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TEXAS, MEMPHIS, KANSAS CITY...AND SANTA MARIA?

California's BBQ Capital Proves That Bigger Isn't Always Better

Santa Maria, CA—Can a bucolic wine country destination on California's Central Coast really rival the big boys of regional American barbecue such as Texas, Memphis and Kansas City?

For those in the know, the answer is "Absolutely!"—thanks to Santa Maria Style Barbecue, the legendary sauce-free preparation based on native ingredients and methods in the Santa Maria Valley in northern Santa Barbara County.

Santa Maria Style Barbecue is no stranger to accolades. *Sunset Magazine* once declared it "the best barbecue in the world." The book *Renewing America's Food Traditions* called it "a mainstay of California's culinary heritage." Famed Chef Bobby Flay showcased it on his Food Network television show *BBQ with Bobby Flay*.

Nevertheless, many foodies remain unaware of this remarkable barbecue style that delivers big, distinctive flavors despite its relatively simple preparation. So where to begin your Santa Maria Style Barbecue journey? The Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce has some suggestions:

- **Order the complimentary Santa Maria Style Barbecue booklet.** This 14-page booklet showcases the history, methods and recipes of Santa Maria Style Barbecue. It is available on request by calling the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce at (800) 331-3779. It can also be viewed, printed and downloaded at www.SantaMariaVisitor.com.
- **Visit the Official Santa Maria Style Barbecue Blog at www.santamariavalleybbq.com.** The regularly updated blog features how-to videos, recipes and tips, as well as information on purveyors and restaurants that specialize in Santa Maria Style Barbecue.
- **Experience California's Barbecue Capital.** Numerous restaurants in the Santa Maria Valley specialize in Santa Maria Style Barbecue, including Shaw's Steakhouse, the Far Western Tavern and The Hitching Post, all of which have been owned by the same families for more than 50 years. You can also enjoy Santa Maria Style Barbecue foods to-go at local markets such as Dino's Deli and Old Town Market.

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. Over time, the unique qualities of these homegrown cookouts became known as Santa Maria Style Barbecue.

The traditional cuts of Santa Maria Style Barbecue are top-block sirloin and tri-tip, a triangular bottom sirloin cut that was first popularized 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.

For information about Santa Maria Style Barbecue as well as local lodging, wine tasting and more, visit www.santamaria.com or call the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce & Visitor and Convention Bureau at (800) 331-3779.

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