



AUGUST NEWSLETTER

The Crème de la Crème of Culinary Travel

“They say the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach, and the same can be said for understanding another culture,” says Andy Alpine, Co-Publisher of **Specialty Travel Index** (www.specialtytravel.com). “If you want to really understand another culture, eat their food and drink their wine. Or better yet, learn to cook it.”

Culinary travel is a growing trend, and with good reason. You can have your gâteau and eat it too. And when you return home, you can make it for your friends.

From paella in Valencia, the champagnes of Champagne, the olive oils of Tuscany, to the cabernets of Napa Valley, there are opportunities to eat, drink, and travel worldwide. It’s just a matter of selecting the where in the world you want to cook, and just how much you want to get your apron dirty. Some trips sprinkle in a few cooking demonstrations, a stroll through a farmers market, a bit of wine tasting and some really good eating; others involve in-depth training that would make a chef proud.

And, as always, **SpecialtyTravel.com** helps you find exactly the trip you want with drop down menus that select the best tour operators for an unforgettable culinary experience. Here’s a taste of some of the food and wine travel experiences gourmands will find on www.specialtytravel.com :

Culinary Delights of Andalusia

Andalusia boasts culinary meccas like Granada, Córdoba, Málaga and Jaén, but it also has some little known gems like Iznájar is a small hilltop Moorish village overlooking a romantic turquoise-coloured lake. Active Gourmet Holidays bases their Culinary

Delights of Andalusia in *Finca Las Encinas*, a 150-year old Andalusian farmhouse with breathtaking views and surrounding olive trees. Andalusian food is characterized by its vibrant colors, rich aromas, and full of sensual and complex flavor—and, of course, olive oil. Day trips include Moorish castles, olive oil and sherry tasting, and the unforgettable Alhambra Palace and garden. Evenings are reserved for hands-on cooking demonstrations—followed by dinner. [Active Gourmet Holidays](#)

Barging in Burgundy

There can't be much better than gliding along the beautiful, intimate waterways of Central France--from the well known scenic Burgundy Canal and the pretty Nivernais Canal, to the celebrated 'Côte D'Or' (Golden Coast) of southern Burgundy, Canal du Centre, and the River Saône on a luxury barge. Winding past hidden medieval villages, wooded valleys, and gentle plains, you'll always eat and drink well on these cruises, but the Barge Company offers some enticing 'Barge and Cook' or 'Wine Connoisseur' cruises that will send guests home with souvenirs like excellent, little known French wines from small wineries en route and the recipes and knowledge to recreate some of the delicacies served on board. [The Barge Company](#)

Pubbing through Britain

The British Connection creates pub tours to the best of British and Irish pubs, carefully chosen with their clients tastes in mind. If you want to visit the most historic hostelrys, visit the pubs by canoe, kayak, car or coach, or taste the most unusual brews available, they will put you on the pub crawl of a lifetime. In Dublin, the British Connection can arrange a tour of music and literary events in pubs. [The British Connection](#)

Cucina Toscana

It's hard to be interested in both food and travel without harboring a hunger for a trip to Tuscany. The Tuscan countryside is gorgeous and the food is second to none. Palio Tours offers a week-long Tuscan cooking experience (you can add on a couple days in Florence or Rome). It includes 3 lessons (and the chance to eat the fruits of your labor), a visit to an olive farm, and day trips to Chianti towns like Radda and Castellina or some

of the southern Tuscan neighbors like Pienza and Montepulciano.

[Palio Tours](#)

France for Discerning Oenophiles

Imagine gazing over 1000 barrels of a renowned First Growth wine . . . tasting by candlelight in vaulted 12th century cellars . . . staying at a private Classified Growth chateau as their exclusive guests . . .or walking through a Grand Cru vineyard with a world-famous winemaker. These are the kinds of experiences that are hard to arrange on your own, but can spark the trip of a lifetime for wine lovers. French Wine Explorers Bordeaux tours give you the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to taste at some of the world's most famous chateaux, including First Growths like Chateaux Margaux, Latour or Lafite Rothschild. At these exclusive estates you'll be welcomed for private VIP tours and tastings. Learn from insiders about the people, power and politics that have shaped Bordeaux's past and continue to influence it today. Along the way, you'll enjoy first-class accommodations, and sumptuous meals prepared by the region's best chefs at fabulous Michelin-starred restaurants. For wine lovers, it just doesn't get any better than this.

[French Wine Explorers](#)

Discover the Cradle of Paella

Led by Gerry Dawes, a well-known writer and expert in Spanish food and wine, Epicurean Ways trips through Valencia and Alicante give travelers the chance to meet the chefs and pastry makers responsible for the region's renaissance. These regions of Spain have been called the "land of 1000 rice dishes", but paella is not the only thing on the menu. Guests discover both traditional and avant garde cuisine, and the traditional sweet dessert mistela wines made from moscatel grapes and Fondillón, a monastrell-based *vino rancio* (a purposely oxidized, slightly sweet wine)—once nearly extinct. Winery visits, cooking classes and a saffron demonstration are all included. [Epicurean](#)

[Ways](#)

French Culinary Adventures

Julia Childs discovered her lifelong passion for cooking in France, and she wasn't the

first—or the last—chef to be inspired by the French palate. Owned by a French native, Enchanted France LLC will help plan the ultimate epicurean escape in France. If you want cooking classes from a master chef in Provence (or in a Paris apartment), a private guide for a Loire Valley Châteaux and Wine Tasting, or a Champagne Escapade, Enchanted France can arrange it for a real insider's eating experience.

[Enchanted France](#)

Calistoga Sip & Cycle

This is a dream trip for the active wine lover. Getaway Adventures offers day or weekend wine and bike trips. On the weekend trip, you'll spend Saturday cycling the Calistoga area, 20 miles of easy and flat terrain, visiting small family wineries like Chateau Montelena, Vincent Arroyo and Frank Family Vineyards. Afterwards, soothe away tired muscles with a mud bath with eucalyptus steam and blanket wrap followed by a 30-minute massage. On Sunday, you'll head over to Sonoma County for a 17-mile loop in the Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys. Quiet, peaceful, virtually traffic free; this enchanting loop takes you by wineries like Lambert Bridge, Quivira, Dry Creek, and Preston. You don't even need to bring a bike or helmet—they're provided.

[Getaway Adventures](#)

HAPPY TRAVELING