

welcome to our table!

Dining in Santa Cruz County

by Sally Wing



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Sampling local restaurants can be an interesting aspect of exploring any new area, but dining out in Santa Cruz County is very likely to be the highlight of your visit. A unique combination of geography, culture, and imagination has produced a veritable mecca for food lovers.

Here in Santa Cruz County you will experience the very best of what has become universally known as "California cuisine." And you'll understand the dynamic way that California has helped to shape America's dining style.

Above all else, the defining element in the cuisine of California is the use of fresh ingredients. Finding these ingredients is especially easy here in Santa Cruz County which is situated in the center of one of the most fertile agricultural areas in the world. In our local restaurants you will enjoy the imaginative use of fruits and vegetables in nearly every course on the menu. Most are gathered from nearby farms and orchards.

Be sure to take a drive into the Pajaro Valley in southern Santa Cruz County where rows of strawberries stretch to the horizon, and artichoke plants open their leaves to the sun.

Local chefs have an abundant supply of lettuce, cauliflower, bell peppers, brussels sprouts, and every other native ingredient they might need to produce the salads and entrées they are justly famous for. Many chefs sing the praises of local farmer's markets where fresh farm products are available directly from the field.

One of the other important fresh local products is quite literally swimming at our doorstep. Chefs make superb use of the local seafood which is gathered off our coast in the Monterey Bay. In almost all of the restaurants it plays a significant role on the menu, and in some it is the featured attraction.

Of course, even the freshest, tastiest meal is enhanced by a fine wine. As you may have suspected, that wine is also produced locally. In the nearby Santa Cruz Mountains vintners from over forty small, family-owned wineries are hard at work producing the wines which are the perfect accompaniment for your dinner.

The Santa Cruz Mountains wine appellation begins in San Francisco and stretches south for 60 miles. In 1981 the Santa Cruz Mountains Viticultural Appellation gained official recognition. It was one of the first American viticultural areas to be defined by geophysical and climatic factors.

This wine region, which is much more geographically rugged than the Napa Valley north of San Francisco, specializes in small, individual wineries. Many of the highly acclaimed wines which are produced here are the featured items on local wine lists. It will be well worth your while to look for them and sample them!

davenport



bonny doon

boulder creek

felton



soquel

santa cruz

capitola



monterey bay



scotts valley



aptos



watsonville

