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# A drop or two from the ocean



## Will Lyons

You are rarely further than 100 miles from the sea in Portugal. The Atlantic influence is apparent both in the country's sensational seafood cuisine and the temperate climate that helps them produce such great-value wines. Some of my happiest memories are sitting at a simple table in a bustling cobbled backstreet in a whitewashed town in northern Portugal, sipping something cool and crisp with a plate of sardines.

Besides vintage port, the country has plenty of wines to choose from, many made from hard-to-pronounce native grape varieties. The Douro Valley is the place for warm, fruity reds that are a natural fit with cured ham and succulent grilled meat. Their whites, which can have a tangy, spritzy character, pair superbly with salted cod *bacalhau*. Here are four to enjoy ■



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### 1 2016 ANSELMO MENDES ALVARINHO VINHO VERDE LAITHWAITE'S, £13

Vinho verde, the spritzy, crisp white wine with razor-sharp acidity that is made in the far north of Portugal, is perfect at this time of year. This bottle is packed full of fruit and best served cold from the fridge as a great match for seafood dishes.

### 2 2015 PORTA 6 LISBOA MAJESTIC, £9

This smooth, medium-bodied red wine will bring joy to any dining table laden with succulent meats and heavy salads. Made in the mountains north of Lisbon, it's a blend of three Portuguese grape varieties. An absolute banker for the summer months ahead.

### 3 2015 GRAN PASSO, CASA SANTOS LIMA



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### WAITROSE, £8

If you're looking for a rich, ripe, supple red wine that comes in at less than £10, this is for you. Easy to drink, it carries the scent of ripe plum and blackcurrant, and slips down with a smooth finish. Ideal to accompany a simple meal with friends.

### 4 2016 ALTANO, DOURO TANNERS, £10.70

The Symington family, best known for producing Graham's port, also produces this fresh, high-altitude white wine. I first enjoyed this example on a family holiday in Madeira and it has been a regular in our household ever since. Dry and crisp, with a clean citrus finish.



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