

SANTA BARBARA

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Contact: Shannon Turner Brooks
Santa Barbara Conference & Visitors Bureau
800.676.1266, 805.966.9222; sbrooks@santabarbaraCA.com

LIVIN' LA VIDA LOCATORE IN SANTA BARBARA *Demystify the Locavore Lifestyle and Learn How to Eat "Green"* *While Tasting Your Way Through the American Riviera*

Santa Barbara, CA — It's official. The "locavore" lifestyle has gone mainstream. "Locavore" was named the "2007 Word of the Year" by the *New Oxford American Dictionary*. And there is no better place to study up on what "*living la vida locavore*" is all about than in Santa Barbara, California—the American Riviera—where eating "green" is second nature.

What is a locavore, you ask? "Locavore" refers to the fast-growing trend for health-conscious and environmentally-aware people based on the simple concept of eating locally grown and harvested foods. In this case, "local" means food grown or sourced within a 100-mile radius of where you live. The average distance food in the U.S. travels before it makes it to our tables is an astounding 1,500 miles. When you buy local, food stays off the highways, benefiting you, your community and the environment. It is more energy efficient, the food is fresher and it tastes better. Practicing locavore principles is an excellent way to support your local farmers and producers. The concept originated in San Francisco with a campaign called "Celebrate Your Foodshed: Eat Locally," designed both to raise awareness about sustainable agriculture and to reconnect people with the farmers and farms that produce our food.

Why is Santa Barbara the perfect place to learn how to eat like a locavore? A popular destination for food and wine aficionados, Santa Barbara is uniquely self-sustaining when it comes to food and offers a truly regional culinary experience. An abundance of fresh, seasonal produce is readily available at daily farmers' markets and local grocery stores. Fresh catch from the Santa Barbara Channel is served at local eateries, and you can even buy seafood right off the boat at the Santa Barbara Harbor. Add to this a rich selection of fresh herbs, cold pressed olive oil, cured olives, pistachios, walnuts and toasted walnut oil from local groves—and you have all the ingredients you need for a purely local feast. You can explore and taste your way through the American Riviera on your own or enlist the expertise and guidance of professional.

Bounty Hunting

Santa Barbara's year-round growing climate means that even in January, farmers' markets and produce stands offer an array of colorful produce to inspire professional and amateur chefs: Navel and blood oranges, Pixie tangerines, creamy cherimoyas and avocados from the Goleta and Carpinteria foothills and an array of sweet root vegetables and delicate salad greens. Tender artichokes and asparagus from Lompoc are the harbingers of spring, followed by old-fashioned Chandler strawberries, rhubarb, Meyer lemons, sugar snap peas and tendrils, crisp fennel bulbs, green garlic, baby fava beans and cherries in May. Summer brings a riot of colors to the table, opening with apricots and plums, followed by heirloom tomatoes, basil, sweet corn, squashes, eggplants and beans, melons, peaches, figs and red and gold raspberries. Fall is the season for sweet and hot peppers, newly-dug potatoes, hard squashes, grapes, apples, pears and passionfruit. As the holidays near, pomegranates, persimmons, colorful kales and Satsuma mandarins beckon.

Santa Barbara chefs and locavores know that the freshest organic fruit and most colorful produce come from the **Santa Barbara Certified Farmers' Markets** (www.sbfarmersmarket.org). There is a Farmers' Market every day of the week, except Monday. Farm stands can be found throughout the region—from Carpinteria in the south to Santa Maria in the north. Farms like **Fairview Gardens** (www.fairviewgardens.org) offer educational tours. And seasonal u-pick farms allow you to dig your hands and feet into the soil.

Hook, Line & Sinker

The Santa Barbara Channel is one of the nation's richest sources of bountiful, sustainable and high-quality seafood. Santa Barbara Harbor's 100+ local fishermen catch between six and ten million pounds of seafood annually. Depending on the season, the catch of the day may include spiny lobster, ridgeback shrimp, spot prawn, rock crab, white sea bass, California halibut, yellowtail, albacore, swordfish, thresher and mako shark, Pacific snapper and barracuda. Our boats also bring in the best sea urchins in the world, as well as squid and sea cucumber. Open ocean farms produce excellent mussels and fresh oysters.

Sample Spot Prawns or lobster at a local restaurant, buy fresh catch off the boats at the Saturday Fisherman's Market, or head to sea to catch and cook for yourself. Guided dive trips and deep sea fishing excursions operate year-round.

Good Libations

Even libations are made locally. Santa Barbara County is home to over 130 wineries and seven microbreweries. Meet local winemakers and brewmasters on self-led or guided tasting treks. For extra "green" credit, head to wine country with **Sustainable Vine Wine Tours** (www.sustainablevine.com), a

wine tour company that provides transportation in a biodiesel-fueled van and focuses on organic wineries and bio-dynamically farmed vineyards.

Several restaurants and bars offer seasonal, handmade culinary cocktails inspired by what's available at farmers' market that day or week. Santa Barbara's abundance of seasonal produce gives mix-masters the creative inspiration and premium ingredients they need to delight the most discerning drinkers' palates at hot spots like **The Hungry Cat** (www.thehungrycat.com) and **Quantum Kitchen & Cocktails** (www.quantumrestaurant.com).

Fantastic Flavorful Voyages

To delve deeper into Santa Barbara's culinary landscape, take a guided culinary tour (including cooking instruction) with **Market Forays** (www.MarketForays.com). Meet the fishermen, visit the farms, get introduced to the best growers at the farmers market and learn to discern the finest produce under the guidance of an expert. The experience concludes with a shared feast centered on seasonal fresh food prepared from the ingredients gathered—paired to local wines, of course. **Cloud Climbers Jeep Tours** (www.ccjeeps.com) also offers guided food and wine tours in open-air jeeps, including visits to wineries, olive oil producers and farms.

Information & Resources

Plan your *living la vida locavore* crash course with the help of the Santa Barbara Conference & Visitors Bureau and Film Commission's ***Get Fresh on the American Riviera Culinary Travel Planner***, a comprehensive guide to all things food and drink in Santa Barbara County, including farmers' markets, regional specialties, cooking classes, specialty shops and markets, u-pick farms and farm stands, wine trails, micro-breweries and a dining guide. Visit www.SantaBarbaraFresh.com to request your free copy of the guide and to access food-friendly content, including recipes, itineraries and events. Visit www.GreenSantaBarbara.com for green travel planning resources and lists of organic and biodynamic wineries.

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