



www.landofwineandfood.com

CULINARY ITINERARY: LOS ANGELES AREA

If there was an Oscar for hottest restaurant scene, then Los Angeles County would surely be among the favorites to win. Foodies – and those who aspire to be – have known about the region’s urban food excellence for years. But, many are surprised to find that in L.A. you can have a town and country experience, where you can visit rural locales that provide food for the urban table. Surrounding the sophisticated skyscrapers, city entertainment and miles of movie studios is incredibly rich agricultural land. Local chefs hunt through the cornucopia of farms and urban farmer’s markets with a reverence some reserve for movie stars. The result is a cuisine scene where the food is the celebrity – enjoyed by visitors, locals and Hollywood luminaries.

Day One: Los Angeles

Start your day off strolling one of the many certified farmer’s markets offered somewhere in Greater Los Angeles any day of the week. For a delicious breakfast on the go, indulge in fresh berries and fresh-baked muffins or croissants. In addition to the freshest in-season produce and baked goods, many markets also offer flowers, cheeses, local artisans’ products, free-range chicken and even seafood. Each market is unique, and the types of produce and goods sold vary. Many offer organically grown fruits, vegetables and herbs. The freshest produce goes fast, so arrive early to get the pick of the crop! For more information on **farmer’s markets**, visit www.farmernet.com/events/cfms.

If you prefer your breakfast Left Bank-style, follow your nose to **La Provence Patisserie & Café** (www.laprovencecafe.com) in Beverly Hills, where you can savor delicate pastries and shop for vintage home décor. Here French trained proprietor Farshid Hakim blends his own coffees and makes croissant sandwiches that have the whole neighborhood showing up for breakfast. Indeed, patisseries, as well as cupcake shops, are all the rage in L.A., including notables such as **Jones on Third** (www.joansonthird.com/), **Sprinkles Cupcakes** (www.sprinklescupcakes.com/), **Susie Cakes** (www.susiecakesla.com/) and **Dainties Cupcakes** (www.daintiescupcakes.com/).

There are endless attractions to enjoy between meals in L.A., from movie studios – such as Universal Studios – and museums to performing arts, strolling by the beach and world-class shopping (everything from CityWalk to Rodeo Drive). But foodies live to eat when vacationing here, and have an exciting array of culinary attractions and restaurants to fulfill their cravings. If you’re looking for great restaurants that use local ingredients, there are many more than you can possibly visit in a day, but these ones stand apart from the distinguished pack: **Lucques** (www.lucques.com), featuring chef Suzanne Goin, winner of the James Beard Foundation’s 2006 Best Chef in California award; **Grace Restaurant** (www.gracerestaurant.com/), where Chef Neal Fraser has created a “Close to Home” Menu, which sources 90 percent of its ingredients within 400 miles of the restaurant; and **Wilshire Restaurant** (www.wilshirerestaurant.com/), where **Chef**

Christopher Blobaum's creations are culled from small, family farms and organic growers whenever possible. Offerings change regularly and reflect the seasons. Endeavoring to present as green an environment as possible, this beautifully designed restaurant actually reflects the elements – earth, fire, water, sky – in its graceful surroundings.

Another favorite is **Josie** restaurant (www.josierestaurant.com/entertain.htm), where **Chef Josie LeBalch** is one of the many Westside chefs who frequent local farmer's markets and make that an integral part of their offerings. Health-conscious Southern Californians also love **Urth Café** (www.urthcaffe.com), featuring organic teas and coffees, as well as delicious entrees and salads. You may even spot a celebrity incognito at one of their L.A. area eateries or dine in celebrity hotspots **Mr. Chow** (<http://www.mrchow.com/>) or **Crustacean Restaurant** (http://www.anfamily.com/Restaurants/crustacean_beverlyhills/displaypages/homepage.html).

Another option for the afternoon is to dive into L.A.'s fascinating melting pot of flavors. Home to some of the most diverse ethnic communities in the country – among them Cambodian, Korean, Malaysian, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Thai, Central and South American – L.A. offers foodies a chance to satisfy their hunger for global spices in one city. Local celebrity journalist Jonathan Gold was recently awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his work as restaurant critic for *LA Weekly* and his column "Counter Intelligence," where he reveals some of the best ethnic eats in neighborhoods throughout the city. Click here for outstanding **Ethiopian** recommendations (www.gridskipper.com/travel/los-angeles/las-ethiopian-restaurants-323777.php), **Koreatown** joints (www.laweekly.com/eat+drink/dining/koreatowns-top-40/2013/) or **Salvadorian eateries** (www.local.yahoo.com/CA/Los+Angeles/Food+Dining/Restaurants/Salvadorian+Restaurants).

While there are many ethnic trends that have taken hold of the city, probably the most enduring, the most adaptive and the most widely enjoyed is **sushi**, reflective of the city's rich Japanese influence (L.A. is home to one of only three remaining Japantowns in the U.S.). For the purist, **Urasawa** (losangeles.citysearch.com/profile/38782294/beverly_hills_ca/urasawa.html) offers an intimate, privileged experience. With just 10 bar stools and no menu, chef Hiro Urasawa takes you on a journey of sushi as it was meant to be experienced. For those looking for a little style with their sushi, **Katsuya** (www.sbeent.com/katsuya/) serves up some of the best sushi in town set in a cutting-edge Philip Starck interior filled with throngs of beautiful people. For forward-thinking foodies, innovator Nobu Matsuhisa has been educating Angeleno palettes for years with his venerable establishment, **Matsuhisa** (www.nobumatsuhisa.com). Featuring a fusion of Japanese and Peruvian elements, Matsuhisa gives clients a new view of the sushi bar.

Carnivores can satisfy their passion at various steakhouses in Los Angeles, such as **Cut** (www.wolfgangpuck.com) in Beverly Hills, another Wolfgang Puck success. This contemporary steakhouse has received many accolades, not only for its food but also design. Prominent architect Richard Meier, who designed The Getty Center, worked with Puck to create a modern, elegant and chic spot. Other notable steakhouses include: **Mastro's Steakhouse** (www.mastrosrestaurants.com) in Beverly Hills, **Lawry's The Prime Rib** (www.lawrysonline.com), **BOA Steakhouse** (www.boasteak.com) and **Nick & Stefs** (www.patinagroup.com).

Nouveau Food trucks are all the rage in Los Angeles, with mobile vendors bringing a whole new meaning to street cuisine. These trucks offer more experimental culinary offerings, and locals are eager guinea pigs, following their locations on twitter religiously. Trucks include: **Kogi BBQ truck** (Twitter: @KogiBBQ), which recently made *Conde Nast Traveler's* Hot List; **Sprinklesmobile** (Twitter: @Sprinklesmobile), **Baby's Badass Burgers** (Twitter: @BabysBBs), **Coolhaus** ice cream truck (Twitter: @coolhaus) and many more.

After the sun goes down, dress up and rub elbows with the L.A. glitterati in the city's cuisine scene, where the food is on stage just as much as the patrons. Coming up with a shortlist of "must-sees" here is impossible, due to the vast variety of celebrity chefs and gourmet eateries. Some outstanding restaurants can be found on La Cienega, Beverly Hill's unofficial Restaurant Row, such as the aforementioned Matsuhisa restaurant. Beverly Boulevard and its surrounding streets are emerging as the latest culinary epicenter, home to places such as the aforementioned Grace restaurant and the new Mozza Restaurants from Mario Batali and local Nancy Silverton. **Pizzeria Mozza** and the slightly more formal **Osteria Mozza** (www.mozza-la.com) next door have received an avalanche of well-earned buzz from media and diners alike. As the founder of legendary La Brea Bakery (www.labreabakery.com/), one can only imagine how incredible the pizza crust is. And, the Osteria's Mozzarella Bar, manned by Silverton herself, is much like a night at the theater – pure food performance art. Other notables include landmark eateries such as Wolfgang Puck's **Spago** (www.wolfgangpuck.com/restaurants/finedining/spago/beverlyhills/index.php), which continues to epitomize Los Angeles dining with its star-studded clientele and impeccable menu of fresh, innovative California faire. While Chef Lee Hefter has manned the kitchen for some time, this landmark restaurant is synonymous with the super chef, Puck. While any of Joachim Splichal's downtown restaurants would be a good fit for any itinerary, the flagship **Patina** (www.patinagroup.com/patina/) is the star in his culinary crown. Housed within the stunning shell of the Walt Disney Concert Hall, this equally striking dining room serves some of the most elegant, innovative food in town. If your visit calls for a special occasion, reserve the private chef's table, just a pane of glass away from the action in the kitchen. In West Hollywood, Michelin-star chef Gordon Ramsey, star of FOX Broadcasting Company's hit food show, *Hell's Kitchen*, made his second stateside debut with a new restaurant, **Gordon Ramsay At The London West Hollywood** (www.gordonramsay.com). The restaurant offers a signature menu inspired by California's phenomenal ingredients, which are used to create light, yet flavorful dishes with a distinct Los Angeles style.

After dinner, enjoy an evening in the entertainment capital of the world by catching an evening performance or dancing the night away in one of L.A.'s glamorous nightclubs. Wine bars are on the rise, such as **Bottle Rock** (www.bottlerock.net/) in Culver City, recently voted the best in L.A. by CityGuide/AOL, and the nearby **Vinum Populi** (www.vinumpopuli.com/). You can also try **Eight-18** (www.eight-18.com/) in Toluca Lake, or **Primitivo Wine Bistro** (www.primitivowinebistro.com/) in Venice – just to name a few.

For a complete list of L.A. restaurants, activities and attractions, visit www.discoverlosangeles.com.

Day Two: Santa Monica

If you happen to be around mid-week or on a weekend, a great morning jaunt is to experience "farm to fork" Santa Monica style. Be one of the one million people who visit the **Santa Monica Farmer's Markets** every year for a selection of fresh, seasonal produce. All four farmer's markets are CFMs (certified farmer's markets benefiting communities by selling only produce and products that are grown or made in California), and take place on Wednesdays at Arizona Ave. and 2nd St., Saturdays at Arizona Ave. and 3rd St. and at 2200 Virginia Ave., and Sundays at 2640 Main St. The Santa Monica Farmer's Markets are known for their unmatched selection of top-notch seasonal produce and their mix of merchandise and prepared food. It is not surprising that many of the city's renowned chefs get their produce from the local farmer's markets for their restaurants every week. The rich diversity of crops and cultures allows for a weekly exchange of customs and recipes. Chef Allyson Thurber of the renowned **Lobster** restaurant (www.thelobster.com/) features seasonal ingredients like garlic and spiny lobster for autumn in her popular Herb-Grilled Spiny Pacific Lobster dish. Josiah Citrin, who owns and operates **Mélisse** (www.melisse.com), which won the Four-Star Mobil Travel Guide Award and has been honored by Zagat, heads to the local farmer's market at least twice a week to find fresh inspiration for his ever-changing menu.

Before you leave the farmer's market, grab the makings for an easy picnic lunch and spend the day at the beach, including a stop at the Santa Monica Pier, a must-see Southern California attraction featuring amusement-park rides, an aquarium, vintage carousel, free concerts and more. If you prefer your lunch on white linen rather than a picnic blanket, visit the aforementioned **Lobster** (www.thelobster.com/) at the base of the pier, where stunning ocean views, fresh lobster and great cocktails make the crowds worthwhile.

If you're looking to celebrate a special occasion and money is no issue, head to nationally renowned **Mélisse** (www.melisse.com) for dinner, combining the sophistication of traditional French cuisine with contemporary American sensibilities. Or, try any of a number of upscale choices, such as **Catch Restaurant at Casa Del Mar** (www.catchsantamonica.com); **The Galley**, Santa Monica's oldest steak and seafood restaurant and bar (www.thegalleyrestaurant.net); or **The Penthouse** at the Huntley, featuring a panoramic rooftop view from one of Santa Monica's premier luxury resorts (www.thehuntleyhotel.com/penthouse). For more information on Santa Monica restaurants and attractions, visit www.santamonica.com/.

Another option for the day is to take the ferry from Long Beach or Marina del Rey to Catalina Island (visitors can also catch ferries from San Pedro, Dana Point and Newport Beach), where shopping, horseback riding, golfing, water sports and 30 dining experiences await. Catalina Island eateries range from casual to tastefully romantic – all beautifully situated against a harbor backdrop. The **Catalina Country Club** (www.visitcatalinaisland.com/avalon/dini_countryClub.php) features natural and organic products and seafood from environmentally sustainable fisheries. Its wine list offers a variety of wines made from organically grown grapes and/or from vineyards that practice biodynamic farming.

Coming soon is **Catalina's first vineyard**. In spring 2007, Geoff and Alison Rusack, owners of the Rusack Vineyards near Solvang, brought a 25-year dream closer to reality with the ceremonial "first planting." Three varietals – Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and a special Zinfandel – were planted in the interior of Catalina Island by El Rancho Escondido. If all goes well, the first small crop should be harvested in the fall of 2009. For more information visit www.rusack.com/about/catalina.html. For more information on Catalina restaurants and attractions, visit www.catalinachamber.com/.

Day Three: Pasadena

Pasadena is emerging as a hidden gem for foodies, with many options to fill your day. If you ever thought about formally studying the art of cooking, in the morning you might want to tour the **California School of Culinary Arts** (www.cscsca.edu), one of a very few such schools in the U.S. to partner with the internationally renowned Le Cordon Bleu – the leading authority on culinary techniques, training and development for over a century. You can watch students earn their culinary stripes in the renowned **Bistro 561** (www.561restaurant.com) – run completely by senior students and supervised by instructors. If you're more interested in the art of winemaking, check out the **Pasadena Neighborhood Winery** (www.dvinewineusa.com/locations/california/pasadena/). Here you can enjoy a wine tasting flight or a glass of hand-crafted wine, customize your own label or even create your own personal batch of wine! You can also choose from a large selection of wine accessories and gifts.

For lunch, enjoy a "farm to fork" experience at **Parkway Grill** (www.theparkwaygrill.com), a leader in the farm fresh movement. They began planting their own organic herb and vegetable garden more than 20 years ago. As Pasadena's most decorated restaurant, Parkway upholds this innovative spirit with its creative yet market-driven approach to seasonal ingredients and cuisine.

After lunch, visit historic Old Pasadena, filled with quaint retail shops, specialty boutiques, art galleries and antique shops. If you're in town on a Thursday afternoon, check out the **South Pasadena Farmer's Market** (www.farmernet.com), located on Meridian Avenue at Mission Street from 4 to 7 p.m. Or, if you need a little chocolate therapy, dive into **Leonidas Chocolate Cafe** (www.myleonidas.com/leonidas_stores.html), one of the few gourmet chocolatiers in Pasadena. Producing the finest chocolate flown in fresh from Belgium, this heavenly cafe also offers hot drinks and coffee, perfect accessories to an afternoon lingering with friends and marveling at the distinct truffles.

For dinner, take your taste buds to France. Pasadena could be the next Left Bank, if French cuisine were the measuring metric. With the best French cuisine this side of La Seine, **Bistro 45** (www.bistro45.com/) is a legend in Southern California and is routinely honored by *Wine Spectator*, *Zagat* and *Condé Nast Traveler*. Classy and personable, this old-school bistro pairs an extensive wine list with authentic French delicacies to truly transport diners back to the Old Continent, courtesy of owner Robert Simon. As a counterpoint, restaurant **Maison Akira** (www.maisonakira.com) in Pasadena takes the Franco mastery and fuses it with the Far East. With experience at top restaurants in both Paris and Tokyo, Chef Akira Hirose effortlessly brings the disparate cultures together into a single artistic whole, delivering a memorable brand of contemporary French cuisine with a Japanese twist.

For more information on Pasadena restaurants and attractions, visit www.pasadenacal.com/.

The above itinerary was created based on feedback from various destination marketing organizations, so we apologize if there are any minor inaccuracies. Dates and hours may vary so we suggest you confirm dates and hours in advance of visit. Updated June 2009.

MORE INTERESTING OPTIONS

MORE RESTAURANT RECOMMENDATIONS

L.A. Area

Monsieur Marcel's Restaurant & Wine Bar

Situated in the heart of the historic Original Farmer's Market, Monsieur Marcel's Restaurant & Wine Bar provides a hearty taste of France in the most unlikely place. Once you've polished off your Tarte Tatin, head over to its gourmet store for a basketful of souvenirs your friends and family will devour.

www.mrmarcel.com/

Tlapazola Grill

A visit to L.A. wouldn't be complete without savoring the specialties of our neighbors to the south. With the city's epic list of South and Central American flavors to choose from, an easy choice would include Tlapazola Grill, an unassuming strip mall spot specializing in the moles and other innovative faire from Oaxaca.

www.losangeles.citysearch.com/profile/11398609/los_angeles_ca/tlapazola_grill.html

Santa Monica Area

Tengu

Santa Monica's hottest Asian fusion spot. www.tengu.com

Rustic Canyon

A fabulous sustainable, green establishment. www.rusticcanyonwinebar.com

Real Foods Daily

Very popular, very vegan! www.realfood.com

Pasadena Area

The Dining Room at the Langham Huntington Hotel & Spa

Receiving “Best Service” accolades and extraordinary scores in the 2008 Zagat Los Angeles/Southern California Restaurants guide, **The Dining Room at Pasadena’s prestigious The Langham, Huntington Hotel & Spa, Pasadena** (formerly The Ritz-Carlton, Huntington Hotel & Spa) highlights “Modern American” cuisine paired with an extensive wine selection. The Dining Room is a new recipient of its first Michelin Star. www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/Huntington/Dining/TheDiningRoom/Default.htm

GASTROPUBS

L.A. Area

Father’s Office

Sang Yoon’s temple to all things on tap features an impressive array of hard-to-find microbrews and one of the best hamburgers in town (no, really...he’s famous for them).

www.fathersoffice.com/html/fathersOffice.html

York

More *Cheers* than *Sex and the City*, this homey hangout has a loyal following that appreciates the comfortable everyman’s vibe, well-executed menu and variety enough to please every tippler in town.

losangeles.citysearch.com/profile/45092105/los_angeles_ca/the_york.html

Royal Claytons

A local hangout for City Hall employees as well as architects and designers from the neighborhood’s Art District, Royal Claytons has a relaxed attitude with a refined palette.

losangeles.citysearch.com/profile/44661423/los_angeles_ca/royal_claytons.html

Ford’s Filling Station

Now an institution in the white-hot Culver City neighborhood, Ford’s Filling Station is the brainchild of Ben Ford, son to Harrison Ford. With a light, breezy atmosphere, coveted patio and lineup of impeccable pub faire, this neighborhood favorite becomes standing-room-only most nights. www.fordsfillingstation.net

Santa Monica Area

Library Alehouse

A true public house, Santa Monica-style. Choose from 29 unique microbrews and select imports on tap and many hard-to-find bottled beers from around the world. Library Alehouse offers the widest selection of its kind in Southern California. www.libraryalehouse.com

Father's Office

Father's Office features 45 international beers, 15 wines by the glass, and an extensive tapas menu. Lauded as home of the best burger in Santa Monica. www.fathersoffice.com

AGRITOURISM

L.A. Area

The **Farm Store at Kellogg Ranch**/Cal Poly Pomona, www.csupomona.edu/~farmstore/

Underwood Family Farm, www.underwoodfamilyfarms.com

ARTISAN CHOCOLATE

Jin Patisserie

Proprietor Kristy Choo, a graduate of San Francisco's California Culinary Academy, channels her passion into cakes and chocolates to die for. www.jinpatisserie.com

Leonidas of Hollywood

Enjoy the finest imported Belgian chocolate, flown in overnight and containing only the best Callebaut chocolate, fresh cream and butter. www.leonidashollywood.com

Lartisan du Chocolat

Savor traditional French chocolates such as truffles (some filled with cognac and other liqueurs), dark chocolate, milk chocolate and mint, as well as chocolates spiced with bay laurel, rosemary or lavender, among many others. www.lartisanduchocolat.com/index.htm

OTHER INTERESTING GOURMET ATTRACTIONS, EVENTS & PROMOTIONS

L.A. Area

- L.A. has launched its first official **dineLA Restaurant Week**. Visitors and locals can take advantage of specially priced three-course menus at more than 100 restaurants countywide. The event takes place January 27 to February 1 and February 3-8, 2008. www.dinela.com
- From the grocery stores to the massive dim sum emporiums, **Chinatown** is worth the detour and an afternoon spent following your nose: www.chinatownla.com
- An L.A. institution for more than 18 years, the **Cooks Library** caters to foodies and professionals alike with more than 8,000 titles and a regular calendar of book signings and events: www.cookslibrary.com
- Nearly every small neighborhood in L.A. County can claim its own local **farmer's markets**. Find one near you and see what's fresh and what the locals are eating: www.farmernet.com/events/cfms
- A one-day Basic Course at the **California Sushi Academy**: www.sushi-academy.com
- **The Los Angeles Wine & Spirits Competition** – May 28-30, 2008, www.fairplex.com/wine2007/index.asp
- **LA Wine Fest** at the historic Raleigh Studios in Hollywood – July 12-13, 2008; www.lawinefest.com/
- **Central Coast Wine & Food Celebration** fundraiser for the UC Davis Bonaccorsi Fund – held at Wally's Wine, West L.A. www.wallywine.com/ps-29126-315-event-central-coast-wine-food-celebration-uc-davis-bonaccorsi-fund.aspx
- Wolfgang Puck's **American Wine & Food Festival** at Universal Studios Backlot, www.awff.org

- **Learn About Wine** offers year-round private tasting and public wine events at locations around the city: guest.cvent.com/EVENTS/Calendar/Calendar.aspx?cal=c134aae3-9f74-49d0-90f5-f6a6343e72eb

WINE BARS

Santa Monica Area

Bar Pintxo

The concept for Bar Pintxo (pronounced “peencho”) emerged from a recent trip to Barcelona where Chef Joseph Miller was deeply inspired by the cooking of Spain – the unique combinations of flavor, texture and temperature; the bold spectrums of sweet, sour, bitter and salty; and all the smells, sights and sounds wafting through the various stalls of the marketplace. **Bar Pintxo** plans to offer the same selection of fresh, high-quality “pintxos” (tapas) inspired by the diverse regions of Spain, with a modern California flair, and a full bar with 25 wines by the glass and great microbrews. www.barpintxo.com

Rosenthal

Enjoy wine tasting, a vineyard hike, blending seminar or one of many special events at this scenic hillside estate in Malibu’s Newton Canyon, a new wine region visited by some of Hollywood’s top stars. www.rosenthalestatewines.com

Pasadena Area

Madeleine’s Restaurant & Wine Bistro

One of the great landmarks of Pasadena, the seductive Madeleine’s Restaurant & Wine Bistro) is housed in the beautiful Cheesewright Building, an old Einstein-haunt during World War II. Dedicated to oenophiles everywhere, Madeleine’s combines classy French cuisine with an intimate wine bar with tastes that stretch worldwide. www.madeleinesrestaurant.com

Vertical Wine Bistro

This popular eatery features small plate bistro fare with a dazzling selection of more than 400 wines from around the world. www.verticalwinebistro.com.

For more information check out www.landofwineandfood.com.

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