

# Ep 148: Your three day itinerary around Rias Baixas: The land of Albariño



**Janina Doyle 00:00:07** Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat, a podcast for all you wine lovers, who, if you're like me, just cannot get enough of the good stuff. I'm Janina Doyle, your host, Brand Ambassador, Wine Educator, and Sommelier. So, stick with me as we dive deeper into this ever evolving, wonderful world of wine and wherever you are listening to this, cheers to you!

Hello wine lovers and welcome back to another season of Eat Sleep Wine Repeat. Yes, this is season four. I can't quite believe it, but here we are. I am your host, Janina Doyle. And I've got to say I am genuinely excited to be back on your airwaves or your headphones or your car speakers, wherever you are tuning in from, for another round of podcast fun. But before we dive headfirst into all the insights, hilarity, the wine education, the knowledge that you've hopefully come to know and love, I've got some fantastic news to share with you. Drum roll please. This season I am raising a glass, virtually of course, to an incredible partnership with none other than Wickham Wines. Yes. So, you've heard it, right? Wickham Wines is on board as my sponsor and supporter this year. Now I know what you're thinking, you know. Well, what is the catch? Well, folks there, there is no catch. It's not like they're forcing me to drink the top-quality wines. Oh wait, actually, yeah, yeah. No, actually they are, and I am not complaining. But in all seriousness Wickham Wines is an online retailer. They sell really top-quality wines, and I could not be more thrilled to be working with them. It's a partnership made in podcast heaven. And uh, here's the best part. Thanks to Wickham Wines, I can finally ask for some help, which means I might actually get some sleep this year. So thank you guys. Uh, plus we can expand. I can grow now, and I can make this podcast even more amazing for you. So, if you're wondering how we can make a podcast about wine even better, it's simple. Me getting more sleep and making sure we drink those great wines. But seriously, wine lovers, we have got a fantastic season ahead. I've got some incredible guests. We will be covering more wine regions, more wine topics that I haven't covered before, and I promise you episodes as lively and fun as always.

**Janina Doyle 00:02:38** Now, today's episode is just me. I have just come back from Rias Baixas in the northwest of Spain. So, this is the Galician region where it's beautifully green and I spent four days there. However, I was taking it really easy. So, I am gonna give you kind of like a three-day itinerary that you could choose to mix and match. Just follow it if you're lazy, hopefully it might give you some inspiration. And we're gonna be talking about wine making techniques, wineries, food, beaches, nature, the whole thing. So, grab a glass, get comfortable unless you're driving of course. And join me on this wild podcasting journey. I am so glad that you are here with me yet again, and I promise you won't want to miss a single episode this season. Cheers to you. Cheers to Wickham Wines and cheers to an amazing season ahead. Let's go.

**Janina Doyle 00:03:39** So, Rias Baixas calling you wine lovers, you, nature enthusiasts, this is the perfect place if you like, sipping fresh white wine, basking in the beauty of the great outdoors and enjoying beautiful white sands. So, if you're wondering why, you might wanna go to Rias Baixas, it is to be able to enjoy a beautiful, chilled glass of Albariño, which is the grape variety of this area. But apart from the crisp and zesty, delicious white wines that are produced there, this is a place of stunning landscapes. So, what you need to imagine is these lush green vineyards that literally stretch as far as the eye can see. We are not just talking normal vineyards. You can drive down through a village, through a town, and everybody's gardens are a vineyard, everyone's. And so, side by side, everywhere where you can see is a tiny little plot of vineyard. Everywhere. There are picturesque coastal views, quaint villages, in fact, one I'm gonna tell you about, which is just straight out of a fairytale. Now I wanna talk about beaches for a second. This is, oh, the place for you, if it's not raining, but we'll get to that. But imagine really soft, super white or golden sands. The waters are crystal clear and not that I had the chance to do, but hiking. They have incredible lush forests everywhere and beautiful walks. So hopefully I've got you inspired and you're already packing your bags. But some of you may be wondering where the hell is Rias Baixas, first of all.

**Janina Doyle 00:05:38** So, Rias Baixas is a wine region and it's found in the northwest part of Spain. So, it's specifically in the autonomous community of Galicia. It's situated alongside the Atlantic coastline. So, did mention those beautiful beaches, but oh my God, is the sea freezing. So keep that in mind. It is not far from the border with Portugal. In fact, on two of the sub regions of Rias Baixas, they are directly on the Portuguese border. Now I'm talking about those sub zones. There are five of them, which we will cover in a moment. And all of them focus primarily on the Albariño grape variety. So, imagine you've got that combination of a very maritime climate. You have the lush green landscapes, as I've mentioned, and of course the proximity to the ocean that is gonna contribute to the very unique character of the wines that are produced in Rias Baixas. Now this is a Galician area, so they do actually have their own language, and speaking in Galician, Rias Baixas, well Rias is a term that refers to the coastal inlets or the estuaries. I like to just call them fingers. So if you look on the map, you'll find these little fingers along the coastline. So, they have been often created by the mixing of river and sea waters. So, these natural features, they are the defining geographical characteristic of the Rias Baixas. And Baixas, it means down, or it means lower. And it's referring to the lower part of these coastal inlets or fingers, um, as opposed to the Rias Altas, which is the higher estuaries, which is further to the north and along the Galician coast. So, there we go, a bit of a bit of a geography lesson in there, but in a second, I promise we're gonna get to the wine part. But it's worth keeping in mind that this too, these lower estuaries, the Rias Baixas, they also have a significant influence on the climate and the terroir and the topography. So, you hopefully have a bit of an idea of what you might expect when you are coming to this area. So let's talk about how you get there.

**Janina Doyle 00:08:01** Now, the easiest way to fly in, is to fly to Santiago de Compostela. Now this alone is worth, I mean it depends on how much you are into your history and your towns and your churches, but at least half a day is worth dedicating to this beautiful place. If you are into your walks or you are hiking, you may already know about this area. This is the final destination of the Camino de Santiago, which is basically a network of pilgrimage routes. And there's so many you can take. They stretch all across Europe and it all culminates here in Santiago de Compostela, in or at the cathedral, which by the way is absolutely magnificent. And there's something amazing in the main town square outside of this cathedral, seeing all these exhausted people, people taking their shoes off, the blisters,

all the walking sticks, the super red faces, the elation, the exhaustion, people literally collapsed all over the floor. But it, it's a bit inspiring. It's beautiful. There's a energy, slightly magnetic. It's just really a city. I think it's a city or is it a town? Anyway, it is a place that's just, it's all about tradition, its history, the religion. So, it's definitely a must see. Now when I was there. So, I would advise doing this your first day or your last day because it works best with going back to the airport. I went and ate at this amazing market where all of the little restaurants, they buy their food from the market. So, it's super fresh and there is this long line of different tiny restaurants where you sit just around where the food is being made. And I ate at one of the restaurants called Salvaxe, which is amazing. They have several wines by the glass, literally for three euros you can get a beautiful glass of Albariño. There's also another restaurant called A Ostreria, which does loads of seafood. Now, these two restaurants I can vouch for Salvaxe, cause I ate there myself and it was literally the best food I had on the trip. But both of these restaurants were recommended by one of the winemakers I went to visit. Now we know they make fabulous wine, they have great palates, they know what they're talking about, even better than these two places. And of course, there's others that you could choose from. Just outside, there is a wine bar where you can try loads of different wines by the glass and they let you get food from all the other places, and you can bring it there and kind of stand there, Spanish style whilst drinking. So, this is one of those places that might not actually be on the list of top 10 things to do on TripAdvisor, but after you've seen the cathedral, which is a must, then go to this mercado, Mercado de Abastos. So put that on your map, right?

**Janina Doyle 00:11:21** But this is a wine podcast. So, I'm gonna take us to the first winery that I visited, which is the largest winery in Rias Baixas. And you may have heard of them, they are called Martin Codax. Now to get to Martin Codax from Santiago de Compostela takes about 45 minutes, in the car. And also keep in mind, to the east of Santiago to Compostela is the airport by just 15 minutes. So, everything's super close. And when you go to Martin Codax, you are in the heartland of Albariño because this is the main sub region, the one that you really do need to know about as two thirds of the wineries are here and 50% of all production. And what's grown, comes from here. And this is called Val do Salnés. Now, when I was down with Martin Codax, what was absolutely crazy and I didn't realize we talk about that these are coastal wines, that the wines come from the coast. If you look on the map, you'll see Val do Salnés is on the coast. But I had no idea how close to the coast some of the vineyards are. Now, literally, if you see my social media in maybe the next few weeks, there'll be a video that I've recorded of me literally standing on the beach and the vines are behind me. That is how close they are. And so, if you can imagine the salty breeze is coming in, this is one of the reasons why Val do Salnés has such a saline salty character, or at least the Albariño's that come from this sub region. So, of all of the five sub regions, Val do Salnés, if you want to know what is slightly different, these are the really fresh crisp styles and they have more salinity because they really have that super coastal influence. And the soils all across Rias Baixas, in general, are granitic soils. And that really aids with the acidity. I learned, now there is a Galician word to say decomposed granite. So, the special type of granite that they have in their soils, and it's called Xabre. Now this is spelled with an X because remember they, well, there's lots of X's in all of their words. So, it's spelled x a b r e. Remember, there is a transcript that you can download in case I say something and you'd like to know the spelling. So, I wanna give some context to Martin Codax and how they work, as they are a cooperative. So, they were established in 1985, which is in fact a few years before the DO Rias Baixas was established, which was 1988, which is actually quite crazy. I'm thinking from an English wine perspective. Sorry everyone, I bring it back to English wine all the time, don't I? But you know, in England we've only really been making wine for 30 years. Now

granted in Rias Baixas with Albariño, their history goes back a thousand years. But actually, in terms of pushing the wine, marketing the wine, actually creating groups and getting the message out there, gosh, very similar time to England. So, this region in a way, is still kind of really very new. But because people have been growing their own grapes for a thousand years, it's so fragmented. I already mentioned to you, you'll find somebody who has literally the garden, the size you'll find in Central London as in tiny, and they've planted literally a few vines, which they may wanna sell to somebody. So, we are talking, tiny micro vineyards. When I was asking everybody, nobody seemed to know exactly what the average vineyard sizes, they would just say it's super small.

**Janina Doyle 00:15:11** However, I did my research, I've gone on the DO Rias Baixas website, and I think these facts, these numbers are really interesting. So, Rias Baixas, tiny still, is at 4,321 hectares, the whole region, not the subregion of Val do Salnés, but everywhere. Across that there are 22,832 vine plots and 5,011 wine producers. There's actually only 179 wineries. By the way, some of these numbers are actually quite similar to England. If you want to know more about that, come send me an email and I'll, and I'll give you some other information. But this is a podcast on Rias Baixas. Now I just did a few calculations and dividing in the hectares into the vine plots and it comes up about five hectares on average. I mean we, we, you know, a lot of people will have a lot less than that, but this gives you an idea of how fragmented it is and how hard it is for people to actually be able to make good wine, decent wine if they're just tiny and they have a few vines, hence cooperatives have come in. And so Martin Codax is a group of wine growers that came together. Of course, it's grown massively, but strength in numbers and they've been able to produce wine of actual scale. Now they are known for their flagship wine, which is just called the Albariño. You may know it because it has the scriptures, it has like poems that the whole winery is named after. The gentleman, the Galician poet Martin Codax who went around with his Galician Portuguese language singing, creating music and poems. And so, part of this poetry is on the label. You can get that for about 15 pounds. And it is just a perfect example of what Albariño should taste like. Typicity of Val do Salnés, we are talking that super concentrated lemon and melon with salt flakes. It is medium bodied but it's linear, it's fresh, beautiful, intense, fruity notes. Now that is what Albariño should taste like, but it was phenomenal for me to taste through all of Martin Codax's range and realize how depending on what you do with the grape, you can produce some really interesting examples.

**Janina Doyle 00:17:40** So this is a great winery to come to. Go to one of the big boys and get an opportunity to try Albariño in different styles. So, one of the, oh my gosh, moments of my trip was tasting one of their Albariños, called Albariño Lias. Which is a wine that has spent time on the Lees so it can give more texture and body. So, this was the 2020 vintage in England, it's a little over £20, comes from some of the best plots that see loads of sun. So, it's already really ripe. And then they stir in some of the finest lees and about six, seven months of stirring. Now this wine, apart from the fact that now it started tasting and smelling a little bit more oily and beeswaxy, there's this more honeyed note and instead of it being bright lemon, it's like lemon curd, but with this very nice mineral steely edge, beautiful wine. If you want something a little bit richer and more savory. So always look for Lias or Sur Lees or Sur Lias, these kind of names on the label. But my moment was pairing this with a cheese from Galician called Cebreiro. Now if you don't know what that cheese is, you just need to look for a cheese that looks like a chef's hat. So, it's all bulbous at the top and it's white and it's made from cow's milk and it's just milky and a bit chalky and not, it's more savory than sweet. Maybe this slight herbie grassy, slightly spicy note. But oh my god, there are times when wine and food goes together. If you are looking

for a really special partnership, get a bottle of this Albariño Lias and pair it with this Cebreiro cheese. Oh my gosh. Okay, Now moving on. So, you are aware of other styles.

**Janina Doyle 00:19:50** They have orange Albariño. So again, it's just leaving these white grapes but on their skins for longer. Now your Albariño is tasting like a ginger orange marmalade, spicy wine. There's ginger root, there's a bit of orange, like toasted orange skins, very interested. They leave their Albariño on the skins for about seven to eight months. So, this is called OW, that was the 2021 vintage. I was tasting. Even crazier, they do a late harvest wine. So, this is leaving the grapes on the vines way past what would be normal at harvest time. So, they are going to get riper, they're gonna get more concentrated, more sugar will accumulate in the grapes, but if you are lucky, you will get the good kind of botrytis. So certainly, with their 2018, which is called Gallaecia, hopefully I'm pronouncing that right, 80% of the grapes got botrytis. Now if you're wondering what botrytis is, it's often referred to as Noble Rot. That's the good stuff.

**Janina Doyle 00:21:00** If you hear Grey Rot, that's the bad stuff. So basically we're talking of a fungus here, which doesn't really sound very attractive. As long as there is enough sunshine, this fungus turns into noble rot, the good stuff. So, what happens, this fungus develops on grapes where the area is particularly humid. So, think about all the Rias, all of the estuaries, the rivers. So, this is a perfect place in Rias Baixas, where you have humid conditions, it infects the grapes. What that does, it then causes the grapes to dehydrate and they're gonna shrink, which will concentrate the sugars and the flavours in the remaining juice. So, you're gonna get something that is really sweet with really intense flavours. So you will have possibly heard of or tasted wines from Sauternes in France who are super famous for making sweet wines of botrytised grapes. Uh, there are late harvest Rieslings in Germany, but these are some of the best dessert wines. And this only happens once the fungus comes and effectively pierces holes in the skins, dehydrates the grapes. But you still need enough wind and enough sunshine in the afternoon to dry things up so that it doesn't turn to grey rot and instead is the noble rot that we like. So, you get flavours very often like orange marmalade and honey, that's what botrytis gives. Now this special wine is not a sweet wine. So actually interesting in the DO Rias Baixas regulations, you are not allowed to have any wines that have more than 17 grams, if I'm right, of residual sugar per litre. Which means you can't go to that sweetness level of a hundred and fifty, two hundred, three hundred grams that you get with dessert wine. So, this specific wine has just five grams residual sugar per litre. So pretty dry wine. They typically make it every three years because again, botrytis you can't always guarantee you're gonna get the good stuff. And um, this wine was, it had this toasted brioche note and dried apricots and the orange marmalade and honey note you expect, but with really vibrant acidity, but lovely and dry. It was very unusual. Not my favorite because I just love Albariño that has the real freshness but so interesting. And if you'd like going on your wine journey, you have to try that. Now all the wines I've mentioned are definitely available in the UK. Funnily enough, my favorite wine just to make things difficult is not available in the UK. So, you need to come to the winery to try the Arousa 2021, which oh my god, just made from specific plots, 18 months of just aging in stainless steel. So if you want a very clean wine, but one that's of just highest quality and has had time just to soften up, this doesn't have the linearity of the flagship, it's just perfumed and pretty and rounded and with this lovely chalky finish. So, you have to come to Martin Codax to taste these wines.

**Janina Doyle 00:24:17** Now what I learned from the lovely ladies that showed me around, which I really like, this is the land of women, which I love. So, if you can imagine how important the sea trade is, this wine region is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean. The men would go out and take care of all sea

issues, leaving the women to take care of the land. So, all of the small vineyards were tended to by women. Women ran the land. So, I love that part of history. I also, from the winery of Martin Codax, which is very close to the sea, I looked out and they showed me what to me to my eyes, looked like lots of little long black rocks that were sticking out of the ocean. They are not, they are muscle farms. And so, of course, when you are in this region, you need to try the muscles, they're incredibly fresh and to realize that they just get picked directly there in the Rias is pretty incredible. And the last thing that I learnt, which I think is really cool and it might be something fun that you can look out for when you're looking around, is that the vines of Albariño are all trellised in a pergola system or also known as parra. So p a r r a. So, these are wire trellis quite high off of the ground, anchored with granite posts on either side. And the reason for this is because of the rain, because of the humidity. Now also, keep in mind, rain levels here are about 1,200 millimeters a year and we like to complain in England in places that has about 800 millimeters. So yeah, quite a bit more rain over here. And so, by lifting up the grapes, the grapes will hang down and it creates a lot more airflow and less chance for the humidity to cause fungal issues and rot. Now the fun story that I discovered and if you pay attention is that we as humans through evolution have got taller. This is a fact. And so many of these vineyards have been tended to family member passed down to family member. And as these vigneronns have got taller, the generations have got taller, they have needed to raise the height of where the fruiting wire is. And so, you can look on these granite posts and basically there's this extra little bit of stone or granite on top where they have then raised the height and then moved the wires. So, I thought that was a nice little soundbite that I could share with you all.

**Janina Doyle 00:27:19** Now I went to Martin Codax before lunchtime, they don't have a restaurant. They may be the largest winery working with 300 families, but Rias Baixas really is developing still. And so, the wineries are great to visit for tours and for tastings, but then it's best to go to the local towns and fishing villages to get something to eat. And so, I was recommended to go just a few minutes towards the coast to Cambados where there are beautiful restaurants to try. There's a plaza called Plaza Fefiñáns. Now that might sound familiar to any of you guys who go to Waitrose and buy your wine as there is an Albariño named specifically after this plaza. But you know, we love connections and I got very excited when I saw that 'cause it all started making sense. So, a cute little plaza just to walk around, but lots of choice for eating and even the roundabouts right by the coast have barrels and presses in the middle of the roundabout. So you really do feel like you are definitely in some sort of wine county, when you are driving around. Now from Cambados and right by the coast, I just drove a little bit down south by about eight minutes and I was able to go off road and found myself in the middle of a whole load of vineyards. And this was where I discovered some of the vineyards that Martin Codax is using that are directly on the coast. So, if you have a few spare moments and you don't mind a bit of exploration and maybe getting lost, drive down a little bit and just, you know, use Google maps, use the satellite view and go and find yourself some pergola vines just to, you know, go and have some snaps with.

**Janina Doyle 00:29:14** Now after that I made my way over to Pazo Baion. Now this is, oh the most gorgeous estate with the most beautiful vista. So this Pazo, or, this Manor house, which is so gorgeous and they do weddings here. So, anyone getting married, this is a place to check out. They own the 25 hectares of vineyards that are planted around this estate, and they've turned everything into a winery and everything is done there. In contrast, they are part of the umbrella of Condes de Albarei, who are the second largest winery in Rias Baixas, also operating with that cooperative model. But what makes this place special is that they make just three wines and those wines come from the estate. So, it's got

that consistency. Uh, the grapes are not being moved and there's just something magical about that. The grapes all come from that one place. So, they have their Pazo Baion wine, they have a single vineyard wine called Vides de Fontán, and then they have, a late harvest wine that is affected by botrytis again. Seeing a theme here, uh, called "Gran a Gran" and gran a gran means berry by berry because of the amount of work it takes to go through and pick the berries that you actually want to use for quality. In contrast to the Martin Codax wine, this has slightly more residual sugar per litre. As I was getting these kind of quince notes, this kind of flaked pastry and apple tartan on the palette, but still again, remember Albariño, vibrant acidity. This was their 2017 and only their second ever vintage that they've done this. But the wines of Pazo Baion if I was going to explain, they have an added elegance. All of them have a certain amount of lees aging. So less linear, there's a real elegance and a slight more restraint with more subtle floral notes compared to, for instance, I did taste the 2022 Condes de Albarei, which is their, their flagship. And you get that intense expressive fruits, some real freshness, pear drops, loads of green apple skins, and it's like herbaceous and dried lavender note. But it's all really intense and really, really fresh and kind of instantly impactful, shall I say. Whereas all of the Pazo Baion wines do take that slight step back. This, hmm, added maturity. Now the estate, oh my gosh, it dates back to the 16th century when it was owned by Lords. The architecture is insane. It, the Pazo, or I guess I think the translation is kind of like a manor house, but it has this kind of even castle vibe and then wrapped around with beautiful trees. And I have to say, oh my God, the whole estate smelt like white flowers and lavender and herbs. It was absolutely beautiful. There were little waterways, there was a dove house, but kind of not like a dove house I've ever seen before. Almost like this tiny mini chapel. It was, it felt very sanctimonious. So, oh my god, that's a must to see. And then they have what used to be the cow shed, which has been entirely transformed into some of the most beautiful of gardens. And they have these flowers, which I have seen all over Rias Baixas. Now, like if you're not driving down and seeing a forest, a vineyard, you will then see these hydrangeas. Now these hydrangeas, if you don't know, are like these big green bushes and they have huge big round flowers made of lots of different petals, basically the size of your head. And they're either pinky, yeah, pink or blue, depending on the pH of the soil. So that was a fun fact that I only just discovered. And oh my god, they had loads of these here, gorgeous sculptures, manicured gardens, and some pretty, pretty yummy wines. And I think I already said, you can get married here. So, this was just such a completely contrasting visit to Martin Codax, which was much bigger and a little bit more industrial, but very cool with loads of different wines to try and really getting a full on experience of what wines they have to offer. And oh gosh, I didn't even mention that Martin Codax does a sparkling wine, so made in the traditional method like you would do in champagne, but they using the Albariño grape. So, you really do have this vibrancy and aromatics, but mixing with this quite chalky texture. So, ugh really is 50 shades of Albariño. Now, after doing these two visits, I decided to head to my hotel. You've got plenty of places you could choose and perhaps you might want a beach resort, something on the coast. However, for location-wise and giving me the opportunity to be able to investigate more up north and south, and Val do Salnés, I stayed in a little town called the Caldas da Reyes, just eight minutes away from Pazo Baion.

**Janina Doyle 00:34:48** Now the next day I wanted to actually check out my surroundings. So, on the recommendations of those I met at the wineries who live in this area went down to Pontevedra, which is a town that has some really beautiful cultural landmarks and that of history as well. However, beautiful as it was about 15 minutes to the West, I went to a town that I fell in love with. This is a fishing town called Combarro. Now, oh my gosh, this may be one of my most favorite places I have ever been to. So, imagine that this was a fishing town on the coast. First of all, you have breathtaking views of the sea and

this beautiful landscape where you see the hills around, but then there are these cobblestone streets. So, oh my God, then there's narrow paths and streets and it's all on different levels. So it is almost like you're stepping back in time and many of the streets don't have steps or they're not properly paved. It's like granitic rocks and lumps and bumps and the houses have just been planted in and around. I cannot describe to you how insanely beautiful and old school and historic it feels. Then, when we talk about historic, they have what is called Hórreos. Now this is spelled with a H, so H O R R E O S. Now the Hórreos of Combarro are of this architectural feature. They're protected, they cannot be knocked down at all. They're basically these raised wooden grain stores. They're pretty unique to Galicia, although you may find similar ones actually in places like Ireland and England, but nothing quite like this. And they have these crosses generally on the top as well. They're incredible and beautiful to see, and they are lined across the waterfront. So like to see them is amazing to take photos. And then what they've done is that these restaurants have like positioned themselves in between each one of these Hórreos and you can just dine and drink wine. And I cannot express to you how beautiful that place was.

**Janina Doyle 00:37:18** Now when talking about food, I should probably mention some of the local cuisines. You must have heard of Pulpo a la Gallega. So, you have to try this. We've talked about mussels and of course seafood. Anyway, full stop. Also Padron peppers. And I've been asking everyone where does Padron peppers come from? Well, the town of Padron, which is in between Santiago de Compostela and coming down to Val do Salnés. So, if you wanna pass through the birthplace of yummy, delicious padron peppers, you can do. And then they also have these very cool dishes called empanadas. And I would've thought, I think of like almost like the Cornish pasty style empanadas you get from Argentina or Chile or some of other places in South America. But no, it's almost like a bit of a big huge pie. And then they just cut it up into little pieces. So, it's something really quite different and unique. Their version of an empanada, but very, very tasty.

**Janina Doyle 00:38:01** So, after this incredible fishing town, it was beach time. And so, as you go along more west, you have lots of options for beaches. I would highly recommend Sanxenxo, a great place with loads of restaurants and cafes along the waterfront. Oh, and that is where I got to try my first Tarta de Santiago. So, this is one of the traditional desserts from Santiago. So, I dunno, maybe you might want to do it there in Santiago de Compostela, but it's a beautiful, delicious almond cake, which I can highly recommend. So, when you have finished doing that, part of your itinerary would be to carry on and find some other beach towns. If you want another, you could go to Portonovo. However, my absolute favorite, heading up a little bit further north on what's almost like a bit of a peninsula, this super, super long beach called Praia Da Lanzada. And it's got these sand dunes, this really long walkway. So, you know, using the wooden path through the sand dunes, very, very green, lots of grass over them. And then this beautiful, long, long white sanded beach. And that is where the sun would set if there was actually a sun when I went there. But it was grey, and it was cloudy. So, I could only ask that one of you listens to this, goes takes a snap, and then tells me all about it. For me, I would grab a bottle of Albariño, take some beautiful cheese and nibbles, and go and watch the sunset on the beach. That would be magical. Now there's an insane amount of beautiful beaches you could visit. I was recommended to take a boat across to the island of Ons, o n s because it's very similar to the super famous island, the Cies island, but less busy. However, either, if you can fit that into your itinerary, absolutely check out because everybody was talking about that. Now there is enough to keep you busy in Val do Salnés and a million wineries you could just rock up to there are brown signs everywhere telling you there is another winery here, there's another winery there. You could have so much fun. I was gonna go to Mar de Frades, which



are also another one of the big ones. And one thing I was recommended, which I didn't do, but for you walkers just round the corner from Mar de Frades is Ruta de Pedra e da Auga. And it's a beautiful one hour or so walk to a nice church. And then back again with obviously lots of lovely greens. That was on my list that I didn't achieve.

**Janina Doyle 00:41:05** However, I love to try and experience something completely different. And one of my wine friends recommended me to go to a winery that is not within any of the five DOs. Now this is because I was told it's actually quite political why some areas are not included in the DO Rias Baixas. However, nonetheless, they make incredible wines. And this is a winery that you might be interested in. This is Bodega Entre os Rios, which means winery between the rivers. And it's basically a property that is effectively an island. Literally, as the river splits it opens up into two rivers and then joins again. And the property is in between this. Now, to get there from where I was staying, which is basically close to Val do Salnés, I had to go up north and then go to the next finger in the north, the next finger along. And so this is an area called Barbanza. Now, what is amazing about this place, you can actually stay here. This is a boutique winery, kind of an experimental winery. So, I was greeted by José, who is the current winemaker, with his dad. And his dad bought the, well the land, but it had a little house on it 47 years ago. But my gosh, what it looks like today and what is on offer is amazing. Now, to get to this property, to get to this rural house, this country house, however you want to call it, you start going down this little windy path further down into this incredible forest. It gets greener and greener. You go across this beautiful bridge, this river running with pebbles and stones and the birds are tweeting. And then there it is, this little magical country house with dogs running around everywhere with this beautiful garden with a sauna at the end of it. And then a natural plunge pool, a swimming pool that has got the water fed directly from the river. So super supernatural. And then terraces upon terraces of just random vineyards here, random vineyards there, they have one palomino grape vine. I absolutely love it. You cross another bridge and then you will find this little house which stores all of the winery equipment. This is the winery. It's more like a garage, but it's stunning. And this little house is coated with, with leaves all over it, which actually stops the temperature, the heat coming into the winery, everything comes in the juice, gravity fed because everything is terraced. And there is these different levels. Now this winery is not a natural winery because they do use sulphur, which actually is a good thing because it means that you're not gonna get a funky wine. They're using enough sulphur simply to protect the wine from any bacterial infections so that it still tastes like the juice that they create. However, other than that, everything else is entirely hands off, very minimal intervention. An interesting story that I learned was that it was José's dad that decided they were only ever gonna have natural yeast in the winery. And the reason for that, apparently in the nineties, everyone was using the exact same yeast strain. So, all of the Albariños tasted like bananas. Hmm, fun fact. And so, he was so adamant that only natural yeast from the grapes was gonna ever come inside that winery, that nobody was ever allowed inside the winery unless they washed down in the river to make sure that they were not bringing in any other kind of yeast strain. Obviously, now, I was allowed in, I didn't need to wash in the river, thank goodness, but over years and decades of already building up the natural yeast, the yeast that is present to that land, to that winery, it's fine. I can't ruin it now. So, it's okay, but I just absolutely loved that story.

**Janina Doyle 00:45:40** Now these wines don't tend to have necessarily that intensity or I don't know, shininess of some of the typical wines you drink from say Val do Salnés. But as José would say, I'm not making wines for sniffing, I'm making them for drinking. And actually, as you drink them, they've all got

this incredible texture. A lot of them have a bit of a savoury nature. But I have to say the standout wine for me was the Sobre Lias 2022. So again, on the lees. One part of the wine goes through malolactic fermentation to really give body, the other part is completely clean and then it's mixed together. And my gosh, this wine just has this incredible clean perfumed aromatic nose, and its very green apples and Asian pears. And there's this lovely chalky texture and all that vibrant acidity just tingles in your tongue. That was my absolute favorite. But of course, he specializes in Albariño. In fact, you will find an incredible reel if you want to know how naturally you can disgorge sparkling wine. So, I tasted the 2022 Vino Escumoso Branco, which is the same way to say Espumoso blanco, but in the Galician way. And this wine, oh my gosh, had that flaked pastry, yeasty nose, this apricot puree. And it was a little bit yogurty, but with super clean fruit, fresh and soft, supple bubbles. It was really bright and light and fruity. It was really fantastic. And because he is not this big winery that has disgorging machines, he does the process à la volée. And that simply is outside. You use a little device to just click off the cap and it will all shoot out. Now you wanna try and do this really quickly and turn the bottle. So, it's all about kind of the degrees to try and create less mess. But if you watch the video, you will see that José's t-shirt was just coated in the sediment in the lees from the wine. It's absolutely fantastic. Great fun to watch that. So, if you've never seen anybody do disgorgement à la volée, that which means to the fly 'cause it's flying something really, really quick. That's definitely something you should check out. And you can find that out on my Instagram. So, oh my god, that was an incredible wine from Albariño.

**Janina Doyle 00:48:15** However, there is another grape variety that they focus on, a grape variety called Reposa. Now if you looked on Jancis Robinson's website, she would also call it Albarin. This is another name for it, but my God, it smells like Jasmine and Lily. It's all flowers. I mean, if I could compare it to another grape variety, maybe I'd say Torrontes, but it is less weighty, it's lighter, it's brighter. José describes this as this is the Chanel number five of the grapes of Galicia. So just to take us away from Albariño for a second, you may want to get to know another grape variety. That's that nobody's talking about. So Reposa is something that you can try. If you come and see this winery. Now they do tours. There are loads of different wines that they make. Most are experimental. They also make quite a few red wines using grapes called Espadeiro, Mencía or Caiño. Now to be honest, the red grapes of Rias Baixas for me, oh they are different. Incredibly crunchy fruit. Super high acidity. In theory don't work at all. And they weren't necessarily to my palate, but something so moreish afterwards. You know when you have something super sour and super crunchy and your mouth explodes and you are like, whoa. But then afterwards you're like, huh, I wanna do that again. I have to say José's Reds did that to me. So again, coming to this winery was such a mind-blowing experience. There were wines aging in Demi Johns. He's making an orange wine out of clay pots and he calls this wine Tinallas, which is what clay pots mean. But apparently because of bureaucracy, he now can no longer label his wines that way. Now this is a winemaker who does not like bureaucracy. He does not like following the rules. He is absolutely brilliant and an absolute character. And so, he's even thinking about keeping the same label but then covering up the part that says Tinalla with the material that you could get on a scratch card. So after you've bought it, you could scratch it off and still see Tinalla, absolutely legendary. He knows it's gonna cost a fortune to do that, but I have told him I think that's an incredibly good marketing exercise. I love the way he thinks, brilliant brains. I hope he can find a budget to be able to do something like that, to put the middle finger up to the denomination people and the rules and the regulations that just come in and ruin all our fun. So, my gosh, if you want to really get out back, step away from some of the more classic known varieties or styles, this is an incredibly good place to come to. And of course, you can stay and just use the sauna, listen to the birds and stroke some dogs. And then just 10 minutes to the beach.

So, from what seems like being in the middle of nowhere in this secret magical land, that should be where fairies live, you can go to the beach. There is a beach called Praia do Areal. Absolutely stunning. And I ate at a restaurant that I can highly recommend, and it was called Restaurant Nojira.

**Janina Doyle 00:51:55** So I hope that gives you just a little bit of an idea of places to go and visit. Maybe wineries to go and see. I don't think you can actually be disappointed in this area other than the rain, but you need to expect it anyway. Now don't forget, you could go down to the south part, which is the O Rosal sub region or Condado do Tea. There you'll be shaking hands with Portugal. There's the tiny, tiny subregion of Soutomaior, which has hardly anything going on, so I wouldn't worry too much about that. And then of course, actually in the furthest north, closest to Santiago de Compostela, you could also go to the other sub region, the newest of all called Ribeira do Ulla. Now apparently, because land is so expensive here, that's probably where you're gonna find all of the new vineyards being planted or winery setting up. So that might be a subregion to bookmark.

**Janina Doyle 00:52:58** Now to finish off with, although 96% of the vineyards are planted to Albariño, you may find other grape varieties, the whites that could be blended in with Albariño, such as Loureiro, Caiño, Torrontes, which is not the same Torrontes as in Argentina, and Treixadura. And then there is the Reds, remember, which is Caiño Tinto, Espadeiro and Loureiro Tinto. So quite a few others to be aware of.

**Janina Doyle 00:53:32** So next week I have Amelia Singer on, you may know her as the TV presenter from the wine show. We will be talking about the wines of Austria. So, I can't wait to share that episode now. I mean I've been talking for a very long time. So, a very quick wine quote to close off the first episode of season four

“Wine is the answer. What was the question again?”

Dunno who said that the whoever did was highly intelligent, right? May you all have a gorgeous week and if you have the opportunity to leave a quick review on the podcast app you're listening to that will be greatly appreciated and help this podcast become more discoverable. Raising my glass to you all. Here's to season four. Cheers to you.