

San Luis Obispo County: Wine Touring



WINE ITINERARY IDEAS IN SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Wine Touring

- Your day begins with a scenic drive along uncrowded country roads to discover small family-owned wineries where you are warmly greeted and treated like old friends. San Luis Obispo County has been growing grapes and making wine since the Franciscan friars planted grapes at **Mission San Miguel Archangel** in 1978. As of 2003, the county became the third largest wine growing area in California.

Wine Growing Regions

- Wine grape vineyards now cover over 34,000 acres of the county spread over two distinct wine regions. The weather and geography create microclimates that favor a wide range of varieties.

Paso Robles

- The northern portion of the county, around Paso Robles, is the largest appellation and is home to two distinct geographic areas roughly divided by the city and Highway 101.
 - **Eastside:** Stretching from San Miguel to Templeton and eastward along Highway 46 East the area is characterized by rolling hills and warmer temperatures.
 - **Westside:** The more rugged terrain of the Westside includes wineries in the “Templeton Gap” and the Adelaide areas.

San Luis Obispo

- This viticultural area includes Edna Valley, Arroyo Grande Valley as well as Avila Valley and Nipomo. The valleys have east-west orientations and are distinguished by the marine air flowing directly into the valleys from the Pacific Ocean that moderate temperatures.
 - **Edna Valley:** Located southwest from the city of San Luis Obispo, this broad valley at the base of the Santa Lucia mountain range is known for its premium wine grapes.
 - **Arroyo Grande Valley:** Inland from Arroyo Grande, and extending into the rugged terrain behind Lopez Lake. Some wineries trace their history to vines planted in 1879.

Tasting Rooms

- Many wineries maintain tasting rooms where you can sample their wines and learn more about the winery’s unique character. Quite often, the person behind the counter is the winemaker or a member of the family. Tasting rooms provide an opportunity to experiment and find a new favorite wine. Most wineries do not charge for tasting, while a few have a nominal charge that may include a souvenir glass. Ask about their wine clubs that offer monthly shipments and access to winemaker events.

Vintner Associations

- For information about the wineries, annual events and educational seminars contact the vintners and grower associations that represent each region:

Paso Robles Vintners & Growers Association—www.pasowine.com 805.239.8463

San Luis Obispo County Vintners & Growers Association—www.slowine.com 805.541.5868