

Golden Forks in the Golden State

Food & Beverage

Meeting Planning

BY PAUL LOVE ON NOVEMBER 03, 2015

Northern California leads the way for fresh foodie ideas

There's a lot to love about Northern California right now. Great venues? Check. Innovative tech to help events run smooth? Definitely. Comfortable climate year-round? Yep.

What might be most exciting is the region's place at the forefront of the country's culinary scene.

San Francisco was recently named "the best food city in the country right now" by Bon Appetit magazine, much to the delight of restaurateurs and diners alike. "We are very excited to have our city's culinary excellence recognized," says Joe D'Alessandro, president and CEO of San Francisco Travel Association.

D'Alessandro attributes much of the great food to what he labels "the bounty of Northern California." The region has a fierce focus on locally sourced foods, and everything from fruits and vegetables to nuts and meats comes from local farms and ranches and, of course, the Pacific Ocean.

Nicole Rogers, director of Sacramento Convention and Visitors Bureau's farm-to-fork program, echoes the sentiment. "Farm-to-fork continues to generate positive national attention for our region and is growing at a rapid pace," she says.

From Santa Cruz to San Jose and San Francisco to Sacramento, meetings and events have never been as delicious as they are in Northern California.

Hands-On in Napa Valley

No exploration of Northern California is complete without a visit to Napa Valley's wine country. Just about any of the wineries in the region is good for a rich tasting experience, and many offer exciting activities involving wine, food and more for groups.

Cakebread Cellars hosts cooking classes for groups that have attendees cooking in a variety of styles, including comfort foods, seafood and French cuisine—with wine tastings and property tours, of course.

Raymond Vineyards' Winemaker for a Day program (above) puts attendees in charge of their own private blending room. Blend and bottle red wine to take home, or order an entire case of your own concoction.

Oxbow Public Market is a hub for foodie fun in downtown Napa. Groups can arrange hands-on classes in spice blending and tastings of cured meats in the 40,000-square-foot market.

The Culinary Institute of America at Greystone is a must for foodies in the region. The castle-like building is an awe-inspiring site, and groups can arrange tours and cooking classes where some of the top talents in the country learned their trade.

San Francisco

Moscone Center

Three-story convention center in the heart of the city; 700,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space; 256,225 sq. ft. of meeting space in 106 meeting rooms; 123,000 sq. ft. of prefunction lobby space.

Oceano Hotel & Spa

Located on Half Moon Bay; 20 minutes from San Francisco International Airport (SFO); 8,000 sq. ft. of meeting space, including five function rooms; Oceano Coastal Spa offers more than 30 treatments.

The Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco

23,000 sq. ft. of meeting and event space, including 9,360-square-foot ballroom; Parallel 37 serves globally inspired California cuisine; JCB Tasting Lounge offers luxury wine tastings.