



Hunter Valley Cheese and Wine Tasting Tours

If there was ever a match made in heaven, it's fine wine and matched cheeses. And on an iHop Hunter Valley cheese and wine tasting tour you can indulge in the very best of both while enjoying the beautiful backdrop of the Hunter Valley vineyards - a region that many say is not far off heaven itself, but within easy reach of Sydney.

No matter whether you're a committed gourmet wine and cheese lover, or you're simply looking for a special weekend getaway, or a unique and memorable group activity, a Hunter Valley cheese and wine tour is literally a feast for the senses.

A cheese lover's paradise

When you think about the Hunter Valley, most people think of it as a wine destination, and rightly so. After all, it is recognised across the world as one of the great wine regions. But what you might not know is that the Hunter Valley is quickly becoming equally famous for its fine cheeses.

Given the wonderfully rich grazing land that has been producing top quality dairy produce for generations, it's not surprising that the Hunter Valley has attracted the talents of leading cheese makers that now produce an extensive array of cheese styles with their own particular Hunter Valley personality. In much the same way that wine reflects the regionality of where it is made, so too with dairy produce and the cheeses that the region inspires.

So many Hunter Valley cheese shops

The Hunter Valley Cheese Co is just one of the standout cheese makers that is a perennial favourite on any Hunter Valley cheese tour. This boutique cheese factory with it's own maturation and tasting rooms, offers a fascinating insight into the cheese making process using local dairy produce. After you've filled your mind with the help one of the company's cheese specialists, fill your mouth with an extensive sampling selection of the company's artisan handmade cow's and goat's milk cheeses, including fromage blanc, feta, bris, washed rind, natural rind, cheddar, tommes and blue vein styles.

Other popular options that are open to the public include Cheesemaker Simon Gough's Binmore Dairy that specialises in soft cheeses and the Hunter Valley Smelly Cheese Shop, which, for added decadence, is also home to the Hunter Valley Galato Company.

The best of Hunter Valley wine and cheese in one

One of the best ways to experience the best cheese and wine the Hunter has to offer is by joining iHop Wine and Cheese Lovers' Progressive Dinner Tours. The name pretty much says it all but there's more to it than simply tasting the best of the cheese makers' art.

Typically lasting for about three- and-a-half hours, on these nighttime tours you'll get the full Hunter Valley experience that combines sampling fine wines and cheeses and dinner at award-winning restaurants set amongst beautiful vineyard surrounds. You'll also get an insight into the art of perfect cheese and wine pairing and a private look behind the scenes of a working family vineyard.

This is by no means the only option. In fact, you can enjoy local cheese plates and matched wines on iHop's Taste in' Grazia Tour and on iHop's Hop-On Hop-Off Bus tours you will be able to visit and sample all of the Hunter's best cheese offerings at cheese factories, shops and cellar doors.

If you're looking for something different to the organised tours, or there are particular providers or sites you'd like your group to visit on a Hunter Valley cheese and wine tasting tour, the iHop team can help you put together a tour itinerary to suit your needs.

Getting to the Hunter Valley from Sydney

Given its proximity and easy transport connections to Sydney, the Hunter Valley is ideal for an overnight or weekend getaway.

Driving from Sydney, the distance to the Hunter Valley is around 160 kilometres, via the most direct route north on the M1 motorway. This will have you in the Hunter Valley in around two to two-and-a-half hours. Follow the Cessnock/Hunter Valley exit sign to Cessnock. That said, there are a variety of scenic coastal and country routes to enjoy that take a little longer.

Catching the train from Sydney's Central Station is another easy and popular option. Trains to the Hunter Valley area leave regularly throughout the day. Google Transport NSW Trip Planner for details.

Flying to Newcastle from Sydney is another option. From Newcastle hire a car, or take a bus service to your destination.

iHop offers a range of four pick-up points throughout the region, depending on the tour you choose. These will be listed along with the tour details.

Given the region's popularity as a tourism destination, the accommodation options are wide and varied, from budget to boutique 5-star winery stays. Any good accommodation-booking website or travel agent will have a host of options to suit your budget.

Find out more about iHop's Hunter Valley cheese and wine tour options here.

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