

# Red Wine: Good for the Lebanese Economy & Good for your Heart



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“In fact Lebanese winemakers are not looking about the volume only but also about the wine quality believing that it will allow them to offer better controls for quality and taste, Red wine is earth’s answer to the sun” stated by an owner of a Lebanese winery.

Endowed with the ideal Mediterranean climate and a diverse landscape of a sun-drenched waterfront, looming summits and desiccated valleys, Lebanon has long been prolific terrain for vineyards. The last ten years, Lebanon encountered a boom in the wine production, 23 additional wineries launched their first vintages and a few more wineries rumored to be in the works for 2016. Actually we have 43 Lebanese wineries as per the Union Vinicole du Liban (UVL) (Lebanon’s association of wine producers).

The total vineyard area in Lebanon is 10.609 ha with 70% devoted to “table grapes” while grapes destined for wine production stand at the equivalent of 3.183 ha. The Bekaa region comprises 69% of the total vineyard area (2196 ha).

Lebanese wine is known worldwide for its unbeatable quality and taste Lebanon produces around 8.5 million bottles of wine per year of different types. The Lebanese wine industry is now entering a new evolutionary phase where wine making is not simply viewed as a tradable good but as a process that has the potential to compete on the basis of excellent quality and an excellent service; it is a major industry and an important part of the agricultural sector.

Red wine production in Lebanon remains on a steady course not significantly increasing its production but not decreasing either and it’s relatively very low compared with neighboring wine producing countries.

**The demand of red wine as in trade has the highest share in the Lebanese wine market, apart from the healthy aspect, the success of this type is due to its special composition, it is considered as a high quality product.** Lebanon prides itself in having mastered the art of producing Red wine highly demanded by many foreign consumers that have admired its taste and who have become regular importers.



The distribution of vineyards in the different governorates (mohafazas) of Lebanon is shown as below:

- Aakar: 7%
- Bekaa: 69%
- North lebanon: 8%
- South lebanon: 2%
- Mount-liban: 13%
- Nabatieh: 1%

Red wine is produced from a unique selection of the finest grapes, the vineyards are mostly grown in the Bekaa valley, this valley has its own geographical and natural characteristics; it enjoys long dry summers, cool nights and consistent rainfall with an altitude of around 1000m/3.82 ft.

Actually, lebanese wineries are growing through the core values of tradition, nobility and modernity that master the state of the art technologies in the production of wine. They are trying to implement the newest and most innovative processes in order to continue leading the market with the best quality.

## Health Benefits of Red wine

In early history, Hippocrates, the famous Greek physician

used to prescribe wine for the disinfection of wounds, lethargy, pain during child birth and as an aid for digestion and treatment of diarrhea. **The moderate consumption of wine is known to be good for health but one must understand the risk and danger of high consumption which can lead to violence and accidents.**

Red wine has many therapeutic virtues and moderate consumption can lead to many health benefits such as:

- Lowering blood cholesterol.
- Cardiac protection: Red wine is rich in polyphenols, antioxydants that not only protect the heart by lowering the bad cholesterol (LDL) and boosting the good cholesterol (HDL) but also act as anticoagulants and vasoprotectors.
- Lowering the risk of type 2 Diabetes: The skin of red grapes contains a natural substance named resveratrol which may help diabetic patients control their blood sugar according to studies recently published.

A french philosopher and poete of the 16<sup>th</sup> century once said: “Have good wine and good science and forget about all the rest”.