

German Wine Has Carved A Heady Niche

German wine, part of the [German cuisine](#), is influenced by the cool, northern climate that slows down ripening of the grapes and presents differing levels of ripeness. This results in wines of different flavors from dry (*trocken*) and off dry (*halbtrocken*) to varying levels of sweetness (*lieblich*). This also depends on the [German wine region](#), by the way.

The ever popular Riesling is a typical sample of this idiosyncratic climate that has served to put Germany on the world's wine list and very close to the top too.

The quality of German wines is dependent on the ripeness at the time of harvest. Grape growing is said to take about 1,300 hours of sunshine, and so, the relatively cool climate of the wine regions of Germany ensures a long ripening period. This grants the wine a fruity acidity that sets it apart from the Mediterranean variety.

German wine has a history that goes back to the 1st century, but the country was known mainly for its light and sweet Riesling. Now daring reds such as the Spätburgunders and the Dornfelders, among others, have been added to its repertoire to give Germany a well rounded fame in wine production.

The level of ripeness at the time of harvesting decides its sugar content which in turn decides the flavor. In the case of German wines, this is referred to as "must weight." The degree of ripeness is often indicated in the label to help consumers choose the quality they prefer.

QbA (*Qualitätswein bestimmter Anbaugebiete*) denotes a basic quality wine that is acceptable as table wine in Germany. Sugar may be added for ripeness and this wine is not normally exported. QmP (*Qualitätswein mit Prädikat*) are the wines of top quality with no added sugar. They are around six in number as in the following descriptions.

In Germany, grape harvesting is done long after others in the area are done with it. This takes place as late as October and goes on over November making it possible to attain various levels of sweetness and flavor. You can see how this works out in these various categories...

First among these would be the **Federweißer** which may well be mistaken for a milky concoction. This is a very young wine with the yeast still not broken down. It is presented in open bottles as the fermentation process is still nowhere near completion and may cause an explosion if sealed. This is something you really shouldn't miss when on the wine road in the [Moselle](#) region. It's one of my favorite wines!

Kabinett has a low level of ripeness as it is picked quite early on in the harvest season. This German wine exudes a typical lightness with just about seven percent alcohol.

Spätlese is riper as it is allowed to remain on the vine for a week longer than the Kabinett and comes up with a richer taste and more body.

The **Auslese** is made from over-ripe grapes with a touch of the botrytis mould. Clusters of these grapes are handpicked to produce a fruity flavor with lingering sweetness due to their high sugar content.

Beerenauslese is made from extremely ripe grapes, picked one grape at a time, and is a dessert wine of uncommon quality.

Trockenbeerenauslese, in addition to being a tongue twister in terms of pronunciation, is a German wine made from dry grapes that have been completely infected with the botrytis mould. Though *trocken* refers to dry, it is not intended to describe the flavor of this wine, but rather the state of the grape when picked.

Then you have the Ice wine or **Eiswein** made from grapes that have dried and frozen on the vine, and pressed when still frozen. This extracts pure grape juice while the water remains ice and is expelled. This is the secret behind the vibrant flavor of this exquisite German wine. ;-)

Now I'm sure you would like to know where exactly you find which kind of wine, right? OK, check out the page about [German wine regions](#). Also, the page about [German Cuisine](#) describes other German delicacies. :-)