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2009 CALIFORNIA WINE AND FOOD STORY IDEAS

1. California Knows How to Do Wine and Food. The California Travel and Tourism Commission (CTTC) has partnered with the Wine Institute to celebrate California's wine and cuisine. With more wineries than any other state and famous chefs serving the freshest ingredients, California is one of the world's top wine and food destinations. A fabulous promotional campaign, including a 30-second spot featuring famous winemakers, chefs, and California wine and food icons, debuted February 2008. In addition, CTTC introduced a center for wine and food on the Web – www.landofwineandfood.com. The site hosts engaging itineraries, the best of California's wine and food hotspots, celebrity bloggers, and other fun and informative surprises for consumers. The Wine Institute has also rolled out a Web site, www.discovercaliforniawine.com, containing visitor information on California wineries and featuring a searchable database of wineries and amenities by region, as well as customized tours with driving directions and maps.

2. Eat and Drink Green Across the State. There's an eco-revolution, and California's restaurants and vineyards have always led the way. Restaurants across the state have turned to sustainable ways to support the environment, along with local farmers and ranchers. From the freshest produce at hundreds of farmer's markets to numerous farm-to-fork operations, California began the trend of producing the finest and most abundant array of organic, slow, locally grown, vegetarian, vegan and eco-friendly food. Visitors can tour the farm their produce came from, eat while listening to the farmer explain his methods, or learn first-hand where milk and cheese come from, providing a deeper connection to the food they eat. Wineries embracing green winegrowing and winemaking practices also provide eco-tours to explain their earth-friendly practices and offer tastings of sustainable, organic and biodynamic wines. Go online to www.discovercaliforniawine.com/wineries and use the drop-down menu to do a search of wineries with eco-tours, sustainable wines and more. There's never been a more delicious way for consumers to go green!

3. Oenophiles Love California Wine. Wine lovers around the world flock to California for a taste of the good life. With more than 2,800 wineries, California produces 90 percent of U.S. wine, offering consumers a great selection of varietals, styles and price points. Wine regions spread from the best-known Napa Valley and Sonoma County to new and emerging favorites in the San Luis Obispo/Paso Robles, Lodi, Livermore, Monterey, Santa Cruz Mountains, Sierra Foothills/Gold Country, Mendocino, Madera, Temecula and Santa Barbara (made famous in the movie *Sideways*) areas. With favorite varietals such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay still

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going strong, California's varied micro-climates, soil and topography also lend themselves to less common varieties, such as Pinot Grigio and Riesling. With award-winners by the dozen and incredible opportunities to taste, tour and learn, California's wine country spreads across the state and is the stuff of wine lovers' dreams.

4. Dine on Diverse Delights from Every Culture. California's incredible mixture of cultures from across the globe makes for an equally dynamic cuisine. From American and new -wave California Cuisine to exquisite gourmet selections, little of California's culinary selections exist without a dash of another vibrant culture, allowing foodies to take their taste buds around the world. With Ethiopian, Chinese, Hmong, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, Caribbean, British, Czech, French, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Spanish, Swiss, El Salvadoran, Mexican, Greek, Middle Eastern, Basque, Danish, Indian, Japanese and the best sushi outside of Japan, California's ever-shifting ethnic cuisine landscape is a show-stopper.

5. Rural California Offers Wine and Food Surprises. There's more to California than bright lights and big cities. Hundreds of rural areas across the state hold hidden treasures and unexpected surprises, not to mention fun events and festivals throughout the year. California is America's top agricultural state, producing more than 400 agricultural products. That means visitors find the best in local, fresh produce – so fresh you pick it yourself! These areas are full of roadside stands, mom and pop joints, family-run vineyards or restaurants – and don't miss the farmer's markets (most towns have them, usually on Saturdays. Find one at: www.cafarmersmarkets.com). Artisanal cheese makers, organic olive oil producers and even raw milk dairies are just some of the hidden gems rewarding savvy travelers who take a few steps off the beaten path.

6. Visitors Love Food "Capitals" in California. California is truly a global wine and food center – with many food capitals across the state becoming known for different specialties. With garlic in Gilroy, dairy in Tulare, artichokes in Castroville, honeybees in Palo Cedro and horseradish in Tulelake, not to mention Salinas as the "salad bowl of the nation" and the Central Valley as the "nation's fruit basket," each capital comes with history, incredible foods, parades and more. Events throughout the year draw attention to California's incredibly culinary productivity. Check out the Almond Festivals in Esparto or Ripon, Strawberry Festival in Arroyo Grande or Oxnard, Stockton Asparagus Festival or California Avocado Festival in Carpinteria.

7. California Offers the Best in Breweries and Gastropubs. California's taste offerings include something for everyone – and that includes beer connoisseurs. From gastropubs big and small to breweries locally and world-renowned, California offers plenty of good grub and the best spots to settle down with a cold one and enjoy the view. Hotspots like Ford's Filling Station in L.A. and Triple Rock Brewery in Berkeley offer the best beer and food combinations in cozy settings, while the Russian River Brewing Company in Santa Rosa, North Coast Brewing Company in Fort Bragg, Gordon Biersch in the Bay Area and Sierra Nevada Brewery in Chico are known world-wide for their fabulous brews.

8. California Makes the Best Artisanal Chocolates and Cheese. For cheese and chocolate lovers, California is a culinary paradise. The state is filled with fabulous cheese shops and chocolatiers, such as the Cheese Board Collective in Berkeley and Mendocino Chocolate

Company, as well as the best artisanal factories. With Pasadena's Leonidas Chocolate Café, San Diego's Chuao Chocolatier, Scharffen Berger Chocolate factory tours in Berkeley, Recchiuti Confections in San Francisco, San Mateo County's Harley Farms, the Petaluma Creamery, Fiscalini Farms in Modesto and the Sonoma Cheese Company, there are plenty for chocoholics and cheeseheads everywhere! California also has the historic aspect covered – it's the birthplace of world-famous See's Candies and the artisanal goat cheese industry (Laura Chenel's Chevre).

9. Celebrity-Spotting Is a Gourmet Affair. California is full of celebrities, and they have to eat, too. Visitors love playing paparazzi at our fabulous restaurants, hoping to spot a familiar face – and snag an autograph or snapshot. Celebrities may be concentrated in the L.A. area in hotspots such as the Ivy, Cut, the Palm, M Café de Chaya or Ashton Kutcher's Geisha House, but there are plenty of other places statewide for celebrity -spotting. The Sardine Factory in Monterey, Viceroy Resorts' Citron in Palm Springs and Clint Eastwood's Hog's Breath Inn in La Quinta are just a few hotspots. If it's new and customers are raving, chances are good a star or two will show up.

10. The Birthplace of California Cuisine. The best place to find California Cuisine is, of course, California. Known as a fusion of different cooking styles, using the freshest local ingredients, California Cuisine drew its name through Alice Waters of Berkeley's Chez Panisse, and was popularized by Wolfgang Puck's Spago restaurants. Many restaurants serving California Cuisine change menus seasonally (or even daily) based on what ingredients are available fresh and locally– farmer's markets are an important resource. Some restaurants are taking it a step farther by growing their own produce, such as Zazu Restaurant in Santa Rosa. California cuisine lets culinary tourists become "locovores," whether it is through dining in fine restaurants or shopping at local farmer's markets and creating their own dishes.

11. Food and Wine Tours Let Visitors Experience the California Lifestyle. Savvy tour guides are picking up on California's reputation as The Land of Food and Wine, creating specialized tours to teach aspiring foodies all about the California lifestyle, from "locovore" dining to winery hopping. The tours give an insider's view, whether it be going to the hottest farmer's markets and teaching tourists how to prepare great California-inspired dishes with local wine pairings – or by taking visitors to special wineries they can't get access to on their own. Check out www.visitcalifornia.com for more information.

12. Culinary Tourism Growing Strong. Research from the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) shows that the state's growing segment of wine and food travelers represent a high-value customer who California is uniquely qualified to satisfy. They are active, meaning they're more likely to participate in cultural activities, enjoy spa visits, visit state/natural parks and historic sites; they're highly experiential, wanting new and fun experiences beyond the norm; they're indulgers, wanting the ultimate luxury; many are aspirational, wanting the good life and willing to stretch themselves to get a piece of it; they're curious about California's diversity and scope; and they're trendsetters, confident leaders who like outrageous people and things. This coveted traveler group represents a tremendous growth opportunity for California tourism businesses – not only in restaurants and wineries, but also other segments of the industry.

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