

tasting through...

ARGENTINA



ARGENTINA WINE BENEFITS FROM:

- ★ ELEVATION (the ability to perfectly ripen varieties at a latitude that would typically be too hot)
- ★ IRRIGATION (in a country that is typically very dry - *outside of El Niño years* - many vineyards are able to use water reserves from the melting glaciers and snow that feed rivers atop the Andes Mts)
- ★ DRY (less disease pressure and more flavor concentration)
- ★ OLD VINES (30% of vines are over 40 years old - mainly Malbec, Bonarda, and Semillon)
- ★ WEAK PESO (because of the exchange rate many can import excellent quality wines at lower cost)

TOP VARIETIES:

- ★ MALBEC (red)
- ★ TORRONTÉS (white)

HISTORY

- gained independence from Spain in 1816 and developed agricultural sectors
- in the 1850s, European immigrants (from Italy and France), brought winemaking techniques and grape varieties, such as Malbec from France, which became a hallmark of Argentine wine
- faced a series of challenges, including phylloxera (a vine disease) in the 1880s and recovered producing more bulk wine for export
- flourished in the 21st century and is now one of the world's largest wine producers; diverse climates and altitudes, from the Andes mountains to the Patagonian plains, bring a wide range of wine styles

CLASSIFICATIONS

- 85 % of wines must be from labeled vintage/variety
- Reserva = 12 months in oak for red / 6 months in oak for whites
- Grand Reserva = 24 months in oak for red / 12 months in oak for whites
- **Area classifications**
 - **IP** wines: lowest level, covers large geographic area / table wine
 - **IG**: verifies the origin of the grapes from a delimited region (can be provinces *ex: Mendoza/Salta*, or departments within provinces *ex: Cuyo or Maipú*)
 - **DOC**: specifies a geographical limit and production methods, highest quality (there are only two: *Luján de Cuyo*, and *San Rafael* - both within Mendoza)

TORRONTÉS

- signature white variety of Argentina, Torrontés is known for its strong, aromatic profile (flowers, perfume, citrus, tropical fruit)
- thrives in Argentina's high-altitude vineyards (Mendoza, La Rioja, and Salta), where the cooler climates help retain its fresh aromatics and the sunshine gives it the longer growing season needed to develop its aromatics
- two main types of Torrontés grown in Argentina:
 - Torrontés Riojano: The most common and widely grown type, known for its aromatic intensity and crisp, dry finish
 - Torrontés Sanjuanino: Less common, this variety is more neutral and less aromatic but can still produce quality wines

MALBEC

- mid-19th century, Malbec was introduced to Argentina from France; it flourishes in the high-altitude regions of Mendoza and has found its home here as Argentina's signature red!
- requires abundant sunlight (UV rays) to fully ripen and develop its deep color and intense fruit flavors
- a vigorous variety that needs mostly dry conditions and less fertile soils for quality production
- notable for being approachable, with ripe black fruit flavors, higher alcohol, oak, spice, and soft tannins

CLIMATE/LANDMARKS

- **temperate continental climate** hot, humid summers and cool, mild winters
- **varying climate types** conditions vary from hot in the north to very cold in the extreme south and at the heights of the Sierras and the Andes Mts
- **Andes Mountains** - the altitude (ranging 500m to 3,300m) creates cool temperatures in areas that would otherwise be too hot (also a wider diurnal which leads to cooler nights extending the growing season)
- **flat land** - even at high elevations there are flat areas of land for vines, allowing for machine harvesting and the use of flood irrigation - which requires flat land
- **El Niño** - weather pattern every 2-10 years, creating higher rainfall and bigger threat of hail
- **Zonda Wind** - hot, strong, dry wind in early spring and late summer (can reduce disease, but also affect flowering and reduce yields)
- **soils** Mainly alluvial deposited by rivers flowing down the Andes, (Top Mts = poorer soils - stones/calcareous) (Mid Mts = gravel/sand/silt) (Bottom Mts = high nutrient soils - loamy/clay)
- ***The influence of altitude and latitude matter here!** Need high altitudes at low latitudes for cooling influence, while high latitudes can have lower altitudes.

WINEMAKING

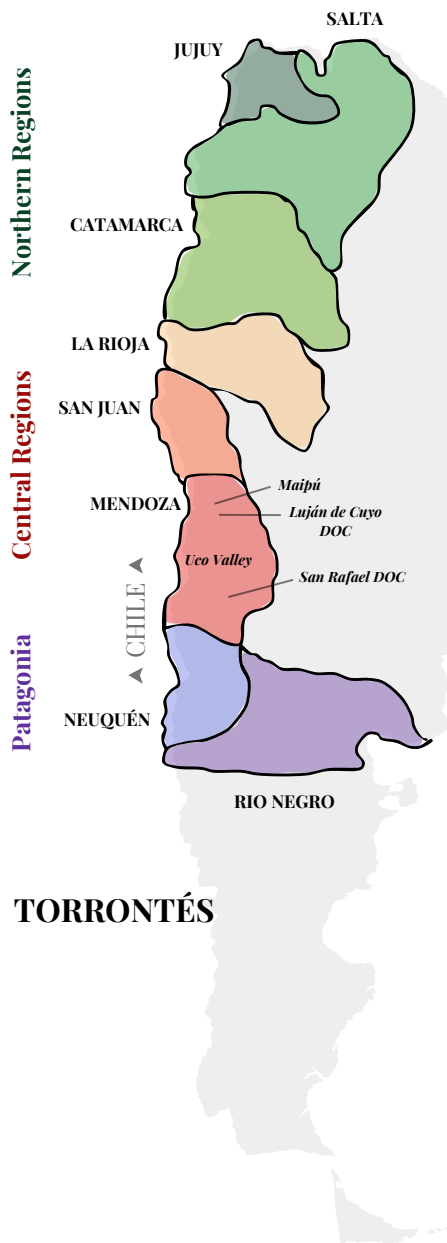
- **can be more traditional** harvesting later with temperature control, fermenting and maturing in New French Oak for *ripe, fully body* flavor
- **now leaning more modern** harvesting earlier, using neutral vessels, keeping higher acidity/lower alcohol for more *fresher, brighter* wines
- experimenting with whole bunches, natural ferments, gentle extractions, and blending
- many producers use Organic/Biodynamic practices due to limited fungal disease (although actual certification remains low because it's expensive and rigorous)

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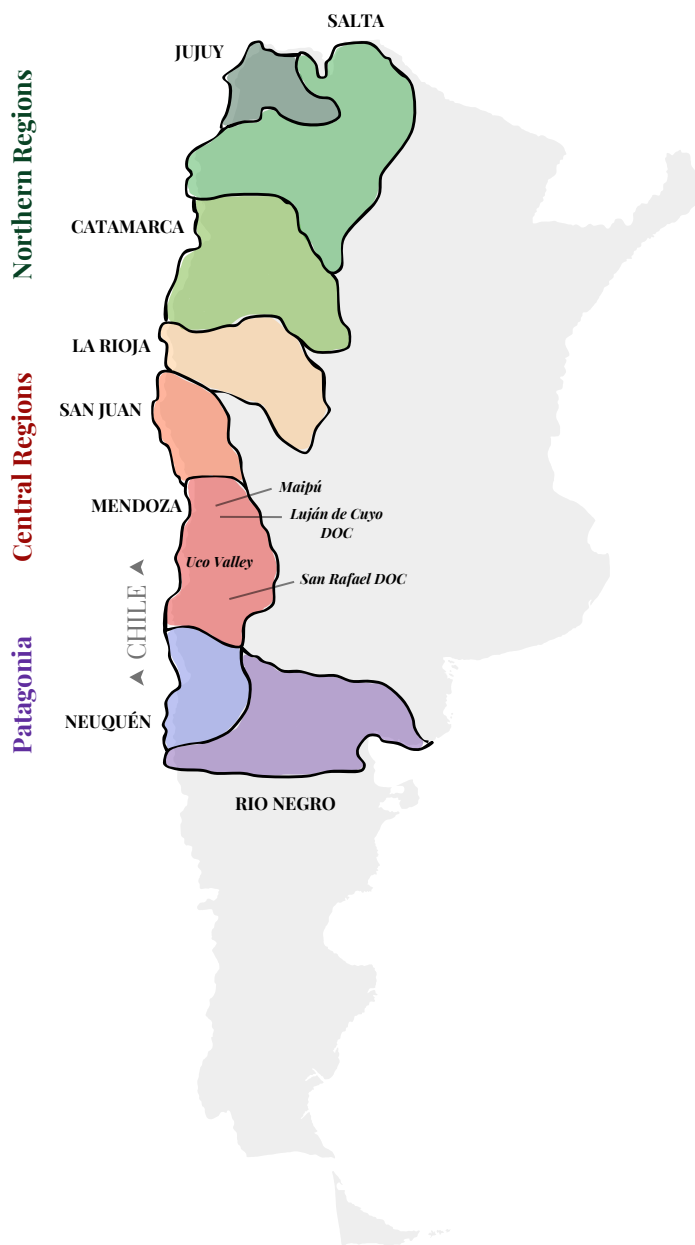
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