

NUTTY NOVEMBER: PISTACHIOS, CHANTERELLES & CHERIMOYAS ***Freshness Guaranteed on the American Riviera®***

Shell out a few bucks for cooking classes and crack up guests with a nutty approach to fine cuisine. Pistachios, harvested locally in November, are party perfect for the holidays. Mushroom season hits full tilt as well. Find your inner-fungi at restaurants and farmers' markets throughout the county.

Pining for Pistachio

Pistachio ice cream? How about a recipe for Meyer lemon and pistachio panna cotta, or pistachio pesto sauce? These addictive nuts originated in Persia near the carpet-making city "Kerman," also the name of the variety cultivated in Santa Barbara. Pistachios are alternate bearing, producing a heavy crop one year and a lighter crop the next. **Santa Barbara Pistachio Company** harvests naturally tree-ripened and pesticide free pistachios on their farm in Maricopa.

For lovers of this nut, arrange a private cooking class with **Chef Andy LoRusso - The Singing Chef®**. Chef Andy can take this nut to another level with a variety of tasty takes. Learn the tricks of the trade while hearing amazing arias. Or, visit one of the County's 11 local farmers' markets to sample a delicious variety of pistachios (from garlic to regular) and let the good times roll!

Manic for Mushrooms

Morels are probably the best-known wild mushrooms, but the Chanterelle is the most prized by the world's great chefs. Chanterelles are only found in the wild as all efforts to cultivate them have proven unsuccessful. Though mild, Chanterelles have a unique spicy forest-like flavor and are known in Italy as girolle and in Germany as pfifferling.

Let your excitement mushroom and learn fun fungi facts from **Chef Leonard Curti of Trattoria Grappolo** in Santa Ynez. His risotto will knock off the socks of any friend of the fungi. Other great stops for in-season fare include **opal restaurant and bar** for eclectic California cuisine and a truly creative chile-crusting filet mignon topped with chanterelle zinfandel sauce. Local mushroom hunts are led by chefs throughout town. Strap on those boots and grab a basket!

The Cherished Cherimoya

With flavor evocative of mango, pineapple, papaya, and vanilla custard, Mark Twain called the cherimoya "deliciousness itself." In Santa Barbara County, 250+ acres are planted in this delectable fruit also known as custard heart, sweetsop and sugar apple. Recipes pop up throughout town during this season. Keep an eye out for cheeky cherimoya chutney, an ideal foil for baked pork tenderloin.

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

November is a great time to visit the regional farmers' markets. Start with a visit to the weekly **Santa Barbara Certified Farmers' Market** in Montecito. From Santa Barbara take Highway 101 north, and exit Coast Village Road. The market is located along this stretch on Fridays. Here, you can graze on a variety of pistachios from **Santa Barbara Pistachio Company** and put the palate to the pedal with free samples of honey, fruits and locally-produced hummus. Cross the street to **Jeannine's American Bakery Restaurant** for a fantastic variety of breads and sinful sweets.

Sign up for a cooking lesson and head over the hill to Santa Ynez. Take Highway 101 north to Highway 246 (Solvang); turn right at the Santa Ynez sign. Turn right on Sagunto Street, and Chef Leonard Curti's **Trattoria Grappolo** is on the left. After a few hours driving the stoves, head back and sniff out the *al fresco* Santa Maria-style tri-tip sandwiches prepared over open flame at the corner gas station (Highway 246).

Depart via Highway 246 to Highway 101 south. Exit Santa Rosa Road, and turn left onto Santa Rosa Road. Here you'll find the **Santa Rita Hills AVA** (wine region appellation). These distinct cool-climate wines are well worth the jaunt, specifically the pinot noir, syrah and chardonnay varietals. Grab a few bottles for friends back home and backtrack to Highway 101 south.

Exit at Carrillo Street, and turn left on State Street to Santa Barbara's historic downtown. As the dinner hour approaches, slip into **opal restaurant and bar**, located next door to the legendary Arlington Theatre.

Details

- **Chef Andy LoRusso/The Singing Chef®:** 805.966.1192, www.singingchef.com
- **Jeannine's American Bakery Restaurant:** 1253 Coast Village Rd., Montecito, 805.969.7878
- **opal restaurant and bar:** 1325 State St., Santa Barbara, 805.966.9676
- **Santa Barbara Certified Farmers' Market/Montecito:** 1100 – 1200 Coast Village Rd., Montecito, www.sbfarmersmarket.org
- **Santa Barbara Pistachio Company:** 3380 Highway 33, Maricopa, 800.896.1044, www.santabarbarapistachios.com
- **Santa Rita Hills AVA:** Santa Barbara County Vintners' Association, 800.218.0881, www.sbcountywines.com
- **Trattoria Grappolo:** 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805.688.6899