

FEBRUARY'S FABLED FARE

Freshness Guaranteed on the American Riviera®

Veg Out On Your ABC's as asparagus, broccoli and cauliflower rear their heads in gardens and markets throughout Santa Barbara County this February. Restaurants and purveyors of fine culinary ingredients countywide get *heady* about these local veggies likely of Italian origin.

Fresh Fare

Asparagus is a low fat, vitamin-rich member of the Lily family that grows up to 10 inches a day! For a classic combo, try the Angel Hair Salad with Lobster, Asparagus, Sun-dried Tomatoes and Olives at **Downey's Restaurant** where Chef John Downey focuses on local products with aplomb. Another great bet with an Italian flair is the savory *Grigliata d'Asparagi*: Pancetta-Wrapped Asparagus with Parmesan and Balsamic at Chef Dario Furlati's tasty **Ca' Dario**. In the tiny hamlet of Montecito, asparagus makes a showing in a variety of formats. Try the low-key **Pane e Vino** where 80 to 90 percent of the restaurant's ingredients are culled from local farmers' markets.

Big on Broccoli

Brocco in Italian means *branch*, and the many-branched broccoli is Santa Barbara County's largest planted crop with 27,000 acres, generating \$120 million in annual sales. Not surprisingly, this beautiful branch is ever-present in eateries across the board. For a compulsory culinary kick, **Sage and Onion** steps up with its seasonal menu, including Broccoli Bacon Quiche and a fragrant Rosemary Broccoli Cornbread. Other greats by chef Steven Giles include Marinated Pork Medallions and Wild Boar Belly with Broccoli Rabe and White Bean Cassoulet. For live salsa and a more traditional take on broccoli, pop into **Ruby's Café** for Chicken Cordon Blue: Broccoli and Jack Cheese with Smoked Ham-Stuffed Chicken Breast topped with Hollandaise. Or brush up your chopsticks-chops with Broccoli and Teriyaki-Ginger-Glazed Salmon at **Arigato Sushi**, reputed by locals to have the best sushi in town.

Call for Cauliflower

Cauliflower (like broccoli) is a cruciferous ("cross-bearing;" four-petaled) vegetable strongly believed to reduce the risk of cancer (by as much as 35% if eaten three times weekly). The edible part of both plants is actually a tight flower of fresh flavor. Check out the Cauliflower Soufflé by Chef Martin Frost at **The Patio Restaurant** at the **Four Seasons Resort Santa Barbara**. For another local treat, head to the homey **Paradise Café** for Seared Scallops with Braised Cauliflower.

Culinary Travel Planner & Visitor Information

Foodies rejoice! Planning a culinary adventure in Santa Barbara County just got simpler. Contact the Santa Barbara Conference & Visitors Bureau (tourism@santabarbaraCA.com or 800.676.1266) for your copy of the 32-page **Get Fresh on the American Riviera®** culinary travel planner. The free-for-the-asking guide highlights culinary attractions and tours, including gourmet food product purveyors, regional seafood specialties, farmers' markets, cooking classes, food and wine events, wineries, and much more! Visitor and culinary travel information is also available via www.santabarbaraCA.com or www.santabarbarafresh.com.

Suggested Itinerary

Rain or shine, a visit to Santa Barbara's wine country presents a cozy and flavorful winter tasting experience.

Start the day with the 40-minute drive from Santa Barbara to Solvang. Take Highway 101 north and exit Highway 246 in Buellton. Turn right on Highway 246 and drive 3.3 miles to **Paula's Pancake House** (on your left at 1631 Mission Drive) for a scrumptious breakfast. After, drive about a mile on Highway 246 (Mission Drive) and stop by **El Rancho Market** (on the right side, at Refugio Road) to pick up a few take-home treasures or create a gourmet picnic lunch.

This market is Santa Ynez Valley's insider secret. The small (16,000 sq. ft.) delicatessen offers home-made salads, legendary pastries, specialty dressings, dips, cheeses and a host of local lavender products. The market is also a complete food store, chocked with the finest local goods from Santa Maria piquinto beans to house-cured pastrami and minutes-old produce. Try the Mississippi Caviar, a specialty of the market, with black-eyed peas and avocado.

Get back on Highway 246 (Mission Drive), turn left (west), go 1.6 miles and turn right on Alamo Pintado Road. Proceed several miles and follow the signs to the wonderful village of Los Olivos where you can enjoy an afternoon of wine tasting and gallery hopping. Here, find numerous tasting rooms including **Carina Cellars**, as well as the **Los Olivos Café & Wine Merchant** and **Fess Parker's Wine Country Inn & Spa**, a great place to bed down before a grueling day of wine tasting along one of the many trails, or to indulge in a wine-inspired spa treatment. To return to Santa Barbara from Los Olivos, head west on Highway 154 to Highway 101 south.

Details

- **Arigato Sushi:** 1225 State St., Santa Barbara, 805.965.6074
- **Ca' Dario:** 37 E. Victoria St., Santa Barbara, 805.884.9419, www.cadario.net
- **Carina Cellars:** 2900 Grand Ave., Los Olivos, 805.688.2459, www.carinacellars.com
- **Downey's Restaurant:** 1305 State St., Santa Barbara, 805.966.5006, www.downeyssb.com
- **El Rancho Marketplace:** 2886 Old Mission Dr., Solvang, 805.688.4300, www.elranchomarket.com
- **Fess Parker's Wine Country Inn & Spa:** 2680 Grand Ave., Los Olivos, 800.446.2455, www.fessparker.com
- **Los Olivos Café & Wine Merchant:** 2879 Grand Ave., Los Olivos, 805.688.7265, www.losolivoscafe.com
- **Ruby's Café:** 734 State St., Santa Barbara, 805.962.9688, www.restauranteur.com/rubys
- **Pane e Vino:** 1482 E. Valley Rd., Montecito, 805.969.9274
- **Paradise Café:** 702 Anacapa St., Santa Barbara, 805.962.4416, www.paradisecafe.com
- **The Patio Restaurant:** Four Seasons Resort Santa Barbara, 1260 Channel Dr., Santa Barbara, 805.969.2261, www.fourseasons.com/santabarbara
- **Paula's Pancake House:** 1531 Mission Dr., Solvang, 805.688.2867
- **Sage and Onion:** 34 E. Ortega St., Santa Barbara, 805.963.1012, www.sageandonion.com