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Rueda’s 2026 grape harvest rose 17.6% to 144,838,958 kilos

Verdejo drove the increase, representing 88% of the crop after heat and drought sped ripening across the denomination.

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Rueda’s 2026 grape harvest rose 17.6% from a year earlier, with wineries in the denomination taking in 144,838,958 kilos of grapes during the campaign, according to data released Tuesday by the Regulatory Council of the D.O. Rueda in Castilla y León, Spain.

The total was up from 123,123,089 kilos in 2025, an increase of 21,715,869 kilos. The figures cover grapes delivered to wineries in the denomination between Aug. 12 and Sept. 24, over a 44-day harvest that the council said took place across the 74 municipalities that make up the appellation.

The increase was driven mainly by Verdejo, the white grape that dominates Rueda production. The denomination reported 127,407,397 kilos of Verdejo in 2026, up from 108,903,108 kilos a year earlier. That was an increase of 18,504,289 kilos, or 17%. Verdejo accounted for 88% of all grapes harvested in the denomination this year.

The data underline how heavily the region remains focused on white varieties. Of the total 2026 harvest, 144,465,124 kilos were white grapes, equal to 99.74% of the crop. Red varieties accounted for 373,834 kilos, or 0.26%.

The larger harvest points to a clear increase in potential supply for Rueda wines, especially those based on Verdejo, after the smaller 2025 crop. That shift could affect winery utilization, grape availability and stock levels in the coming months. The council did not publish conversion yields from grapes to finished wine, nor did it release data on prices, inventories or productive vineyard area, so the harvest figures do not by themselves indicate how much wine will eventually reach the market.

The council said weather conditions shaped the course of the campaign. In its press release, it described the growing season as marked by high temperatures and a notable lack of rainfall during much of the cycle. Those conditions accelerated ripening and led to an earlier-than-usual start to the harvest. Heat also continued through the first weeks of September.

Jesús Díez de Íscar, technical director of the D.O. Rueda, said in the statement that the combination of high temperatures and low rainfall forced close monitoring of vineyards to determine the best time to pick each plot. He said the grapes nevertheless reached harvest in good sanitary condition and that ripening evolved in a way that allowed the crop to be gathered in stages, depending on the characteristics of each parcel and variety.

The council said harvesting in Rueda continued to be carried out mostly by machine and at night, a common practice in the denomination. It said lower nighttime temperatures help preserve grape condition during picking and transport to wineries.

The new figures matter most for Verdejo because it is the denomination’s defining variety and the base of much of its commercial output. With 127.4 million kilos this year, Verdejo represented not only 88% of the overall harvest but also 88.2% of all white grapes collected in the denomination. That concentration means year-to-year changes in Verdejo volumes can have a broad effect on winery operations and the pace of vinification during the first weeks after harvest.

The council’s announcement focused on the crop entering wineries rather than on finished production. That distinction is important because kilos of grapes are not the same as liters of bottled wine or sales volumes. Final output depends on winemaking yields and other factors that were not included in the release.

Carlos Yllera, president of the Regulatory Council, said in the statement that the end of the harvest reflected months of work and coordination among growers, wineries and technical teams. He said the next stage now shifts to the wineries and to the development of the first wines from the new vintage.

Rueda was established in 1980 and is the first officially recognized denomination of origin in Castilla y León. Its production zone spans municipalities in the provinces of Valladolid, Segovia and Ávila. The area is best known for white wines, especially those made from Verdejo, which the council describes as a native variety with a long history in the region.

The 2026 harvest data give wineries more raw material than they had last year and reverse part of the tighter supply picture that followed the smaller 2025 crop. For growers and producers, the next key variables will be how the grapes perform in vinification, how much wine can be produced from the larger intake, and whether the added volume changes market conditions for a denomination that remains overwhelmingly dependent on white grapes and, above all, on Verdejo.