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Regional Cuisine Of The United States: California–Style Cooking

By Kirsten Hawkins

The great state of California carries some of the most rich aspects of American culture, from the

pioneers to the gold rush to quality cuisine. Bordered by the Pacific Ocean, Oregon, Nevada, Arizona, and Baja, classic California food can take on many forms. The unique cuisine of California is earmarked by a tradition of freshness and home grown quality, calling forth to mind fresh leafy green salads, fruit, and organic just–about–anything. California is one of the major agricultural centers of the United States. The state of California, as one of the nation's leading producers of fresh produce, has an extreme abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables. When it comes to food in California, a lot of the focus is shifted to quality and nutritiousness rather than cost, taste, or anything else. While this does not necessarily mean that California cuisine tastes badly, it is not for everyone. Those who prefer a heavier, fried or battered food would have better luck sampling some other type of cuisine. Fruits and nuts account for at least a quarter of California's farm income, and vegetables in themselves account for another 25 percent. This includes the famous grapes, oranges, nectarines, peaches, nectarines, and avocados that California is famous for producing, as well as almonds, pistachios, and walnuts. Organic food, which is grown without the aid of pesticides, insecticides, and other potentially harmful additives, is also an extremely popular aspect of California cuisine. Don't get it confused, though; contrary to popular belief, California food is not all about grapes, nuts, yogurt, and organic orange juice. The taste of California is, of course, highly accented by its major influence from the south—of course, Mexico. Tex–Mex or Baja–style cooking plays an integral role in good old–fashioned California Cuisine. Mexican–style food is part of the way of life in California; with the dense Mexican–American population in California (about 34.3 percent of the total number of California residents), a great California chef can put a south of the border twist on just about anything! El Pollo Loco is a fast–food restaurant very commonly seen in California. El Pollo Loco, which translates into The Crazy Chicken, specializes in marinated, grilled chicken in tacos, burritos, or alone. El Pollo Loco is an excellent representation of southern California's obsession with Baja–style "Mexican" food. There are some restaurants in California, even, that boast to serve the "classic Californian cuisine." The California Pizza Kitchen is a chief example of this type of restaurants. The California Pizza Kitchen has more than 180 locations all over the United States and the world. On July 5 the company even opened a CPK in Shanghai, China. They specialize in making food authentically "California–style." The Pizza Kitchen specializes in healthier foods; they mainly serve many different kinds of salad and pizza. All of their pizzas are specially prepared in an open flame pizza oven, conforming to the California

trend of healthier meal preparation and eating.

Kirsten Hawkins is a food and nutrition expert specializing the Mexican, Chinese, and Italian food. Visit

<http://www.food-and-nutrition.com/>

for more information on cooking delicious and healthy meals.

French is Back: The New Cuisine is Trendy and French

By Dylan Miles

French food is back with a vengeance. French cuisine has evolved into a less pretentious version of its older self. The new French cuisine, or Nouvelle Cuisine, is more accessible and comes in many varieties, including bistro food, brasserie style and the ultimate in luxury food, haute cuisine.

French cuisine is fresh and creative, and a lot more simple than it was in the past. French cuisine is often experimental, but the of the food continues to skyrocket. Basically, the French have gone back to their regional roots and brought a modern version of traditional French cooking. Unlike the sophisticated plates of the past, French food now fits into the public's desire for "real food". But real food is not just about traditional mum's-cooking type of dishes. People want traditional foods and flavors with a distinct contemporary feel. People want the old packaged and presented in a new way. The new French cuisine is exactly this.

Frog's legs are still being served in abundance, but the new French cuisine is also influenced by what is going on outside of France. French food is now transformed by influences from the South American, Asian, Italian and American cuisines. Chefs creating the new French cuisine are incorporating ideas picked up from their travels around the world. These days chefs are knowledgeable of the characteristics of cuisines around the world and can use elements of various cultures in creating their own new cuisine.

The result? The new French cuisine is creative and classical. The new French cuisine is both traditional and contemporary.

Dylan Miles, journalist, and website builder, lives in Texas. He is the owner and co–editor of

<http://www.foodgarden.info>

on which you will find a longer, more detailed version of this article.



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