



Top 10 Off-the-Path Wine Regions

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It's hard to imagine that as recently as 30 years ago most wine snobs dismissed Napa vino as swill, and just a couple of decades ago Australia and Chile barely blipped on the wine connoisseur's radar. Today, increasingly sophisticated vinification techniques have fostered a promising new generation of winemakers across the globe, from India to Tasmania. This is great news on two fronts: First, there's more fantastic wine to drink and more values to be found. Second, with places like Napa and Bordeaux becoming overrun with tourists at times, these **off-the-path wine regions** offer all the charm, flavor, and beautiful scenery of classic vineyard exploring (though if you still love those classic wine centers, we have our top picks for those, too, over in our Top 10 Wine Regions feature).

6. New York: Finger Lakes

The land: Named for the elongated, finger-like shapes of its 11 parallel, glacier-carved lakes, upstate New York's pastoral Finger Lakes region (a 9,000-square-mile area set about 300 miles north of Manhattan) boasts a vineyard-covered wonderland of more than a 100 wineries. The lakes' unique microclimates provide prime grape-growing conditions and see most of their viticultural activity centered on Seneca, Cayuga, Keuka, and Canandaigua lakes – the largest of the bunch, each is anchored by its very own scenic wine trail.

Why it's hot: Apart from top-notch wineries that regularly turn out award-winning Rieslings and Gewürztraminers, the pastoral off-the-path wine region is full of picturesque villages, quaint bed-and-breakfasts, farm-fresh eateries, and stunning lake vistas. Its state parks, speckled on lakefronts and bursting with water-carved gorges and waterfalls, round out the offerings for outdoor enthusiasts.

Wineries to watch: Dr. Frank's Vinifera Wine Cellars, Hermann J. Wiemer Vineyard, Heron Hill Winery, and Lucas Vineyards

Lodging pick: Perched on the banks of Seneca Lake, Glenora Wine Cellars offers the region's only inn situated directly on a vineyard; it's set just steps from a bustling tasting room. Thirty guestrooms tout balconies or patios with lovely lake and vineyard views, and guest are treated to wine-centric extras with their bookings, including a complimentary bottle of wine and tasting coupons. (*4.5-hour drive from New York City; www.glenora.com; 607-243-9500*)

Take it home: Riesling from Dr. Frank's Vinifera Wine Cellars