

# California Cuisine

**C**ALIFORNIA CUISINE is characterized by fresh vegetables, seasonal ingredients, creativity, sustainability, and the fusion of different cuisines. As one of the largest and most populous states, California expresses its food culture in a variety of ways. The state is ingredient rich, producing most of the nation's produce. Certain local products—avocados, artichokes, fresh figs, and dates—are used by more Californians than anyone else in America.



## Objective:



Summarize California's cuisine, influences, common ingredients, classic dishes, and multicultural culinary fusions.

## Key Terms:



artichoke	dry monterey jack	salmon
avocado	dungeness crab	Santa Maria-style barbecue
avocado toast	farm-to-table	sardines
calamari	french dip	sourdough
California cuisine	fusion cuisine	sous vide
California roll	goat cheese	sun-dried tomatoes
California-style pizza	jai	sushi
cioppino	oyster cocktail	tri-tip
cobb salad	oysters	

## California's Unique Multicultural Cuisine

**California cuisine** is a style of cooking characterized by fresh vegetables, seasonal ingredients, creativity, sustainability, and the fusion of different cuisines. California cuisine cannot be labeled as traditional, such as Mexican, Italian, French, Chinese, or Japanese.

## A SUMMARY OF CALIFORNIA CUISINE AND ITS INFLUENCES

California cuisine is known for its strong attention to presentation, use of foods low in saturated fats, numerous fresh vegetables and fruits, lean meats, and seafood from the California coast. California's unique food culture arose as a result of its chefs creating new culinary trends over the last few decades, its rich history of several ethnic backgrounds, its diverse farming capabilities, and its Pacific Coast location.

### Location

California is a state on the Pacific Coast of the United States, bordered by Oregon (north), Nevada (east), Arizona (southeast), Baja California (Mexico, south of California), and the Pacific Ocean (west).

### North

Northern California's wine country inspires French, Italian, and Mediterranean food dishes, as well as Asian-inspired fare. Many of the restaurants, cafes, bistros, and grills use ingredients sourced from local growers and farmers' markets.

### Coast

The California coast, especially the northern and central coastal regions, is a source of seafood—a staple in the Californian diet.

### Central Valley

The agriculture diversity of California's Central Valley provides abundant fresh produce. The Central Valley is the sole U.S. producer of several fruits, vegetables, and nuts, including walnuts, olives, clingstone peaches, and sweet rice. There are two main river systems in the Central Valley, the Sacramento and the Joaquin.

- ◆ The San Joaquin Valley produces cotton, grapes, olives, potatoes, stone fruits, Asian vegetables, nuts, citrus, and berries.
- ◆ The Sacramento Valley produces rice, beans, row crops, fruits, cattle, corn, and grapes.

### Napa Valley

Napa Valley is unique due to its location between Central Valley and the coast. Only 2 percent of the world has a Mediterranean climate, and this small section of California is part of that percentage. It is one of the premier wine producers of the world. If there were such a thing as "craft wine," Napa would fit that description. With hundreds of locally and individually owned wineries, this area is one of the most-visited wine-tour destinations. There are more than 1000 wineries in Napa Valley (every expert gives a different number due to an influx of online "virtual wineries").

## Cultural Diversity

California's culture is western, with many Hispanic, Asian, and Italian influences. Californians accept and create popular global innovations and trends. They have a tremendous appreciation for food, artisans, farmers' markets, and organic farming. Health-conscious ideologies are popular nationwide, but many food experts believe it all started in California. California's population is as diverse as its produce. Due to the Atlantic Ocean, Ellis Island is famous for being a stopping point for Europeans immigrating to America. California sits on the Pacific Coast and the Mexican border. For this reason, Asian, Mexican, Central and South American, and Amerindians entered our country through California. This created a different melting pot, with different culinary ramifications, than those found in the East Coast, South, or Midwest.

### Spanish and Mexican

Spanish missionaries were the first group of immigrants who brought their agriculture, livestock, and culinary traditions to California. Prior to its statehood, Mexican ranchers, Native Americans, and Amerindians also inhabited sections of California. The 1848 Gold Rush brought another influx of immigrants from Mexico, Central America, Asia, and Europe. Mexican and Spanish food influences can be found statewide.

### Italian

Italians appear to have had a large impact on California cuisine. Olive oil and sun-dried tomatoes have long been two of California's most valued culinary ingredients. Today, California-inspired seafood and pasta dishes (made with artichokes, roasted garlic, wine, and fish) are featured in fancy restaurants—all having their roots in the Italian immigrants' home kitchens.

### Chinese

Chinese and other Asian immigrants also came to California in the 1800s. By 1850, 63,000 Chinese were in the United States, and 77 percent lived in California. (Source: PBS.) Over the years, many Asian ingredients have found their way into supermarkets. Asian sauces, such as sriracha (Thai-inspired hot sauce) and hoisin (a sweet and spicy Chinese sauce made from fermented soybeans, garlic, vinegar, sweet potato, and chiles), are common condiments found in many restaurants and supermarkets.

### Japanese

Japanese immigration to California started in the late 1800s. Most Japanese moved to Hawaii to work on sugar cane, coffee, and pineapple plantations. Once the United States incorporated Hawaii into the country, many Japanese fled the overcrowded island (according to the census, there were 60,000 Japanese in Hawaii by 1900) to come to America. Japanese culinary influences can be found in the popularity of sushi, teriyaki, ramen noodles, and tempura—now found everywhere in America, they were once only found in California.

## Geography and Topography

California's geography (including its long length) delivers a diverse topography that includes the Pacific Coast, several mountain ranges (such as the Cascades, the Transverse, and the Klamath), redwood forests, deserts (Mojave, Sonoran, and Colorado), and the Central Valley (a major U.S. agricultural area).

### The Coast

The western border of California is about 850 miles of ocean coast. Along the coastline, the fishing industry is busy all year. California cuisine relies greatly on the wealth of its local produce and seafood.

### Inland Farms

California has numerous microclimates that produce diverse agricultural products. For example, southern California grows sun-loving crops, such as avocados, oranges, and dates. In northern California's cool climate, farms produce artichokes, broccoli, and cauliflower. Central Valley farms produce tomatoes, grapes, plums (prunes), and walnuts. Napa Valley is world-famous for their vineyards.

## Climate

Though California is well known for warm weather, the large size of the state results in varied climates. They include moist temperate rainforests and foggy, cool bay areas (in the north), arid deserts (in the south), snowy regions (on north or central mountain peaks), and the balmy and temperate coastal south (year-round average temperatures in the 70s and 80s Fahrenheit).

## Food History

Again, California cuisine's emphasis is on the use of fresh, local ingredients that are often a daily acquisition at farmers' markets or a local farm. Menus are changed to accommodate the availability of in-season ingredients, and some restaurants create a new menu daily. California started the fusion of multicultural foods, and many chefs created menus that led to a shift in California's dining routines.



**FIGURE 1.** Californians have a tremendous appreciation for food, artisans, farmers' markets, and organic farming. Health-conscious ideologies are popular nationwide, but many food experts believe it all started in California.



## Helen Evans Brown

Helen Evans Brown was one of the first supporters and users of fresh, locally available foods in the 1950s and 1960s. She advocated using fruits and spices available in any cook's own neighborhood, as well as fresh local seafood. Brown became friends with famed James Beard after publishing her 1952 cookbook.

## Alice Waters

Alice Waters opened *Chez Panisse* restaurant in 1971 in Berkeley, California, and significantly contributed to the concept of California cuisine. With a nod to French cooking, the restaurant focused mainly on ingredients, and it quickly developed a supply network of direct relationships with local farmers, ranchers, and dairies (a.k.a. farm-to-table).

**Farm-to-table** is a culinary movement in which a restaurant's ingredients come directly from a specific, local farm instead of a store, a market, or a food distributor. Alice Waters's direct relationship with local farmers helped give smaller farms a steady income source. Today, farmers in these relationships grow produce or provide livestock specifically for individual restaurants.



**FIGURE 2.** Alice Waters's direct relationship with local farmers (farm-to-table cooking) helped give smaller farms a steady income source. Today, farmers in these relationships grow produce or provide livestock specifically for individual restaurants.

## Wolfgang Puck

Wolfgang Puck popularized gourmet California pizza. Initially, Alice Waters had started creating high-end pizzas in wood-burning ovens at her restaurant. Ed LaDou was a chef that worked at several restaurants, but tended to be misunderstood by management for his unusually-topped pizzas. After Wolfgang Puck was introduced to LaDou's pizzas, Puck hired him to become a "pizza chef" at his already famous restaurant, Spago. Instead of pepperoni, sausage, and mozzarella cheese, LaDou created pizzas with ricotta cheese, red peppers, pâté, and mustard. He would sometimes replace pepperoni and sausage with duck or salmon. Wolfgang Puck's stardom had the ability to transform these pizzas into a national conversation. Later, LaDou created the first menu for California Pizza Kitchen (CPK).

## Fusion

**Fusion cuisine** is a cooking style that melds two or more types of cultural food preparations, cooking techniques, and/or ethnic ingredients into a culinary mash-up. Fusion has

played a part in the innovation of many contemporary restaurant cuisines since the 1970s. Fusion cuisine is very popular in California.

- ◆ In San Diego, Bistro Kaz is a Japanese-Italian fusion restaurant. Diners can order past with uni, eel pizza, or a Japanese curry with meatballs. In the San Francisco Bay area, chain restaurant Sushirito has burritos stuffed with rice and sushi ingredients.
- ◆ Los Angeles's Chaya Restaurant serves wasabi mashed potatoes that are topped with crumbled bacon—a fusion of Asian and North American favorites.
- ◆ Tallarín saltado is a Peruvian fusion dish of beef with tomatoes, pasta, and chili sauce. It



**FIGURE 3.** L.A.'s Chaya Restaurant serves wasabi-mashed potatoes topped with crumbled bacon—a fusion of Asian and North American favorites. This image is a beef filet nestled on a bed of wasabi-mashed potatoes.



## BROADENING AWARENESS...

### AMAZING ASPECTS: Fisherman's Wharf

California, The Golden State, is full of fun places to visit! Fisherman's Wharf is located in San Francisco, and it is full of souvenir shops, wine bars, music, seafood vendors, and restaurants, all sitting on beautiful San Francisco Bay. Fisherman's Wharf is also home to the former Ghiradelli Chocolate Factory in Ghiradelli Square. YUM! Fisherman's Wharf got its name in the mid to late 1800s, when Italian immigrant fishermen came to the city. Fish is plentiful around the Wharf, and it is a great location for Dungeness crab. Find out more about the many tourism opportunities at this California landmark by visiting their website at <http://www.fishermanswharf.org>. Part of this area includes Pier 39. Go to <https://www.pier39.com/> for more information. For other California sights and sites, try going to Trip Advisor's website. Read the "Things to Do in California" section at <http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g28926-Activities-California.html>.



A separate section of Fisherman's Wharf, Pier 39 is the place to find chowder-filled sourdough bread bowls, sea lions, waterfront dining, street performers, live music, and views of Alcatraz Island and the Golden Gate Bridge.

combines Asian stir-fry techniques and sauces, Italian spaghetti, and traditional Peruvian preparations. (There are many saltados—pollo and lomo are two others.)

## Chinese New Year's

When an influx of Asian immigrants settled in the West, especially Northern California, their long-practiced Asian traditions came with them. One traditional holiday of special note is Chinese New Year. It is a time of family reunions, giving thanks, and looking to the future while remembering one's ancestors. When families gather, there are always special foods that are prepared. **Jai** (Buddha's delight) is a vegetarian dish of root and fibrous vegetables. Each ingredient has a special meaning and purpose. Many New Year's practices are based on traditions and superstitions.

- ◆ Vegetables and fruits (like tangerines and Chinese black mushrooms) represent good luck, happiness, and prosperity for the coming year.
- ◆ A whole fish symbolizes abundance.
- ◆ Chicken symbolizes prosperity. The head, tail, and feet of the chicken symbolize completeness.
- ◆ Uncut (long) noodles symbolize long life.
- ◆ Sweeping floors on Chinese New Year is not recommended. All of the good luck and fortune would be swept away.



**FIGURE 4.** Many Chinese New Year practices are based on traditions and superstitions. For example, specific vegetables prepared for celebrations represent good luck, happiness, and prosperity for the coming year. Which Chinese dishes do you recognize in this picture?

## COMMON FOOD ITEMS AND CLASSIC CUISINE

California chefs use a host of international ingredients in their cooking, including Chinese and Japanese sauces, Indian curry spices, Italian cheeses, and Mexican tortillas. Certain local ingredients manage to stand out among the rest.

### Spices and Herbs

In southern California restaurants, chefs are enhancing the flavor of food without increasing the foods' natural contents of calories, sugar, salt, and cholesterol. They are keeping foods lighter and healthier with the use of fresh products and herbs. California is the garlic capital of



the world. Along with garlic, basil, rosemary, thyme, lemongrass, cardamom, cilantro, curry, anise seed, fennel seed, miso paste, fish sauce, and multiple international spices (and sauces and pastes) make up this ever-expanding cuisine.

## Dairy

Since 1993, California has surpassed Wisconsin to become the leading dairy state. California has become the nation's largest milk producer, the leader in the number of milk cows, and the second-highest cheese producer. Milk is the top agricultural income earner in California. In the United States, California also ranks first in the production of butter, ice cream, and nonfat dry milk. According to the California State Department of Food and Agriculture, California is the number one producer of monterey jack and Hispanic-style cheeses. Monterey jack was created in the California missions, almost 200 years ago. Almost 60 percent of their cheese production is mozzarella. In 2016, California produced two-and-a-half billion pounds of cheese.



**FIGURE 5.** California is the garlic capital of the world, but they grow many other herbs as well. This organic herb bouquet contains basil, marjoram, parsley, rosemary, thyme, and sage.

## Dry Jack

**Dry monterey jack** (dry jack) is an aged, hard cheese that is firm (similar to Parmesan), nutty, and somewhat sweet. It is aged from ten months to four years. Dry jack has a pale yellow color with an assertive flavor. It becomes increasingly brittle with age. Dry jack (versus regular monterey jack) is a result of a San Francisco cheese wholesaler (D.F. DeBernardi), and his serendipitous overstock. After receiving too much monterey jack, he had his employees oil and salt the cheese wheels and place them in the basement. World War I began, and it became more and more difficult to import cheeses from Italy. Remembering the monterey jack, he was pleasantly surprised to find it hard, well-aged, dry, and delicious. Italian-Americans began substituting it for parmesan. Today, dry jack is used with salads, pasta, soups, tacos, casseroles, omelets, and soufflés.

## Goat Cheese

**Goat cheese** (fromage de chèvre in French) is a dairy product made from goat milk. Goat cheese became popular among Californians in simple dishes, such as salads and desserts. Humboldt Fog is a soft-ripened goat cheese created by Mary Keehn, founder of Cypress Grove (a goat cheese producer) in Humboldt County, California. (Humboldt Fog has a creamy, light, and mildly acidic flavor due to the ribbon of edible white vegetable ash throughout the wheel.) It was named for the local ocean fog that rolls in from Humboldt Bay.



## Coastal Ingredients

The coastal waters of the Pacific Ocean provide varied and abundant seafood options.

### Dungeness

**Dungeness crab** is a six-legged crustacean that inhabits cold water bottoms on the West Coast. It is prized for its sweet and tender meat. California restaurants in the Bay Area pair cracked dungeness crab dishes with crisp, domestic, napa valley wines. Home cooks can boil them simply, with white wine and aromatic herbs. Many Chinatown restaurants throughout California (most major cities have a district made up of Chinese descendants called Chinatown) stir-fry dungeness crab with ginger and green onions. It is also enjoyed in crab cakes or seafood salads.

### Calamari

**Calamari** is prepared squid—usually cut into rings, breaded, and deep-fried. A squid is a mollusk (an invertebrate related to the octopus) with ten tentacles. Calamari meat is firm and white, and it has a mild, slightly fishy flavor. Many preparations call for it to be soaked in milk, which softens the meat and lessens its fishy flavor.

### Salmon

A **salmon** is a ray-finned fish that is born in freshwater, travels to live in seawater, and then travels back to freshwater to reproduce. Salmon can be found in the North Atlantic, the Pacific, and the occasional large lake. Salmon dishes are popular due to the fish's tender, flaky meat and rich flavor. They are full of omega-3 fatty acids that help to reduce bad cholesterol. Salmon can be baked, broiled, fried, grilled, smoked, poached, and prepared sous vide. **Sous vide** (French for “under vacuum”) is a cooking technique in which food is placed in a plastic pouch with oil and spices, vacuum-sealed, placed in a water bath, and slowly cooked at a precise temperature. There are five types of salmon common in the Pacific Ocean: Chinook (a.k.a. king salmon, fatty with a deep-red flesh), Coho (a.k.a. silver salmon, medium red flesh), Sockeye (a.k.a. red salmon, dark red flesh), Chum (a.k.a. dog salmon, pale flesh), and Pink (a.k.a. humpback salmon, light pink flesh).

### Oysters

**Oysters** are saltwater bivalve mollusks with irregular shaped, sometimes sharp shells. Oysters can be eaten cooked or raw, and are regarded as a delicacy in many cultures. An **oyster cocktail**, a dish thought to have originated in San Francisco or Los Angeles in the 1800s, is a plate of raw oysters with a cocktail sauce. The sauce is made from a few basic condiments, including ketchup, horseradish, vinegar, and worcestershire sauce. Along with some salt and pepper, this dish is a popular San Francisco appetizer.

### Sardines

**Sardines** are small, herring-like, oily fish. Fresh sardines are often grilled, pickled, smoked, or preserved in tins.

## Sourdough Bread

**Sourdough** is a leaven made without commercial yeast; instead, it uses the naturally occurring yeast and bacteria found in flour. Sourdough is made by simply mixing flour and water. Usually it takes about seven days of adding more flour and water to the solution before the natural leavening is ready for use. For this reason, many bakers use a starter (leftover leavened dough or pre-made liquid). Since sourdough comes from the same naturally occurring bacteria found in yogurt, sourdough bread has a mildly sour taste. It also has better keeping qualities than other breads. Sourdough was popularized in San Francisco during the Gold Rush. It became so common in the mines that sourdough was adopted as a nickname for the gold miners (who were said to sleep with the starters on cold nights to keep the yeast active). The distinctive tanginess of the bread goes well with soups, stews, and seafood dishes. Since 1849, the Boudin Bakery in San Francisco has been renowned for its sourdough bread, and they claim San Francisco's "fog-cooled climate" is why no other city can reproduce their dough.

## Seasonal Produce

California chefs make great use of seasonal produce. It is common to find menu items available only at certain times of the year. Some restaurateurs promote or highlight seasonal ingredients. Farmers' markets and small-scale organic food stores have become extremely popular. California produces almost all of the country's almonds, apricots, dates, figs, kiwi, nectarines, olives, pistachios, prunes, and walnuts. Fresh produce can be broken down by season.

### Spring

Apricots, artichokes, asparagus, kumquats, baby leeks, snow peas, strawberries, and turnips are the most-harvested spring crops.

### Summer

In the summer, restaurants will advocate dishes made with avocados, beets, blueberries, cherries, corn, eggplants, Valencia oranges, and summer squash.

### Fall

Apples, dates, fennel, figs, grapes, asian pears, pomegranates, green tomatoes, and winter squash are all found within fall menus.

### Winter

Heartier vegetables and fruits found in winter include broccoli, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, celery, kiwi, pears, persimmons, and tangerines.

## California Grown Fruits and Vegetables

California is a top producer of most vegetables used in the United States. California produces 90 to 100 percent of American broccoli, artichokes, celery, avocados, garlic, kiwi, plums, and cauliflower. It produces 71 percent of spinach and 69 percent of carrots sold in the United States. (Source: Slate.) There are a few fruits, vegetables, and vegetarian dishes that stand out as being very “Californian.”

### Artichokes

An **artichoke** is a thistle-like plant whose leaves, stalk, immature flower buds, and (most recognizable) center heart are cultivated as a vegetable. Artichokes have thick, pointed leaves and are an excellent antioxidant source. Most artichoke consumers only use the heart in cooking, as the other parts can be dangerous to eat if prepared incorrectly. Californians have found ways to add artichokes to nearly any kind of dish. The state produces virtually all of the nation’s artichokes, half of which are consumed in California!

### Avocados

An **avocado** (or an alligator pear) is a fruit that has a green-to-purple color, has a rough leathery skin, and contains a light-green, oily, edible flesh. The body may be pear, egg, or spherical in shape. Southern California is home to many avocado orchards, where more than 90 percent of the nation’s avocados are harvested. Putting avocado slices in a sandwich is essentially a California trademark; although, this practice has crossed state lines into most of the country. Avocados are dearly loved and used by Californians, and they are frequently used for making guacamole dip.

### Avocado Toast

**Avocado toast** is an open sandwich of mashed avocado, salt, pepper, and citrus juice piled high on toast. There are many variations to avocado toast, including those topped with caviar, feta cheese, radishes, and more.

### Sun-Dried Tomatoes

**Sun-dried tomatoes** are chewy, dehydrated tomatoes that are dried or preserved by exposure to the sun. They have a distinctive, concentrated taste, and they are often packed in olive oil along with rosemary, basil, dried paprika, and garlic. Drying tomatoes in the sun is an old Sicilian method of preserving fruits at the end of the harvest season. Italian immigrants recognized the hot, dry California climates, and they quickly began their tradition of drying tomatoes. Sun-dried tomatoes turned into a profitable industry, and they became a California food craze in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Californians were adding them generously to pasta, pizza, salad, and many other things. The country soon followed suit.

## Barbecue

Barbecue has been a part of California cuisine since the 1840s, when Mexican ranchers cooked beef in barbecue pits. California's barbecue style is influenced by the southwestern regional styles found in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma. California barbecue can be grilled or smoked in a pit, and it can include chicken, beef ribs and tips, pork ribs, sausages, or steaks. Most barbecue sauces used in California are tomato-based, as with all other western states; however, Santa Maria Valley has their own style of barbecuing meat.

### Santa Maria-Style Barbecue

According to [santamariavalleybbq.com](http://santamariavalleybbq.com), “[**Santa Maria-style barbecue** is a slow-cook preparation of] traditional cuts of top-block sirloin and **tri-tip** steak, a triangular bottom sirloin cut that originated in the Santa Maria Valley. The meat is rolled in a mixture of salt, pepper and garlic salt before being barbecued over coals of red oak, a native local oak species that contributes a smoky, hearty flavor. The classic Santa Maria-style Barbecue menu includes fresh salsa, grilled french bread dipped in sweet melted butter, tossed green salad, and slow-cooked pinto beans. Pintos are small pink beans [that] originated in the valley. The origins of Santa Maria-style barbecue date back to the mid 1800s, when local rancheros would host Spanish-style barbecues each spring for their vaqueros, or cowboys, as well as family and friends.”



**FIGURE 6.** Tri-tip is a triangular cut of beef from the bottom sirloin that can be grilled, baked, braised, or roasted. It's a classic California cut of meat that restaurants and many backyard barbecue cooks still use today.

### California-Style Pizza

**California-style pizza** is a single-serving, thin crust, gourmet pizza prepared with non-traditional pizza ingredients, such as artichokes, barbecued meat, goat cheese, chunky roasted vegetables, or mustard. A popular California-style pizza is Thai-inspired, with chicken, a peanut or chili sauce, bean sprouts, and shaved carrots. Wolfgang Puck's restaurant first popularized this pizza style, but it was later brought to the masses by restaurants such as California Pizza Kitchen.



## Sushi

**Sushi** is cold vinegar-soaked rice topped with other ingredients (usually seafood). America's sushi craze began in California. A **California roll** is a sushi recipe that can vary, but it will always include avocado (the primary ingredient), cucumber, and crabmeat. More than one chef claim to have created the California roll, but, regardless, it is a quintessential example of California fusion cuisine.



FIGURE 7. A California roll (or California maki) is one of the most popular sushi rolls in America, especially for those who may not like raw fish.

## California Originals

Many famous restaurants, dishes, and drinks originated in California. With unique Hollywood connections, California cuisine has the ability to reach a national level quickly.

### French Dip

The **french dip** (a.k.a. beef dip) is a hot sandwich of thinly sliced roast beef piled generously on a french roll (or a baguette) that has been dipped in beef au jus (French for “with the juice”). It is usually served with extra au jus on the side. Two Los Angeles restaurants that opened in 1908 claim to have created the sandwich, but regardless of the truth, the french dip is now an American classic.



FIGURE 8. The french dip is an American classic that originated in Los Angeles. Despite its name, this American specialty is completely unknown in France—the name seems to refer to the style of bread alone.

### The Brown Derby

The Brown Derby was a famous restaurant chain in Los Angeles and Hollywood starting in the 1940s and 1950s. Besides being a hotspot for the actors who filmed on nearby filming lots, the Brown Derby has been linked to two American classics. Through a licensing deal, Disney has the only remaining Brown Derby restaurants at park locations.

- ◆ **Cobb Salad:** The **Cobb salad** is a main dish consisting of chopped greens, diced chicken (boiled, grilled, or roasted breast), crispy, crumbled bacon, chunks of cheddar or bleu

cheese (often Roquefort), chopped hard-boiled eggs, diced avocado, brunoised chives, and a red wine vinaigrette (sometimes chopped tomatoes and/or black olives are added). Bob Cobb (owner of the Brown Derby) is the inventor of this salad. His original recipe included chicory, watercress, and french dressing. The cobb salad's Los Angeles roots make it a California must-try.

- ◆ **Monte Cristo:** The monte cristo is an American version of the French croque monsieur, which was a sandwich covered in bechamel and toasted under a broiler. The American version, which first showed up in a 1949 Brown Derby recipe

book, has many varieties. In the original, three buttered slices of white bread sandwiched swiss cheese, ham, and chicken. In all versions, it is then dipped in an egg batter (sometimes sweetened, like french toast) and either deep-fried in oil or pan-fried in butter.



**FIGURE 9.** The cobb salad's Los Angeles roots make it a must-try Californian dish. Restaurateur Bob Cobb (of the Brown Derby Restaurant) was the inventor of this salad.

## Cioppino

**Cioppino** is a tomato-and-wine-based broth filled with fresh Pacific seafood. This fish stew was originated by Italian fishermen in the area now known as Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco. They used leftover seafood scraps to make a stew. Today, it is traditionally made from the catch of the day. In San Francisco, this would include a combination of any locally-sourced dungeness crab, clams, shrimp, scallops, squid, mussels, or fish. The seafood is then combined with fresh tomatoes and herbs in a wine sauce. Cioppino is typically served with toasted bread, either local sourdough or toasted baguette.



**FIGURE 10.** Cioppino, a fish stew, originated on Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco. Cioppino is typically served with toasted bread, either local sourdough or toasted baguette.



## Ice Cream

William Dreyer had an idea for a “rocky road” ice cream recipe. He went to Joseph Edy, who already had candy shops, and they partnered to create Edy’s Grand Ice Cream in 1928. After years of working together, they dissolved their partnership in 1947. Today, there still remains the two separate brands, Dreyer’s and Edy’s. (In 2016, Forbes Magazine named Dreyer’s as number seven on the list of top-selling ice cream brands in the world.)

## Popsicles

Frank Epperson, who was an 11-year-old San Franciscan, invented popsicles in 1905. He left a fruit drink (with a stirrer in it) outside on a cold night. Loving his accidentally frozen treat, Epperson obtained a patent for what he originally called an Epsicle. He also invented the twin popsicle, fudgsicle, creamsicle and dreamsicle. (In 2016, Forbes Magazine named Popsicle as number 14 on the list of top-selling ice cream (or a frozen treat) brands in the world.)

## Fortune Cookies

In San Francisco, one of the most well-known foods came from Asian-American ingenuity—the fortune cookie. Two immigrants, one Japanese (Makoto Hagiwara, landscape designer in San Francisco) and one Chinese (David Jung, Los Angeles founder of the Hong Kong Noodle Company), claimed to have invented the fortune cookie in 1914 (Hagiwara) and 1918 (Jung). No matter who is correct, the worldwide explosion of fortune cookies didn’t happen until Shuck Yee (Oakland) invented a fortune cookie folding machine that allowed for mass production in 1973. (This happened after Edward Louie, of San Francisco’s Lotus Fortune Cookie Company, had created the machine which automatically sticks the paper in the cookie.)



**FIGURE 11.** Two immigrants, one Japanese (Makoto Hagiwara, landscape designer in San Francisco) and one Chinese (David Jung, Los Angeles founder of the Hong Kong Noodle Company), claimed to have invented the fortune cookie in 1914 (Hagiwara) and 1918 (Jung).

## Pink’s Hot Dogs

Paul and Betty Pink started out with a hot dog cart they bought with borrowed money in 1939. They rented a lot for their cart at 15 dollars a month. When the landlord was going to raise the rent, Paul and Betty convinced a bank to lend them enough money to buy the lot. This is the same lot that a Pink’s hot dog stand sits on today. Next to major film studios in Hollywood, this California icon has been famous for almost 80 years. Now with locations all over the country, Pink’s sells hamburgers, actor- and movie-themed hot dogs, Yoo-hoos, and Orange, Grape, and Strawberry Crush.

## In-N-Out Burger

In 1948, Harry Snyder opened a drive-thru hamburger stand. Later that year, he worked in his garage building the first two-way speaker box. From that moment, everything in fast food

changed, and In-N-Out is still one of the most popular burger chains in the Los Angeles area (with many stars going to the Hollywood location before or after red-carpet events). One of their most popular menu items is “Animal Style” french fries. They top hand-cut fries with cheese, secret sauce, and grilled onions.

### Egg McMuffin

Herb Peterson owned a McDonald's franchise in Southern California and created this breakfast sandwich in the early 1970s.

### Drinks

Many alcoholic drinks, beer companies, and colas originated in California.

- ◆ Mai Tai: Created at Trader Vic's restaurant by Victor Bergeron in Oakland, 1944, this alcoholic cocktail was inspired by Bergeron's friends visiting from Tahiti.
- ◆ Martini: One of the most famous drinks in the world was originally called the Martinez, after the city of Martinez in the Bay Area. People used to order the drink in the early 1860s at the Occidental Hotel in San Francisco before taking a ferry over to Martinez. (Different people claim ownership of this drink, but the earliest recipe shows up in Jerry Thomas's “The Bar-Tender's Guide” of 1887. He was a renowned bartender that had worked in San Francisco Bay Area bars, before moving back to the East Coast and writing this guide.)
- ◆ Beer: Many craft beers are located in California, but the most recognizable include Anchor Steam, Sierra Nevada, and Lagunitas.
- ◆ Shasta: The Shasta Mineral Springs Company opened in 1889 with bottled mineral water at the base of Mount Shasta (part of the Cascades in Northern California). They eventually began making the soft drinks that are seen around the world today.
- ◆ Crush Soda: Orange Crush was invented by Neil C. Ward, a Californian chemist, in 1911.

### Summary:



California cuisine is known for its strong attention to presentation, use of foods low in saturated fats, numerous fresh vegetables and fruits, lean meats, and seafood from the California coast. California's unique food culture arose as a result of the culinary movements of the last few decades, the mixing of several ethnic backgrounds, and its Pacific Coast location.

Californians have a tremendous appreciation for food artisans, farmers' markets, farm-to-table relationships, and organic farming. This health-conscious ideology is nationwide, but many food experts believe it all started here in California. You may not think of California as a farm state. Yet, California is not only the leader in dairy production, but also grows 65 to 100 percent of almost all fruits, vegetables, and nuts used in the United States.

Fusion cuisine is a cooking style that melds two or more types of cultural food preparations, cooking techniques, and/or ethnic ingredients into a culinary mash-up. Fusion has played a part in the innovation of many contemporary restaurant cuisines since the 1970s. Fusion cuisine is very popular in California.



With chefs like Alice Waters and Wolfgang Puck, restaurants like the California Pizza Kitchen and the Brown Derby, and cultural influences from the west (Pacific Islands and Asia) and the south (Latin America and Spanish explorers), California is one of the leaders in the introduction of foods, dishes, and cooking styles (from the nineteenth century inventions of sourdough and the Martini, to the twentieth century additions of dry jack and farm-to-table dining).

## Checking Your Knowledge:



1. Why are fresh and local ingredients so important to the people and chefs of California?
2. Describe the role California's geography plays in their cuisine.
3. Describe how fusion cuisine is created.
4. Describe the role immigrants played in California cuisine.
5. Name five common California cuisine dishes.

## Expanding Your Knowledge:



Aside from the region's popular food items and dishes known around the country, California has a larger presence in the culinary world. An e-unit cannot adequately portray all that California cuisine has to offer you. Research famous restaurants and other major culinary trends to get a "feel" for the modern role California plays in America's culinary journey. Begin your research with the Web Links videos. Two of the videos also illustrate food guides, travel opportunities, and the various food trends throughout the state.

## Web Links:



### California Food and Travel Guide Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLaTwsQi6BOg5CrBP-ib6Vh3SZtnbzi5Ur>

### Eight California Food Trends

<http://www.visitcalifornia.com/attraction/8-california-food-trends>

### Golden State Grub

<https://www.foodnetwork.com/restaurants/packages/best-food-in-america/photos/what-to-eat-in-california>

### San Francisco Sourdough

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eabnJyDP23Y>

### What to Eat at Fisherman's Wharf

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-jloGqHB8I>