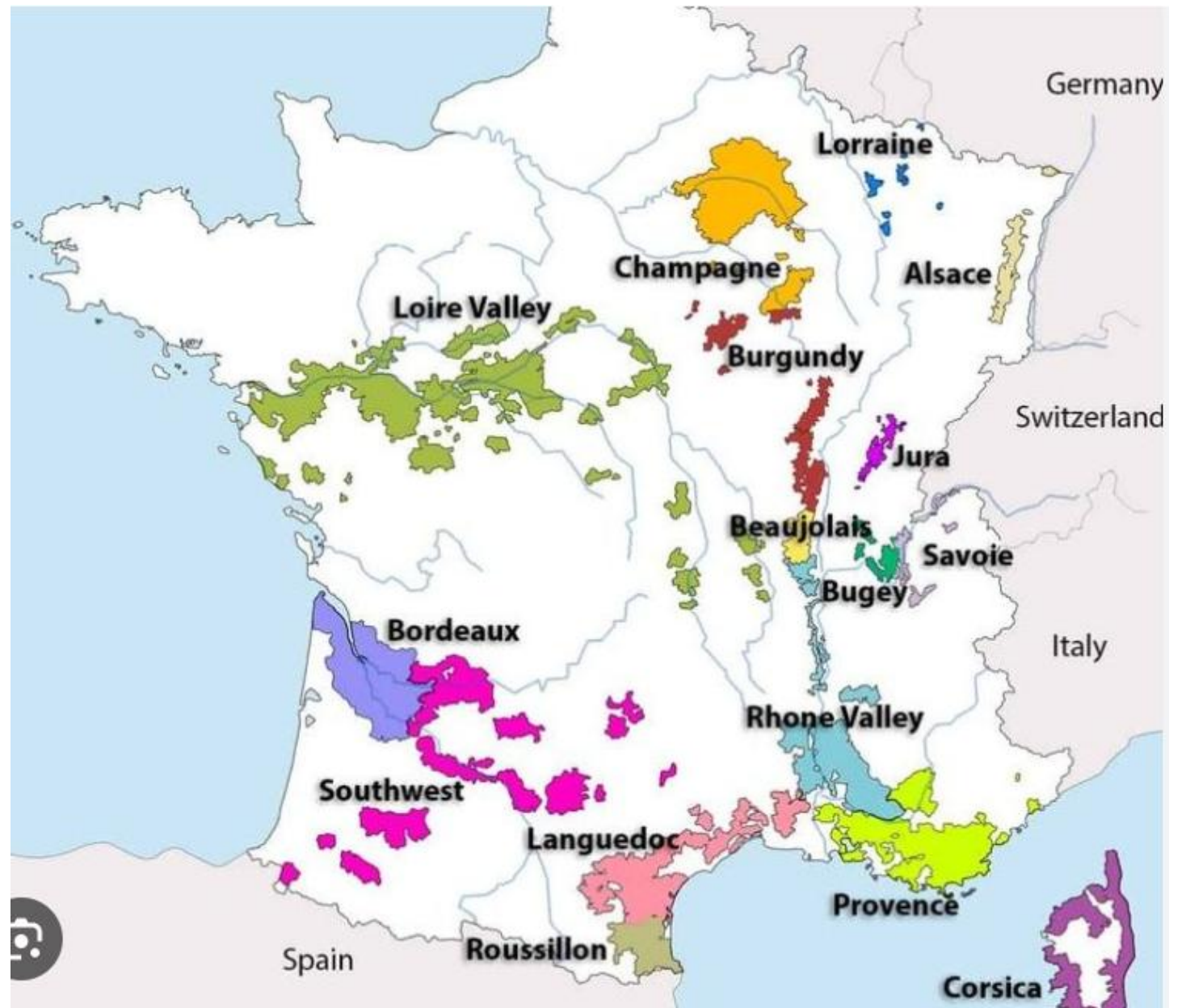


France



- Located in northeastern [France](#), the Champagne wine region is 90 miles east of Paris and is characterized by its rolling hills covered in vineyards. There are over 86,000 classified, planted acres in Champagne, which account for 4% of France's total vineyard area.
- In 1845, the use of the name “Champagne” as a generic label for sparkling wines was banned. By 1887 that term was reserved for wines exclusively produced in—and sourced from—the province of Champagne. The Champagne AOC was officially created in 1936.
- [Blanc de blancs](#) refers to a sparkling wine made entirely from white grapes (primarily Chardonnay).
- [Blanc de noirs](#) are made with “black” grapes, like Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier.
- [Vintage Champagnes](#) means the wine comes from a single harvest.
- Non-vintage Champagne, labeled “NV,” is Champagne made from [a blend of harvests and years](#).

- The Champagne AOC—with its five sub-regions of Montagne de Reims, Vallée de la Marne, Côte des Blancs, Côte de Sézanne and Côte des Bar—contains 390 houses, 125 grower-producers and 16,200 growers. Besides having to be sourced and made in this region to be called “Champagne,” other legal restrictions apply. For a sparkling wine from Champagne to be labeled “non-vintage,” it must be aged for a minimum of 15 months, 12 of these on lees. “Vintage” wines must be aged for at least 36 months.
- In a Champagne blend, Pinot Noir, which accounts for 38% of the region’s vineyard plantings, adds body and structure; Chardonnay, which accounts for 31% of plantings, provides elegance, finesse and citrus fruits aromas; Pinot Meunier, which accounts for nearly 31% of plantings, buds late, protecting it from spring frosts, and adds roundness and floral, herbal and meaty notes.

“Champagne Winemaking: The Traditional Method”

- (making a base wine that is low in alcohol and high in acidity)
 - grapes are handpicked, sorted and pressed to extract their juice
 - first liquids are called the “cuvée” and the remainder is the “taille”
 - juice is fermented
 - a blend of wines from different vineyards and vintages is created in the house style
 - it is bottled with yeast and sugar, sealed with a cap and stored on its side for the second fermentation
 - the dead yeast forms a type of sediment called “lees” that must be removed before the wine is sold

“Champagne Winemaking: The Traditional Method”

- “[Riddling](#)” slowly rotating the bottle and gradually tilting it downward
- sediment collects in the neck
- neck is dipped into a very cold liquid, which freezes the sediment
- remove crown cap, the pressure created by the CO₂ inside forces out the ice and lees frozen into it
- bottle is topped off with a mixture of wine and sugar—and is re-sealed
- That is what determines the final sweetness of the wine
- the bottle is sealed with a thick cork and wire cage, ready to be sold

Styles of sparkling Champagne wines

- **Brut Zéro/Brut Nature:** zero to three grams of sugar added.
- **Extra Brut:** zero to six grams added, very dry.
- **Brut:** zero to 12 grams, dry.
- **Extra Sec/Dry:** 12 to 17 grams, still on the dry side.
- **Sec/Dry:** 17 to 32 grams, medium-sweet.
- **Demi-Sec:** 32 to 50 grams
- **Doux:** more than 50 grams, very sweet; best served with dessert or umami-rich dishes.

Labeling Terms

- **Cuvée:** Not to be confused with “cœur de cuvée” (i.e. first press), the term cuvée is most often used for non-vintage proprietary house blends or special wines. Red and white grapes may be used, but generally there is no skin contact with the red grapes beyond the initial pressing.
- **Prestige cuvée:** Red and white grapes may be used; usually reserved for the finest wines. In some cases these may be single vintages.
- **Non-vintage Champagne:** Red and white grapes may be used for a blend of different harvests to create a signature style; most sparkling wine uses this term.
- **Vintage Champagne:** Red and white grapes may be used, but only from a single year’s particularly special harvest.
- **Blanc de Blancs:** Only white grapes are used, resulting in a light- to medium- bodied wine, with primary citrus aromas and flavors.
- **Blanc de Noirs:** Only red grapes are used (Pinot Noir or Meunier), producing a more full- bodied wine, with more red fruit flavors.
- **Rosé:** Minimal skin contact is used to tint the wine before fermentation, or a chateau can add still Pinot Noir to tint the blend. This is one of the only wines in the world where this process is legally accepted.

Moët & Chandon Imperial Brut Champagne \$38.79 @ HEB

- Pale straw-gold with fine, persistent bubbles. A classic non-vintage Champagne.
- Fresh green apples and pears, followed by citrus zest (lemon, lime). Notes of white peach, toasted almond, honey and fresh flowers. Dry, refreshing, and well balanced with lingering citrus and a touch of toast.
- Brie on Crostini – creamy brie cheese served on a small toasted slice of bread
- The crisp acidity cuts through the creamy brie, while subtle citrus and apple notes complement the toasted bread



Masottina Collezione 96 Rose Brute Prosecco

- Bright pink/salmon-tinged rose w/ fine persistent bubbles. Light-medium Brut (dry)
- Red fruit bouquet dominated by wild strawberries, raspberries, red currants and cherries. Secondary hints of white-fleshed peaches, apricots and floral perfume.
- Fresh and fruit forward, crisp with dry brut style, finishes with a clean, fruity lift.
- Cajun-Spiced grilled shrimp
- Rose has enough body and red-berry fruit to stand up to the spice, while bubbles cool the heat.



Chandon California Brut Sparkling Wine \$17.98 Costco

- Pale straw-yellow color, fine lively bubbles, bright and energetic mousse on the pour. Classic Brut dryness – not sweet, medium-bodied.
- Fresh fruit, green apple, pear, and citrus zest. Subtle floral hints, soft notes of almonds and toast.
- Crisp and lively on the palate, fine, persistent bubbles create a smooth, creamy mouthfeel without heaviness.
- Mini lox and bagel chip
- Dry style sharpens the smoky salmon flavor and cleanses the palate from the richness of the fish.



Gran Castillo Rocio

Brut Cava

Spec's \$17.88

- Pale golden straw color, fine persistent bubbles, and a lively mousse. Approachable and fruit-forward Cava with a gentle creaminess from lees.
- Nose – Fresh bread, green apples, citrus (lemon), pear, melon, some floral hints, subtle earthy undertones.
- Palate – Crisp and fresh, balance between fruit and acidity, apple, citrus, honey-like sweetness, dry finish with a touch of minerality and peppery spice.
- Olive tapenade on a baguette and egg
- Minerality and citrus notes balance the saltiness and intensity of olives without overpowering them



Colligny Champagne Pere & Fils Brut Rose Total Wine \$36.99

- Salmon to delicate pink w/ subtle coppery reflections
- Nose – Red fruit forward – fresh strawberries and raspberries, hints of melons.
- Palate – Medium bodied, fine mousse, red fruit – strawberries, raspberry, cherry, touch green apple, mild acidity balanced with fruit-sweet finish.
- Spicy fried chicken nugget
- Rose adds fruit to soften spice; Wine's slight sweetness cools heat and pairs surprisingly well with fried foods.

