

Canada

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In a nutshell: Icewine and increasingly successful whites and even reds.

Main grapes: The usual suspects plus such acceptable hybrids as Vidal and Marechal Foch.

Canadians are extremely proud of their wine industry (or rather their wine industries, because 2,500 miles divide those of Ontario in the east and British Columbia in the west), and quite rightly. Perhaps the most famous products of Canada's icy winters, vying with maple syrup, are her ice wines, deliciously refreshing yet sweet liquids made from lightly pressed frozen grapes. Unlike the Germans, Canadians can be sure of making these every year, usually from Riesling or the hybrid Vidal (which has no foxy characteristics and can taste very pure and refreshing), although global warming is affecting the total quantity made. Many of Ontario's vineyards are still planted with Concord and American and French hybrids to maximise the chances of ripening grapes before winter sets in but the proportion of European varieties has increased considerably and Canada can make some fine Chardonnay and Pinot Noir - as well as many a respectable Baco and Marechal Foch. Warmer summers have brought a distinct increase in red wine quality.

If Ontario's grape-growing environment is similar to that of New York's Finger Lakes, BC's is more like Washington state. The Okanagan Valley with its useful body of water, hot days and cool nights is the focus of western Canada's dynamic wine industry and south of here near-desert conditions prevail. Irrigation is essential and the wines, made from a wide range of international varieties, have naturally bright fruit. Wine is also produced in Quebec and Nova Scotia, but on a much more limited scale.

The initials VQA on a bottle signal that all the grapes that went into it were grown in Canada.

See [Quebec Wines](#) for more information on wine in Quebec.