

Immerse yourself in the land of cowboys and Cabernet.

With massive Andean peaks forming the visual backdrop, the Maipo Valley ranks as one of Chile's most picturesque spots. It's also home to some of the country's top wines. Cabernet Sauvignon is king here, with alluvial flows, a persistently sunny climate and cool evenings creating the ideal breeding ground for sumptuous red wines. These bottlings sit handsomely alongside the rich stews and grilled meats typical of the region. Around 30 miles from the buzz of Santiago, Maipo's traditional *haciendas*, the occasional roaming *huaso* (Chilean cowboy) and a countryside pace make the region feel a world away. —Amanda Barnes

Where to Taste

Maipo is home to some of the biggest wine brands in Chile. **Viña Undurraga** offers tours of its soil-analysis test pit and a chance to train your senses in an aroma room. Some of **Santa Rita's** tastings include a visit to its Andean museum, while **Concha y Toro's** interactive tour of El Casillero del Diablo, or Devil's Cellar, is unlike any other. For a more intimate tasting, try **Viña Aquitania**, **Viña Pérez Cruz** and **Viña Antiyal**, the latter owned by Chile's leading biodynamic consultant, Álvaro Espinoza. Gourmands should consider **Viña El Principal's** Barbecue tour, featuring a drive to the hilltops where an abundant Chilean *asado* (barbecue) awaits. Imbibe the region's signature red blends while feasting your eyes on vines below. Reserve a table at **Viña Haras de Pirque's** contemporary restaurant for a wine-paired meal with panoramic views from the horseshoe-shaped terrace.

MATT WILSON, GAIL MOONEY-KELLY/ALAMY, CHRIS RODRIGUEZ/GETTY

Where to Dine

Dining in Maipo is often a home-style affair, with hearty Chilean classics served in rural *casas del campo*. Viña Santa Rita's **Doña Paula Restaurant** is a stalwart of the local scene. The historical hacienda was a hideout for Chilean soldiers long before hungry tourists filled its halls. Family-friendly **Lo Pirque** in the vineyard-heavy Pirque area of Maipo serves traditional cuisine during a presentation of elite equestrianism. **Casa Tierra** in Buin is a newer but promising bistro that celebrates the valley's seasonal produce.

Other Activities

The area's ubiquitous mountain terrain attracts adventuresome visitors seeking picturesque hikes, rock climbing, fly fishing and horseback riding in the **Cajón del Maipo**, a stunning gorge located southeast of Santiago. Visits to the San Francisco Glacier in **El Morado National Reserve**, **El Yeso Reservoir** and **San José Volcano** are all rewarding, best followed by a scenic drive to soak in the **Baños Colina** hot springs.

Budget Tip

Stay in Santiago, where things can be cheaper than in the countryside. Navigate the public bus and Metro system, or do a wine and bike tour from **Maipo Valley Wine Tours**.

PROMINENT WINES

Maipo is red-wine territory, boosted by gravel terraces, warm days and cool nights that provide the perfect combination for perfumed wines with silky tannins. Puente Alto is the most prominent Maipo subregion. It produces a trio of iconic Chilean wines: Almaviva, Concha y Toro's Don Melchor and Viña Errazuriz's Viñedo Chadwick. These wines should be high on your list to taste, alongside other signature bottlings like Viña Santa Rita's Casa Real, Viña Aquitania's Lazuli and Domus Aurea. All are varietal Cabs or Cabernet Sauvignon-based blends, for which the valley is best known.



Where to Stay

The grand dame of Maipo Valley lodging is **Hotel Casa Real**, a regal 19th-century home on the grounds of Viña Santa Rita with 16 rooms. Its beautifully landscaped gardens beckon a morning stroll or early evening wine picnic. Venture farther into the nearby Andes mountains to enjoy the woodland hideaway of **Hotel Altiplanico Cajón del Maipo**. B&Bs, cabins and rental homes also dot the valley, or you can choose from options in Santiago.

When to Go

There's a charm to each and every season, from winter's snowy mountain views and skiing to summer hikes to spring's bloom and fall's colors.

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