

Texas' Hill Country Wineries



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Tucked between fields of live oaks and rolling hills, between rodeo arenas and Dairy Queens; between peach orchards and wildflower farms, you'll find an impressive array of vineyards in the Texas Hill Country. The region boasts over fifteen wineries, with more on the way. Many have unique gift selections and facilities suitable for wedding or special events.

Before setting out on your day trip, do a little research to choose the vineyards you'd like to visit (see sidebar for resources, maps, and guides). Take the back roads—the Hill Country offers beautiful scenery and vistas around every corner. And you might even

discover an antique shop or roadside produce stand.

Don't know much about wine? Don't worry—you won't find a "wine snob" anywhere in the Hill Country. Owners and tasting staff are passionate about teaching their customers about wine, finding out what you like (and don't like), and recommending alternate choices. Most vineyards have a range of wines to taste; you'll get a small sample of several, arranged in the best order of tasting (most vineyards have a small tasting fee). "We love to educate people about wine," said Lost Creek winery manager Charlotte Buikema. "We've converted more than one beer drinker." Some wineries also offer tours, if you're

interested in learning more about the wine-making process. (For example, did you know that French oak barrels are labeled with the forest they came from?)

Recent changes to Texas law now allow you to order your favorite wines online or over the phone and have them shipped to you once you've found a favorite winery (as long as someone over eighteen is present to sign for the package). But remember that this is Texas, and wines do not get along well with summer shipping temperatures and hot trunks.

So find a sitter for the kids, pack a picnic lunch, and enjoy a wine tasting excursion into the Hill Country. Here's a sample of places to try.



