral fragrance, developed through a lengthy maceration on Muscat skins (up to six months) following the fermentation and fortification. The wines develop a tawny, burnt orange colour and raisin character while maturing in large wooden casks for up to five years prior to release. Some examples age for more than 20 years. J.M. da Fonseca is the appellation’s largest producer; in the company’s cellars are stocks of wine dating to the 19th century.

Tejo and Alentejano

Both Tejo and Alentejano derive their names from the Tagus, or Tejo, River.

The Tejo VR is surrounded by Lisboa to the west, Beiras to the north, Alentejano to the east, and the Península de Setúbal to the south.

The VR contains the single doTejo DOC (formerly Ribatejo), in which only 1850 of the VR’s 22,300 hectares of vineyards are included.

DoTejo has six subregions: Coruche, Chamusca, Cartaxo, Santarém, Tomar, and Almeirim.

Red, white, and rosado wines are produced from a number of native and international varietals. Castelão and Fernão Pires are the dominant red and white grapes; white wines predominate.

The Alentejano VR, covering 30% of Portugal’s landmass, borders the eastern edge of both Tejo and the Península de Setúbal, extending southward to the Atlantic Coast north of the Algarve.

Alentejano’s hot growing season produces wines with low acidity and high alcohol, and irrigation is necessary in the region’s arid plains. The Alentejo DOC within Alentejano has eight subzones: Moura, Granja-Amareleja, Évora, Vidigueira, Reguengos, Redondo, Borba, and Portalegre. Portalegre is located on the cooler, granitic slopes of the São Mamede Mountains in the northern sector of the DOC. This is the most promising area in the region. Red wine production predominates in Alentejo, and Trincadeira is the region’s most prominent grape.
Algarve

Algarve is the southernmost VR on the Portuguese mainland. It contains four DOC zones—Lagos, Lagoa, Portimão, and Tavira each dominated by a co-operative. Traditional grape varieties in the region include Castelão and Tinta Negra for red wines, and Arinto and Síria for white wines.

Algarve’s hot climate is not particularly suited for the production of fine wines,

Açores

The volcanic Açores (Azores) islands are located in the middle of the Atlantic, nearly 1,000 miles from the coast of Portugal. Three of the nine islands—Pico, Graciosa, and Terceira—have DOC zones, although conditions in the middle of the ocean are not suited to viticulture. The fortified white wines of Pico DOC are the most highly regarded wines of the islands, they are generally consumed locally and viticulture occupies only a small part of the island. The island’s volcano the highest point in Portugal is 7,500 feet above sea level. The vineyards, are sheltered from sea winds by walls from the black volcanic stone,. Pico wines must achieve a minimum 16% abv after fortification, and are aged for a minimum three years in barrel. Grape varietals: Verdelho, Arinto and Terrantez.

Biscoitos DOC, on the island of Terceira, also produces fortified white wines from the same grapes.

Graciosa DOC produces unfortified, dry white table wines.

Pico DOC - Fortified wines

Terras Madeirenses

The Terras Madierenses VR covers both of the isles of the Madeira archipelago: Madeira and Porto Santo.

Two DOC zones, Madeira and Madeirense, cover the fortified and unfortified wines,respectively, Madeirense wines may be red, white, or rosado.