

Take A Culinary Road Trip To Monterey County, California This Fall

Indulge in farm tours, specialized foods and local-favorite seafood

Monterey, Calif., October 13, 2021 – [Monterey County, California](#) has been bustling with activity since the arrival of fall harvest season. The picturesque central coast destination is an agricultural epicenter with 1.4 million acres of land producing more than 150 crops including lettuce, strawberries, artichokes, wine grapes and more, as well as a bounty of fresh seafood from the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. For travelers seeking inspiration for a culinary road trip this fall, Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau has created a guide of must-taste stops throughout the county including visitor-friendly farms, tasty specialized food spots and sustainable seafood finds.

Farm Fun

From pumpkin patches to olive oil tastings and all things artichoke, visit any of these farms to get to the root of Monterey County's agriculture bounty:

Earthbound Farms (Carmel Valley)

[Earthbound Farms](#) started out as a 2.5 acre backyard project that became a nationally-recognized brand found in supermarkets across the country. Producing farm fresh organic produce, visitors can stop by its farm stand in Carmel Valley to explore an organic garden, orchards, kid's garden, market and café. Plus, don't miss its colorful display of organic pumpkins in various shapes and sizes at the pumpkin patch this October.

Serendipity Farms (Carmel Valley)

Continue on the organic farming bandwagon and visit [Serendipity Farms](#) for U-Pick fun. The farm raises more than 50 varieties of organic vegetables, herbs and flowers in Carmel Valley. Fall picking options include strawberries, raspberries, more than a dozen varieties of tomatoes, heirloom pumpkins and winter squash.

Pezzini Farms (Castroville)

Appropriately located in the Artichoke Capital of the World, [Pezzini Farms](#) has been selling heirloom artichokes for more than 80 years in Castroville. Stop by its retail store for a variety of local and farm fresh products, including a cornucopia of artichoke goods. For a more in-depth tour, the farm has teamed up with [Ag Venture Tours](#) for a guided walk that focuses on artichokes and concludes with a tasting of either deep-fried artichoke hearts or an artichoke cupcake.

Borchard Farms (Salinas Valley)

[Borchard Farms](#) is a seasonally appropriate must-visit stop for any pumpkin-lover. Noted as the home of the giant pumpkins on its website, the farm's owner started growing these specialized gourds and competing in pumpkin contests in the 1970s – winning a number of contests including the International Pumpkin Association Weigh-Off. The farm has hosted more than 20 years' worth of its own weigh-off events, with its next Annual California State Giant Pumpkin Weigh-Off Festival taking place on October 16.

43 Ranch Olive Oil (San Ardo)

For an olive-focused farm experience, visit [43 Ranch](#) in San Ardo with roots dating back to 1864. Regularly open Fridays through Sundays, visitors can learn about the olive milling process and do an on-site tasting at this award-winning olive oil farm.

Made in Monterey County

Monterey County's abundance of fertile grounds and nutrient-rich waters have spurred many local residents to establish their own specialized food and beverage businesses. Here are a few that visitors should add to their must-taste list:

Big Sur Salts (Big Sur)

Travelers flock to Big Sur's rugged coastline to catch its mesmerizing views. But how about a taste of that salty sea? [Big Sur Salts](#) hand-harvests straight from the coastline to produce its culinary craft salts. An added bonus is that the money used from purchased products goes to organizations that are helping to preserve Big Sur. Big Sur Salts can be found at multiple restaurants and retail locations throughout the county.

Dutch Door Donuts (Carmel-by-the-Sea)

Having just opened its doors in September 2021, [Dutch Door Donuts](#) in Carmel-by-the-Sea offers made-to-order, artisan doughnuts. It is the first standalone doughnut shop in Carmel in 50 years and is offering three staple flavors, vanilla bean glaze, cinnamon sugar and ground chocolate. Patrons also can find seasonal flavors and, of course, coffee.

Baker's Bacon (Marina)

While store fronts can be found in select locations throughout the country, [Baker's Bacon](#) was founded by Monterey County resident, Tony Baker. His inspiration to produce small-batch, top-quality dry-cured and double-smoked bacon began when helming the kitchen for three restaurants in Monterey County – [Montrio Bistro](#), [Tarcy's Roadhouse](#) and [Rio Grill](#). Try some of chef Tony's beloved bacon at his storefront in Marina.

Pig Wizard (Monterey)

Visitors seeking to taste bacon's counterpart, sausage, can head to [PigWizard](#) in Monterey. The sandwich shop makes all of its sausage in-house and serves a menu including scotch eggs, porchetta, pastrami and air-fried pork rinds. Try the porchetta sandwich featuring slices of the namesake roast with lettuce, tomato, red onion, chimichurri and lemon garlic aioli on a toasted ciabatta roll.

Estate-Grown Only Wineries (Monterey County)

With more than 225 vineyards, Monterey County produces the most pinot noir in all of California and the most chardonnay in the United States. While Monterey grapes make it into barrels and bottles across the country, a select few are grown exclusively in Monterey County, creating estate-grown vintages that are as unique as the terroir. Chances are also good that the winemakers themselves might be pouring visitors' tastings at these hyper local tasting rooms. Stop by Soledad to visit [Chalone Vineyard](#), the oldest producing vineyard in Monterey County, or [Rustique Wines](#), the newest tasting room along River Road Wine Trail in Salinas Valley. For a change of scenery and a different wine-making process, head to Carmel Valley to taste organic wines produced at [Massa Estate Organic Vineyards](#).

Schoch Family Farmstead (Salinas)

While travelers can't visit this farm directly (yet!), they can still enjoy the only dairy farm still producing Monterey Jack cheese in Monterey County. [Schoch Family Farmstead](#) is one of only three dairies in all of California that is certified to sell raw milk, which is used to create its famous Monterey Farmstead Jack cheese. The cheese is aged four to six months in small, hand-crafted batches and can be found at select Monterey County farmer's markets and sampled with [Monterey Bay Food Tours](#).

Ad Astra Bread Company (Seaside)

In 2019, local pastry chef Ron Mendoza decided to start a new venture and bring a bakery specializing in handmade, long-fermented sourdough breads to Seaside through [Ad Astra Bread Company](#). Handmade breads and treats means that patrons will find weekly loaf specials and the chance that the bake goods could sell quickly. While visitors make their choice on their bread selection, they can also sip on local brewery [Other Broth Beer Company](#) brews, which shares the same building space.

Seafood Farms and Markets

No culinary visit to Monterey County would be complete without trying its sustainable seafood, and especially during National Seafood Month this month. There are plenty of restaurants to choose from, but make sure to catch one of these more unique seafood farms and markets during a visit:

Monterey Bay Abalone Company (Monterey)

Abalone has a long history in Monterey dating back to the indigenous Rumsen people, who had harvested it for thousands of years. Today, the marine invertebrates remain on California's list of banned species for commercial and sport diving, but can still be enjoyed through [Monterey Bay Abalone Company](#). The company is the only in-ocean abalone farm in California that sustainably grows these treasured mollusks. Travelers can visit the shop, located at the Commercial Wharf in Monterey, to learn about the farming process, where to try them locally or order some for at-home cooking.

Monterey Bay Seaweeds (Moss Landing)

A husband and wife team that included a seaweed biologist/professor and chef/restaurantier founded [Monterey Bay Seaweeds](#) to bring sustainably farmed seaweeds to restaurants, retailers and seaweed fans. Visitors can stop by the Moss Landing store to choose from four different kinds of seaweed available for sale, and learn where they can try the seaweed locally in dishes or even cocktails.

Seafood Markets (Monterey County)

For visitors looking to pick their own sustainably caught seafood, try one of many seafood markets found in both Monterey and Moss Landing. Stop by local markets including [Phil's Fish Market & Eatery](#), [Bay Fresh Seafood](#) and [Sea Harvest Restaurant & Fish](#) to pick from a variety of local options. No kitchen to prepare your haul? [Café Fina](#) on Old Fisherman's Wharf offers a Fresh Catch special for those who prefer to fish (or shop) for themselves. To experience Monterey County fish at home, subscribe to [Real Good Fish](#).

Visitors are encouraged to travel responsibly in Monterey County by following all current health and safety guidelines and respecting the area's iconic landscapes by staying on trails and leaving no trace behind. For more information on how to explore Monterey County's culinary scene and to book a trip this fall, visit www.SeeMonterey.com.



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ABOUT MONTEREY COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

The Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau (Monterey County CVB) is a 501c6 non-profit organization that drives tourism for Monterey County. Tourism is the largest industry on the Monterey Peninsula and the second largest in the County. The MCCVB is a partnership of the hospitality community and local governments that aims to drive business growth through compelling marketing and targeted sales initiatives that maximize the benefits of tourism to its guests, members and the community. Travel spending in Monterey County was \$3.24 billion in 2019, representing a 3.3 percent increase from 2018. This \$3.24 billion in visitor spending supported 27,120 jobs, contributed \$296 million in total taxes and generated \$153 million local tax dollars that directly benefited the community. For more information, visit www.SeeMonterey.com and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

Media Contact

Rachel Dinbokowitz

Rachel@SeeMonterey.com

831-657-6434