

[Hero image]

To Spit Or Not To Spit: Wine Tasting Etiquette

These days, it seems like everywhere you turn there's a wine tasting. Fundraisers, galas, home theme parties and popular large-scale retail stores have found that wine tasting attracts the masses. [Wine tourism](#) has been on the rise for the past several years. In 2012, for example, California welcomed 20 million visitors for wine tastings and events, resulting in \$2.1 billion in economic impact.

[Attending a wine](#) tasting of any sort can be a rewarding, entertaining and just plain fun event, if you recognize that there are just a few rules of etiquette that, when followed, will not only make the experience memorable for you, but also for those who are hosting you.

[image 1]

- Don't be intimidated. Easier said than done, right? Wine is meant to be enjoyed, and part of that enjoyment comes from talking about the wine. Your wine host or wine maker is there to help you better understand the process of making wine and what makes it attractive to different palettes. Feel free to ask lots of questions--you'll probably ask what everyone is thinking!
- Don't ask stupid questions. Wine hosts have generally preselected the wines they are offering for tasting. Don't ask to try something that's not on the menu. Some wineries will charge a nominal fee for their tastings; don't ask if you can have something for free.
- Remember that a wine tasting is not the same as going to the bar. It's important to drink responsibly, and recognize that the wine hosts are offering their product for your sampling. If you find a wine you really like, consider buying the bottle. If you're going to taste a lot of wine, be sure to have alternate transportation plans or a designated driver. If you're traveling with a group, be mindful of others attending the wine tasting. Don't be loud, or overcrowd the tasting area.

[image 2]

- For tasting the wine, there are several things you can do that will allow you to better experience the flavors of the wine. You may have seen people sniff the wine, swirl it around the glass and talk about a wine's "legs." All of these actions help to aerate the wine and open it up, exposing the flavors and tannins. The legs are the streams of wine on the inside of the glass as you swirl, and indicate the levels of [viscosity](#), or alcohol content. Some people will breathe in slightly or aspirate during tasting to get the flavors all the way to the back of the tongue. Don't feel like you have to do these things, but you'd be surprised at the difference in the wine if you do!
- Discover something you don't like? Don't feel obligated to finish a pour if you're not happy with the taste. The spittoon is there for a reason; don't be afraid to let your wine host know that that particular wine just wasn't for you.
- Most importantly, be respectful. Let the wine host know you appreciate their time and all of the hard work they've gone through to share the wine and their knowledge. Tipping isn't common practice at wine tastings, but showing appreciation for the hard work of the winery is--be sure to let them know you enjoyed the experience.

Remember that when you find something you like, write it down. Better yet, download the Vivino app and take it with you anywhere to track your favorite—and not so favorite wines. With all of the wine tasting opportunities, you'll have a robust wine library at your fingertips in no time!