VOGUE

A Guide to Napa Valley, California Wine Country's Crown Jewel

BY NICOLE KLIEST, SEPTEMBER 5, 2023

You don't come to Napa Valley to be the first. The storied region has been on travelers' radars for about as long as wine has been commercially produced in California. What you come here for is just about everything else—farm-to-table cuisine, internationally-recognized wines, historic hot springs, and design-driven hotels (and that's not even mentioning its rolling mountain ranges and flowing river that can be admired via hot air balloon). Despite lacking any sort of under-the-radar qualities, it's still a destination with an enduring, ineffable appeal.

First and foremost, the Napa Valley AVA (American Viticultural Area) is home to some of the most prestigious wineries in the country. It runs about 30 miles north to south but only five miles at its widest point, which lends itself well to providing a diverse range of climates that allow for a breadth of wine varieties to be made here. The towns where you'll spend most of your time exploring are Napa, Yountville, St. Helena, and Calistoga (with 16 appellations such as Coombsville and Stags Leap District comprising the broader AVA). Getting around is best conquered by car, but if you're wine tasting you'll need to look into transportation via taxi, rideshare, or a private driver.

Though a visit to Napa Valley requires nothing more than a desire to slow down and savor, there are a number of new, buzzy openings across food, wine, and accommodations that justify prioritizing a trip to Northern California right now. Below, a guide to Napa Valley.

Where to Taste

Over in Carneros-Napa (an AVA that runs between both Napa and Sonoma), Bouchaine Vineyards offers unique wine tastings like Sensory Olympics and Vine to Vessel learning experiences.