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Wine tourism in Spain’s Rioja region reaches record high as international visitors drive growth

Economic impact nears 200 million euros as wineries invest in premium experiences and exports outperform national trends

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Wine tourism in Spain’s Rioja region continues to show strong growth, with 912,438 visits to wineries recorded in 2024. This figure represents a 3.54% increase over the previous year and sets a new record for the region, surpassing the 879,423 visits registered in 2023. The economic impact of this activity is estimated at nearly 200 million euros, according to the latest data from the “Monitor de Enoturismo de la DOCa Rioja 2024,” prepared by Dinamiza Asesores.

The Rioja Denomination of Origin (DOCa Rioja), which celebrates its centenary in 2025, remains the most visited wine region in Spain. Out of more than 600 wineries in the area, 214 are open to the public. The reported visitor numbers do not include those

who visit wine bars or stores, nor attendees at events or diners at winery restaurants, suggesting that the total number of wine tourists is even higher.

DOCa Rioja is divided into three main subregions: Rioja Alta, Rioja Alavesa, and Rioja Oriental. Each has distinct climatic and soil characteristics. Rioja Alta and Rioja Alavesa are influenced by Atlantic weather patterns and feature clay-limestone soils, while Rioja Oriental experiences a drier, warmer Mediterranean climate with alluvial and clay-ferrous soils. The entire region covers more than 65,000 hectares.

The economic benefits of wine tourism in Rioja have grown alongside visitor numbers. In 2024, the sector generated an estimated 197.2 million euros—an increase of over 11 million euros compared to the previous year. The average spend per visitor at winery shops rose to 40.05 euros from 37.89 euros in 2023. The average daily expenditure per visitor across the region reached 226.81 euros, reflecting a trend toward higher-value experiences and premium products.

International visitors now account for a growing share of wine tourism in Rioja, representing 36.3% of all visitors in 2024 compared to 33.4% in 2023. The United States leads among international markets with 29% of foreign visitors, followed by the United Kingdom (17.75%), France (14.67%), Germany (12.79%), and Mexico (9.15%). The increase in international demand has prompted wineries to invest more heavily in infrastructure and services tailored to global visitors.

Investment by wineries in tourism-related facilities exceeded 3.5 million euros in 2024, up from two million euros the previous year. Nearly 80% of wineries reported that wine tourism was profitable for their business last year, and most expect demand to continue rising or remain stable in coming years.

Manuel Romero, managing partner at Dinamiza Asesores, noted that this year’s report highlights both a maturing demand for high-value experiences and a strong commitment from wineries to improve profitability and brand positioning through wine tourism.

On the commercial side, DOCa Rioja continues to lead Spain’s market for wines with denomination of origin status, holding a market share of 26.8%. While overall sales of these wines fell by about one percent nationwide in 2024—driven mainly by a decline in red wine consumption—Rioja’s own sales volume dropped by just over two percent but maintained its leadership position.

Red wines remain Rioja’s flagship product, accounting for a market share of 38.5% among Spanish reds with denomination of origin status. Rosé wines from Rioja hold second place nationally, while white wines from the region have also gained ground, reaching an 8.3% market share as white wine consumption grows across Spain.

Despite challenges facing wine consumption both at home and abroad, DOCa Rioja managed to grow its total sales by 0.63% in 2024, selling more than 328 million bottles (equivalent to over 240 million liters). Internationally, exports increased by 3.7% in volume and by 2.2% in value last year, reaching nearly 97 million liters exported and generating revenues of around 520 million euros.

Rioja’s export performance stands out against a backdrop of declining exports for other Spanish wines with denomination of origin status, which fell by almost four percent overall in volume during the same period. The region now accounts for nearly 39% of all Spanish D.O.-certified wine exports—a gain of almost two percentage points over the previous year—and has expanded its presence in key markets such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Mexico, the United Kingdom, the United States, Switzerland, Canada and Ireland.

According to Begoña Olavarría from Spain’s Interprofessional Wine Organization (OIVE), DOCa Rioja’s growth outpaced that of other European denominations in twelve major international markets that together represent nearly two-thirds of global bottled wine trade. In these markets alone, sales increased by four percent in value and six percent in volume last year.

In global terms, DOCa Rioja represented about two percent of both value and volume among all bottled wines sold worldwide in 2024—a notable achievement given that global bottled wine trade fell to its lowest level since 2009.

Industry experts say these results reinforce Rioja’s reputation as an internationally recognized brand capable of competing with leading French and Italian wine regions on both quality and scale. As consumer preferences evolve and competition intensifies worldwide, DOCa Rioja appears well positioned to maintain its leadership through continued investment in tourism infrastructure and strategic export growth.