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THE TRUE TASTE OF CALIFORNIA

Food Movements in California Keep Diners on the Cutting Edge of Culinary Trends

SACRAMENTO, California — There's more than meets the eye in your meal at a California restaurant. In addition to taste and presentation, Golden State chefs are focusing on cutting-edge culinary movements that are changing the way the entire country eats. Today, California food means slowing down, eating locally and, as always, enjoying a delicious meal.

Eat Like a Local

Gone are the days when many chefs would source their ingredients from far off places. Today, California restaurants are focusing on foods grown in their own backyard, and in some cases, in their own restaurant garden. In utilizing locally grown products in their dishes, Golden State chefs are helping to support local businesses and sustain their environment. Whether your travels take you to San Francisco or the California Desert, restaurants across the state are serving up a true taste of their local cuisine. Below are a few locally-focused restaurants to whet your appetite.

- At **Chez Panisse** in Berkeley, Chef Alice Waters was one of the first to offer food that is organically grown and harvested in a manner that is ecologically sound. Over 25 years, she has developed a network of 60 nearby suppliers concerned, like the restaurant, with environmental harmony and optimal flavor. See www.chezpanisse.com.

- San Diego Chef Carl Schroeder of **Market Restaurant + Bar**, regularly uses the products of local ranchers, farmers and fishermen, as well as organic and sustainable produce in his California coastal cuisine. www.marketdelmar.com.

- A leader in the farm-fresh movement, the **Parkway Grill** in Pasadena boasts its own organic herb and vegetable garden on the restaurant grounds and focuses on seasonal ingredients for its celebrated cuisine. For information visit www.theparkwaygrill.com.

- Chef Josie LeBalch is just one of many Los Angeles-area chefs who frequents local farmer's markets and prepares meals with locally-grown products for her offerings at **Josie** restaurant in Santa Monica. For information visit www.josierestaurant.com.

- Chefs Duskie Estes and John Stewart own **Zazu Restaurant & Farm,** a gourmet roadhouse restaurant in Santa Rosa where the food is all about the healthiest local ingredients – many from their own garden – and being "wine friendly, but uncomplicated." For information visit www.zazurestaurant.com.

- Visitors can take the locally grown concept one step farther by embracing the Locavore movement – a trend that focuses on eating foods grown or harvested within a 100-mile radius of where one lives. Locavore also focuses on sustainability and earth-friendly food production and preparation techniques. To get a taste of Locavore, head to any farmer's market across the state (www.cafarmersmarkets.com). In Santa Barbara, **Market Foray** tours teach participants how to shop, buy and eat like a true local. For information visit www.marketforays.com

- Additional restaurants which emphasize local, sustainable, organic food include: **Fish and Farm** in San Francisco. www.fishandfarmsf.com; **Boonville Hotel** in Boonville, Mendocino County. www.boonvillehotel.com; **Barn Diva** in Healdsburg, Sonoma County. www.barndiva.com; **Villa Creek Restaurant** in Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County. www.villacreek.com; **Ubuntu Napa** in Napa Valley. www.ubuntunapa.com.

Farm to Fork

In today's fast food nation, Californians are setting a new, relaxing pace when it comes to eating and truly enjoying the food experience. The Slow Food Movement is quickly gaining in popularity in the Golden State, as chefs focus on the quality of the food preparation process, and their diners in turn take the time to savor each bite of their meal. Slow Food encourages the use of the healthiest local and sustainable ingredients. It also promotes family and friends spending quality time together while eating and reveling in each other's company. Below are a few spots to hit if you're ready to exit the drive-thru:

- At **SideCar** restaurant in Ventura, Executive Chef Tim Kilcoyne produces his meals with ingredients from local farmers markets and varies his offerings depending on what is in season. The restaurant also hosts "Farmers Dinners," where local farmers discuss the products included in the evening's five-course meals. For information visit www.thesidecarrestaurant.com

- Slow Food pioneer Jesse Ziff Cool operates several restaurants in San Mateo County, including **Flea Street Café** and **Cool Eatz**. For information visit www.cooleatz.com

- Located in the North Park neighborhood, **The Linkery** serves rustic fare made exclusively with regional produce and humane meats. Guests can sample hand-made

sausages and house-cured charcuterie while sipping from a wine list and rotation of cask beers that represents a range of artisanal producers. www.thelinkery.com

- In October 2008, Epicurious.com named **A.R. Valentien** in the Lodge at Torrey Pines in La Jolla one of the "top 10 farm-to-table restaurants in the U.S." Chef Jeff Jackson was also recognized for sourcing ingredients at nearby small farms and food purveyors and for promoting locally grown or raised animals and produce. www.lodgeattorreypines.com

- At **Whisknladle**, located in the heart of La Jolla, everything from breads and meats to ice cream and pasta are baked, churned, smoked, aged, cured and pickled in-house. Chef Ryan Johnston also purchases ingredients from local growers and offers a weekend late night menu at the restaurant's double-sided bar , so patrons can socialize in the open evening air or cozy up indoors. www.whisknladle.com
- At **Sea Rocket Bistro** located in North Park, the focus is on local and sustainable seafood at reasonable prices. The menu features sea urchin caught by local divers, as well as shellfish from nearby Carlsbad Aqua Farms and sardines from the waters off the San Diego coast. They also use local produce, eggs and cheeses and serve locally-roasted coffee, San Diego craft beers and wines. www.searocketbistro.com

Feed Your Soul

Gone are the days of small plates in many Golden State eateries. California diners are working up an appetite for heartier meals of good, old-fashioned comfort food. From meatloaf to macaroni and cheese, restaurants are serving up long-standing favorites with a decidedly Californian twist. For a taste of dishes like Mom used to make, be sure to stop at one of the eateries below.

- **La Dolce Vita** in Beverly Hills offers patrons a true taste of its Northern Italian kitchen, with meals served on pans right out of the oven and salad prepared table-side. For information visit www.ladolcevitabeverlyhills

- **Bovolo** in Healdsburg, which features Slow Food served quickly, has added a gourmet twist to comfort food, with dishes like whole wheat and walnut pancakes, a breakfast pizza, home-grown bacon and bon bons dipped in Scharffen Berger chocolate. For information visit www.bovolorestaurant.com

- **Blue Plate** in San Francisco provides countless meal options to soothe the soul, from mashed potatoes to green beans. For information visit www.blueplatesf.com.

- Located in Hillcrest, **Corvette Diner** is a sure-fire favorite serving updated classic American diner fare – burgers and fries, meatloaf sandwiches and thick milkshakes – in an "over the top" 1950's setting. There is a vintage Corvette parked in the dining room beneath glowing, antique neon signs, and the waitresses, who sport bouffant

hairdos and outlandish attitudes, often sing along with the golden oldies playing in the background. www.cohnrestaurants.com

- **Hash House A Go Go** in Hillcrest serves up quirky home-style favorites with modern twists in a hip, casual environment. Fans wait in line on the weekends for huge portions of corned beef or chicken hash, giant biscuits speared with fresh rosemary sprigs and massive, delicious scrambles featuring farm-fresh eggs, veggies and meats. www.hashhouseagogo.com
- Located in the heart of downtown San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter, **Croce's Restaurant and Bar** was opened more than 25 years ago by Ingrid Croce as a tribute to her late husband, singer-songwriter Jim Croce. The restaurant is decorated with the family's music memorabilia and turns out contemporary American fare for diners who relax on the sidewalk patio and listen to live music nightly. www.croces.com
- **Urban Solace** in North Park, offers neighborhood dining in a chic, comfortable setting, with a menu focused on affordable, yet upscale American comfort food like white cheddar mac n' cheese with caramelized bacon, lamb and feta meatloaf with dates and braised beef cheeks with smoked tomato relish. www.urbansolace.net

There are many more examples of great restaurants that feature the above movements. For more information on California restaurants, visit www.landofwineandfood.com.

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