

Exploring Turkey's Wine Heritage

An Enthusiasts Guide

Presented by

Marc Silver



Turkey's Wine History

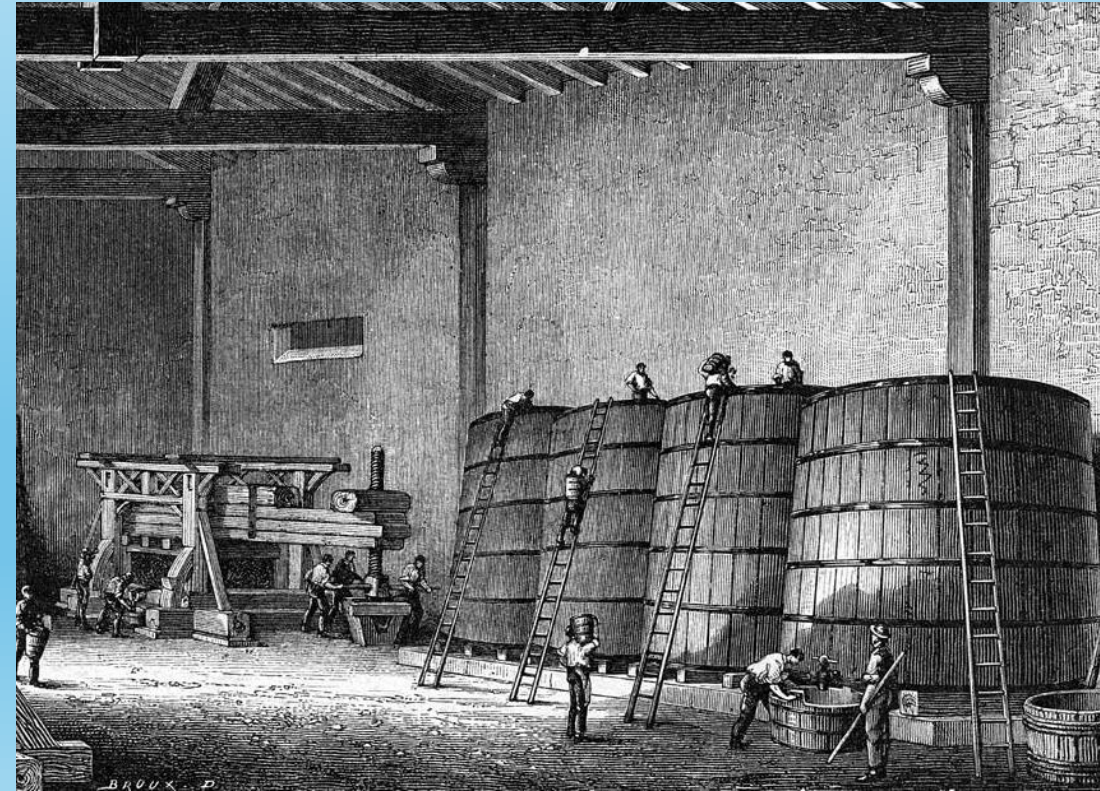
Ancient Civilizations



- Turkey, perched at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, has been perfecting the art of winemaking for over 7,000 years.
- It's a place where history and vines intertwine, and the story begins in the Anatolian region, where ancient civilizations like the Hittites, Phrygians, and eventually the Greeks and Romans, discovered the magic of grapes.
- They didn't just sip wine; they made it a part of their religious rituals and social gatherings. In fact, evidence of wine production dates back as far as 1800 BCE during the Hittite Empire.
- The Greeks, Romans, and Byzantines picked up the baton and ran with it, planting vineyards across Anatolia like there was no tomorrow.

Turkey's Wine History: Contemporary Craftsmanship

- But when the Ottoman Empire rolled in, wine production hit a bit of a dry spell.
- Thanks to Islamic prohibitions on alcohol, the great Turkish wine rivers slowed to a trickle.
- However, not everyone was willing to give up their fermented grape juice.
- Non-Muslim communities—Greeks, Armenians, and Jews—kept the winemaking flame alive, continuing the traditions that had been passed down through millennia.
- By the late 19th century, the tides began to turn as the Empire opened up to trade. Wine production made a comeback, not just for local consumption but to save European markets, which had been hit hard by phylloxera, a pesky vine-killing disease.
- The birth of the Turkish Republic in 1923 brought even more excitement to the scene. Turkey's first modern winery, Kavaklıdere (kah-VAHK-lih-deh-reh), was established in 1929, signaling a new era of wine innovation.



Turkey's Wine History: Modern Era Revival

- As the 20th century unfolded, Turkish winemakers learned to balance their unique indigenous grape varieties with international heavyweights, making a splash on the global stage.
- Fast-forward to the post-1980s, and the liberalization of the Turkish economy turned the wine industry up a notch.
- Turkey is now among the world's largest grape producers, though, surprisingly, most of the grapes are consumed fresh or dried into raisins, leaving only a small (but flavorful) portion for winemaking.
- Today, Turkey's wine industry is experiencing a renaissance, with a growing number of boutique wineries producing high-quality wines that showcase the country's unique terroir.
- The focus has shifted towards indigenous grape varieties and sustainable winemaking practices, reflecting a commitment to preserving Turkey's rich wine heritage.

Wine Regions of Turkey

A Diverse Landscape

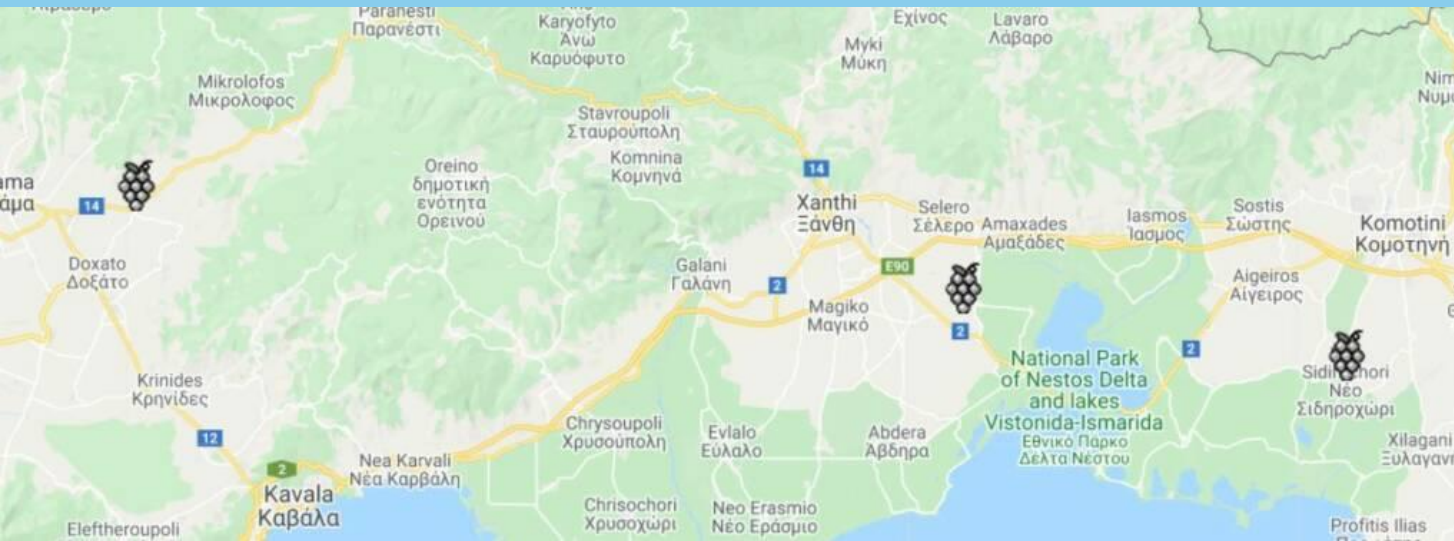
- Turkey boasts a diverse range of wine regions, each with its own distinct characteristics.
- Turkey's diverse geography provides ideal conditions for wine production across several key regions.
- Here are some of the most prominent:



Wine Regions of Turkey

Marmara Wine Region (Thrace): Located in the northwestern part of Turkey, Thrace is known for its cool climate and high-quality red wines. The region is home to the famous Trakya wine region, where Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Pinot Noir thrive.

- **Grape Varieties:** Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc
- **Wine Characteristics:** Full-bodied, structured reds with notes of blackcurrant, cherry, and spice; crisp, refreshing whites with citrus and floral aromas.



- **Location:** Northwestern Turkey, bordering Greece and Bulgaria
- **Terroir:** Cool climate, limestone soils
- **Climate:** Continental climate with hot summers and cold winters.

Turkey's Wine Regions

- **Aegean Region (Izmir and Urla Peninsula)**

Bordering the Aegean Sea, this region is known for its warm, dry climate and limestone-rich soils, which create ideal conditions for high-quality wine production. The Aegean is home to some of Turkey's most respected wineries, including Urla Şarapçılık and Kavaklıdere.

- The region produces a diverse range of wines, from crisp, aromatic whites made from Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay to full-bodied reds crafted from Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

- **Location:** Western Turkey, bordering the Aegean Sea.
- **Terroir:** A warm, dry region with a mix of limestone and volcanic soils, which adds complexity and minerality to the wines.
- **Climate:** Mediterranean climate with mild winters and hot summers, providing ideal conditions for viticulture.
- **Whites:** Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay
- **Reds:** Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Öküzgözü



Turkey's Wine Regions

Central Anatolia: This region, located in the heart of Turkey, has a continental climate with hot summers and cold winters. It produces a wide range of wines, including full-bodied reds from Kalecik Karası and Boğazkere.

Central Anatolia (Cappadocia and Ankara)

- Known for its volcanic soils and ancient wine traditions.
- Eastern Anatolia (Elazığ and Diyarbakır)
- Produces robust wines with indigenous varieties like Öküzgözü (oh-KOOZ-go-zuh) and Boğazkere (boh-AHZ-keh-reh).
- Black Sea Region (Tokat)
- Smaller, focused on white wines made from the Narince (nah-REEN-jay) grape.



Turkey's Wine Regions

- Aegean Region (Izmir and Urla Peninsula)
- Location: Western Turkey, along the Aegean coast.
- Terroir: Mediterranean climate with cooling sea breezes; limestone and alluvial soils.
- Prominent Varietals: Sultaniye (sul-TAH-nee-yuh), Bornova Misketi, Urla Karası (UR-lah kah-RAH-suh), Cabernet Sauvignon.
- Climate: Long, dry summers and mild winters, ideal for ripening grapes with balanced acidity and sugar.

Turkey's Wine Regions

- Marmara Region (Thrace)
- Location: Northwest Turkey, bordered by the Sea of Marmara and close to Istanbul.
- Terroir: Maritime climate with clay-rich soils.
- Prominent Varietals: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot (mehr-LOH), Sauvignon Blanc (soh-VEE-nyon blahnk), Papaskarasi (pah-pah-SKAHR-ah-see).
- Climate: Mild, temperate climate with consistent rainfall, favorable for both red and white varietals.

Turkey's Wine Regions

- Central Anatolia (Cappadocia and Ankara)
- Location: Central Turkey, including the volcanic region of Cappadocia.
- Terroir: Volcanic soils, high altitudes (over 1,000 meters), and significant temperature variations between day and night.
- Prominent Varietals: Emir, Kalecik Karası (kah-leh-JEEK kah-RAH-suh).
- Climate: Continental climate with hot summers and cold winters, contributing to intense flavors in the grapes.

Turkey's Wine Regions

- **Southeastern Anatolia:** This region, bordering Syria and Iraq, has a hot, dry climate and rocky soils. It is known for its unique grape varieties, such as Antep Uzumu and Öküzgözü, which produce intense, spicy wines.
- Central Anatolia (Cappadocia and Ankara)
- Location: Central Turkey, including the volcanic region of Cappadocia.
- Terroir: Volcanic soils, high altitudes (over 1,000 meters), and significant temperature variations between day and night.
- Prominent Varietals: Emir, Kalecik Karası (kah-leh-JEEK kah-RAH-suh).
- Climate: Continental climate with hot summers and cold winters, contributing to intense flavors in the grapes.

Turkey's Wine Regions

- Eastern Anatolia (Elazığ and Diyarbakır)
- Location: Southeastern Turkey, near the Taurus Mountains.
- Terroir: Alluvial soils mixed with stony, rocky terrains.
- Prominent Varietals: Öküzgözü, Boğazkere.
- Climate: Harsh winters and hot summers; ideal for robust, tannic red wines.

Turkey's Wine Regions

- Black Sea Region (Tokat)
- Location: Northern Turkey, near the Black Sea.
- Terroir: Temperate and humid, with fertile, loamy soils.
- Prominent Varietals: Narince.
- Climate: Cooler, humid climate, perfect for delicate white wines with crisp acidity.

Turkey's Terroir: A Blend of Tradition and Modernity

- Turkey's terroir is a captivating mix of geological, climatic, and geographical wonders, making it one of the most varied and intriguing grape-growing regions on the planet. From the sun-drenched coastal plains to the towering mountains, Turkey provides a rich and ever-changing landscape for viticulture to thrive.
- The foundation of its vineyards is built on a mosaic of volcanic soils, limestone, and clay, each imparting its own distinctive qualities to the wines. The climate is equally diverse, blending the warmth of the Mediterranean with the crisp coolness of continental breezes, giving growers the perfect balance of conditions across varying altitudes and regions. This harmonious mix of factors grants winemakers a lengthy, flexible growing season, where temperature fluctuations coax grapes into developing extraordinary depth and complexity.

Turkey's Terroir: A Blend of Tradition and Modernity

- Turkey's winemaking history is inseparable from its terroir. Centuries of cultivation, innovation, and adaptation have nurtured a stunning variety of grapes, along with traditions that are woven into the fabric of the country's cultural identity.
- Just as diverse as its geography, Turkey's vineyards stretch across landscapes like those in the Aegean, where hot, sun-filled summers and cool sea breezes create ideal conditions for cultivating international favorites like Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, alongside local gems like Bornova Misketi (BOR-noh-vah MIS-keh-tee).
- Deeper inland, the magical region of Cappadocia in Central Anatolia features high-altitude vineyards. Here, volcanic soils and extreme temperature shifts between day and night nurture bold, concentrated grapes like Emir (eh-MEER), renowned for their vivid, intense flavors.

Turkish Varietals

Varietals and Wine Characteristics

Indigenous Grape Varieties:

- **Narince:** A versatile white grape variety known for its aromatic wines with citrus, floral, and herbal notes.
- **Öküzgözü:** A red grape variety that produces full-bodied, spicy wines with notes of blackberry, plum, and leather.
- **Kalecik Karası:** A red grape variety that produces dark, intense wines with notes of blackcurrant, cherry, and spice.
- **Boğazkere:** A red grape variety that produces full-bodied, tannic wines with notes of blackberry, plum, and chocolate.

Turkish Varietals

International Grape Varieties:

- **Cabernet Sauvignon:** A popular red grape variety that produces full-bodied, structured wines with notes of blackcurrant, cherry, and cedar.
- **Merlot:** A red grape variety that produces medium-bodied, supple wines with notes of plum, cherry, and chocolate.
- **Chardonnay:** A white grape variety that produces versatile wines with a wide range of flavors, from citrus and apple to oak and butter.
- **Sauvignon Blanc:** A white grape variety that produces crisp, refreshing wines with citrus, herbal, and grassy notes.
- .

Turkish Varietals

Varietals Characteristics and Pairing Suggestions

- Öküzgözü – [oh-KOOZ-go-zuh]
- Characteristics: Fruity red grape producing medium-bodied wines with flavors of cherry, raspberry, and a hint of spice.
- Tasting Notes: Bright red fruit with soft tannins and lively acidity.
- Pairing: Perfect with lamb kebabs, mezze platters, and grilled vegetables.

Turkish Varietals

Varietals Characteristics and Pairing Suggestions

- Boğazkere – [boh-AHZ-keh-reh]
- Characteristics: A tannic red grape known for its bold, structured wines.
- Tasting Notes: Blackberries, tobacco, and black pepper, with a long, earthy finish.
- Pairing: Pairs well with rich dishes like lamb stew or game meats.

Turkish Varietals

Varietals Characteristics and Pairing Suggestions

- Narince – [nah-REEN-jay]
- Characteristics: A versatile white grape known for its aromatic wines.
- Tasting Notes: Citrus, green apple, floral aromas, and balanced acidity.
- Pairing: Great with seafood, salads, and creamy cheeses.

Turkish Varietals

Varietals Characteristics and Pairing Suggestions

- Emir – [eh-MEER]
- Characteristics: Crisp, fresh white grape native to Cappadocia.
- Tasting Notes: Citrus, white peach, and a distinctive minerality.
- Pairing: Excellent with grilled fish, shellfish, and light appetizers.

Turkish Varietals

Varietals Characteristics and Pairing Suggestions

- Kalecik Karası – [kah-leh-JEEK kah-RAH-suh]
- Characteristics: Produces soft, aromatic red wines with subtle fruit and floral notes.
- Tasting Notes: Raspberry, cherry, violet, with a velvety texture.
- Pairing: Pairs well with roasted chicken, duck, or even lighter pasta dishes.

Significant Wineries in Turkey

Kavaklıdere (Aegean and Central Anatolia)

- Significance: Turkey's oldest and largest winery, founded in 1929. Known for its production of both indigenous and international grape varieties.
- Notable Wines: Pendore collection (Cabernet Sauvignon blends) and Yakut (red blend with Öküzgözü and Boğazkere).

Significant Wineries in Turkey

Urla Şarapçılık (Aegean)

- **Significance:** A boutique winery in Urla Peninsula, known for sustainable and biodynamic viticulture.
- **Notable Wines:** Urla Karası, an indigenous varietal producing rich, fruity reds with a smooth finish.

Significant Wineries in Turkey

Kayra Wines (Eastern Anatolia)

- Significance: Known for their use of indigenous varietals like Öküzgözü and Boğazkere, producing robust wines that showcase Eastern Anatolia's terroir.
- Notable Wines: Buzbağ (a blend of Öküzgözü and Boğazkere), renowned for its deep flavors and aging potential.

Significant Wineries in Turkey

Chamlija (Marmara)

- **Significance:** A rising star in Turkish winemaking, Chamlija is known for producing high-quality wines from both international and indigenous varieties.
- **Notable Wines:** Papaskarasi, a light, aromatic red grape, revived from near extinction.

Significant Wineries in Turkey

Turasan (Central Anatolia)

- **Significance:** One of Cappadocia's most respected wineries, producing award-winning Emir and Kalecik Karası wines.
- **Notable Wines:** Turasan Emir, celebrated for its crisp, mineral-driven profile.

Conclusion

- Turkey's terroir is a fascinating tapestry of geological, climatic, and geographical marvels, making it one of the most diverse and alluring grape-growing regions in the world.
- From the sun-soaked coastal plains to the rugged mountain peaks, Turkey's landscapes offer a dynamic and ever-shifting stage for viticulture to flourish.
- Beneath these vineyards lies a mosaic of volcanic soils, limestone, and clay, each infusing the wines with distinct character.
- The climate is just as varied, blending the warmth of the Mediterranean with the refreshing coolness of continental air, creating the perfect environment for vineyards spread across different altitudes and terrains. This ideal combination gives winemakers a long, flexible growing season, with temperature variations that draw out remarkable complexity and depth from the grapes.

Conclusion

1. Turkey's terroir is a fascinating tapestry of geological, climatic, and geographical marvels, making it one of the most diverse and alluring grape-growing regions in the world.
2. From the sun-soaked coastal plains to the rugged mountain peaks, Turkey's landscapes offer a dynamic and ever-shifting stage for viticulture to flourish.
3. Beneath these vineyards lies a mosaic of volcanic soils, limestone, and clay, each infusing the wines with distinct character.

Turkey's terroir is a captivating blend of geological, climatic, and geographical elements, making it one of the most diverse grape-growing regions in the world.

From sun-drenched coastal plains to rugged mountains, Turkey's varied landscapes provide a rich canvas for viticulture.

Its vineyards rest on a foundation of volcanic soils, limestone, and clay, each lending distinctive qualities to the wines. The climate, a mix of Mediterranean

Acknowledgement

My seminars are the result of many years of experience combined with many hours of research over the internet.

I would like to acknowledge the many source I have accessed.

These include Wine Spectator, Wine Enthusiast, BK Wine Magazine, Wine & Spirits Magazine, American Vineyard Magazine, The Grapevine Magazine, Wikipedia.com, Britannica.com, and the various Government websites.

Citations & Resources

Books:

Wine Grapes: A comprehensive guide to the world's 1,368 grape varieties and their wines, by Jancis Robinson, Julia Harding, and José Vouillamoz.

The World Atlas of Wine: A visually stunning exploration of wine regions around the globe, by Hugh Johnson and Jancis Robinson.

Turkey: A Culinary Journey: A guide to Turkish cuisine and culture, including information on wine, by Aylin Öney Taner.

Articles and Journals:

Decanter Magazine: A leading wine publication with articles on various wine regions, including Turkey.

Wine Enthusiast: Another popular wine magazine that often features articles on emerging wine regions like Turkey.

International Journal of Wine Research: An academic journal that publishes research on all aspects of winemaking and viticulture.

Turkish Journal of Agriculture and Forestry: A Turkish journal that publishes research on agriculture and forestry, including viticulture.

Citations & Resources

Online Resources:

Turkish Wine Association: The official website of the Turkish Wine Association, which provides information on the country's wine industry.

Wine Searcher: A website that allows users to search for wines from around the world, including Turkey.

Vinepair: A wine and spirits website with articles and news on the industry.

"Turkey: Wine lands on the rise"

This source provided valuable insights into Turkey's wine history, the revival of indigenous grape varieties, and key regions like Urla and Cappadocia. It also highlighted some significant wineries such as Urla Şarapçılık and Suvla, alongside new viticultural developments in regions like Lake Van.)

www.decanter.com/wine/turkey-wine-lands-on-the-rise-535193/)

"Wines of Türkiye: Award-winning wines from an ancient land"

This article offered detailed information about prominent Turkish varietals such as Öküzgözü, Boğazkere, and Narince. It also featured top wineries, including Kavaklıdere and Kayra Wines, and significant contributions to Turkey's wine industry.