

48-Hour Champagne Diet

Written by Jill Kerr Tepe

Thursday, 24 May 2012 10:43 - Last Updated Friday, 25 May 2012 11:47

Few things sound better in life than sipping Champagne in the actual Champagne region of France.



For years, I had visions of doing just that. I imagined myself, relaxing on a veranda overlooking the revered vines that make this region famous. Perhaps there would be some classical or French bistro music playing in the background as I sat, contentedly downing another glass of the sparkling elixir as the sun slipped beneath a distant hill, my flute casting long shadows on the table.

As you feel warmed by my picture-perfect imagination, I need to explain that the actual experience is a far cry from this. We enjoyed our time in Champagne, but perhaps if I had a better idea of what the experience would hold before I went, I might have enjoyed it even more. Traveling is all about managing expectations correctly; if you don't understand what to anticipate, it's easy to be unnecessarily disappointed. So take my advice and visit, but just understand the process.

First of all, any ideas of tasting wine overlooking a vineyard should be squashed immediately. If you're looking for this, you need to know an individual grower or visit a vineyard in Italy or California. Champagne, by nature, isn't like other wines that are produced from a single estate and named for that vineyard, region, or production year. Almost every champagne is made from a ratio of Chardonnay grapes, Pinot Meunier and Pinot Noir grapes, all coming from different

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growers from different villages in the Champagne region, called crus, and graded by their quality of grapes (Grand Cru, Premier Cru, etc.). The actual wine is produced in town at a Champagne house - where a master winemaker buys grapes and perfects the wine in chalk caves deep below the surface of a grand building.

{vimeo} 41381145 {/vimeo}

On an iPhone/iPad? [Click here to see Jill's video about Reims in the Champagne District](#)

My husband, Nick, and I drove from Paris through the French countryside to experience the city of [Reims](#) (pronounced Rahns), one of two larger towns in the Champagne region (the other being Epernay). And while Reims boasts beautiful architecture and some ancient, historically-significant buildings (Saint-Remi, Notre Dame, Mars Gate, etc.), much of it was destroyed during World War II and reconstructed, giving it a less-quiet feeling than most European villages. And while you might also expect a town that houses the most exclusive Champagne houses in the world to be incredibly posh, it's actually a college town drumming with students, where you're more likely to hang out in bars at night with raucous kids. And good luck finding Champagne to drink at a bar or restaurant. I'm not kidding, it's really difficult to get a glass of Champagne anywhere. I never pictured myself drinking Belgian beer in Champagne because I gave up searching in vain for a Champagne bar, but it's the truth. But I tell you all this, not to discourage you from visiting, but just so you understand what it will be like. We did have our moments of glamor, and learning about the process of Champagne was fascinating. And I rarely have a bigger smile plastered on my face than when I had 2 glasses of \$50+ bottle Champagne in each hand.



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What are your favorite foods? Do you have any dietary restrictions? What are your favorite drinks? Do you have any allergies? Do you have any other dietary preferences? Do you have any other dietary preferences?

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