

TO MARKET IN MARCH

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Cabbage onto this... originating in Western Europe 2,000 years ago, cabbage and kale were the first two members of the plant group *cole* (*col* - Middle-English for “stem”) to be domesticated. Originally used as medicinal herbs, their healthy zest is still highly-valued by the top chefs in town. March brings these vivacious veggies into season along with another all-time favorite: apricots.

Fresh Fare

Cabbage is an Anglicized form of the French *caboche*, meaning "head." The vegetable was introduced to America in 1541 and has delighted chefs ever since with its versatility. For a fresh spin, try the Crisp Corn Tortilla Topped with Black Beans & Shredded Cabbage at **Carlito's Café y Cantina**.

Try the Cabbage Chile with Mango and Pine Nuts from **The Palace Grill**, where a delightful troupe of entertaining wait-folk keep your palate purring with Cajun and Creole fare. Another great stage for cabbage is State Street's **Taj Café** that turns the head into a wonderful Braised Cabbage, Cumin, and Carrot Salad, Indian-style.

Prized by Greeks and Romans in prehistoric kitchens, Kale is a non-heading cabbage often called *borecole*. Kale lends its unique flavor to a multitude of dishes with ease and pride. For example, Sautéed Ginger Sesame Kale with Garlic and Lime combines the best of the season's ingredients with flair. A wonderful Kale and Potato Soup with Smoked Garlic Sausage underscores both its flexibility and adaptability. For a fresh take on kale, **Pascucci** features Kale-Encrusted Halibut Filet in Tomato Caper Sauce. Settle into an *al fresco* seat along State Street and watch time slide by.

Apricots are native to China where they have been used for 2,000 years for such purposes as treating tumors and ulcers. California produces 95% of the United States' apricots, and the best are grown in Santa Barbara County with *Patterson* being the predominate variety.

Visit a local farmers' market for a taste tour of this wonderful stonefruit. Around town, chefs have elevated apricots to cult status. Go wild for Wild Sautéed Salmon with a tangy Apricot, Orange, Grapefruit, Lemon Reduction from **Chad's on Chapala**. Or, perhaps most openly ostentatious, Oriental Chicken Salad of Shredded Santa Barbara Cabbage, Crunchy Noodles, Apricot, Almonds and Green Onions from **Mandarin Palace**. For the best Apricot Danish this side of Denmark, head for the **Taste of Solvang**, an annual food festival in the veritable Danish village, Solvang. Check out the Walking Smorgasbord for other Northern European desserts and fare.

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

Start your day with breakfast at **Andersen's Danish Bakery** (on State Street) and enjoy a freshly made apricot Danish and cappuccino. After, head toward the ocean (south) on State Street, turn left on Cabrillo Boulevard and left to Milpas Street. Stop at **Tri-County Produce** to check out the "Seven-Days-A-Week-Farmers' Market" for the freshest-of-fresh culinary products. This will give you a pulse on the region's top picks.

For lunch slip north on Milpas Street to **La Super-Rica Taqueria**. The line winding out the door is a sure sign you've arrived for fresh Mexican food and killer salsas. This casual hotspot is ever popular and nationally renowned, thanks to the late-great Julia Child's oft-spoken appreciation.

How about an afternoon cooking class with a chef who is deeply committed to using the finest fresh local organic ingredients in his French-style of cooking? **Chef Jean-Phillipe Sitbon** will come to the location of your choice and teach your group innovative ways to incorporate the ingredients of the season into your own March menus.

Time your visit to attend the **Wine Cask's Wine Futures Tasting** event, where owners and wine makers from local wineries offer barrel samples of wines for tasting, evaluation, and purchase reservation. Chef Alex Castillo prepares a sumptuous, seasonally inspired hors d'oeuvres buffet to accompany the wines.

Top your night off with a decadent desert at **The Palace Grill** or **Chads on Chapala**.

Details

- **Andersen's Danish Bakery:** 1106 State St., Santa Barbara, 805.962.5085, www.AndersensSantaBarbara.com
- **Carlito's Café y Cantina:** 1324 State St., Santa Barbara, 805.962.7117, www.carlitos.com
- **Chad's on Chapala:** 625 Chapala St., Santa Barbara, 805.568.1876, www.chads.biz
- **Chef Jean-Phillipe Sitbon:** 2417 El Camino de la Luz, Santa Barbara, 805.966.4574, www.atyourservicechef.com
- **La Super-Rica Taqueria:** 622 Milpas St., Santa Barbara, 805.963.4940
- **Mandarin Palace:** 3955 State St., Santa Barbara, 805.683.2158
- **The Palace Grill:** 8 E. Cota St., Santa Barbara, 805.963.5000, www.palacegrill.com
- **Pascucci:** 729 State St., Santa Barbara, 805.963.8123
- **Taj Café Indian Cuisine:** 905 State St., Santa Barbara, 805.564.8280
- **Taste of Solvang:** Solvang, www.solvangusa.com
- **Tri County Produce:** 335 S. Milpas St., Santa Barbara, 805.965.4558, www.tricountyproduce.com
- **Wine Cask:** Mar. and Apr., 813 Anacapa St., Santa Barbara, 805.966.9463, www.winecask.com