

A group of approximately ten people, including men and women of various ages, are seated around a long table covered with a white tablecloth. They are all smiling and holding up glasses of red wine, making a toast. The table is set with several plates of food, including what appears to be salads and small dishes, along with water glasses and a bottle of wine. The background is filled with the silhouettes of large, mature trees, and the sun is low in the sky, creating a warm, golden glow that filters through the branches. The overall atmosphere is one of a relaxed, communal outdoor meal.

A CURATED GUIDE TO FARMS, VINEYARDS & SEASONAL
COOKING

Under the Ojai Sun

Chef William's Farm, Vineyard & Market Guide

*Beneath the pink sunsets and citrus-scented air, Ojai is a valley shaped by
farmers, winemakers, and artisans who tend the land with devotion.*

CHEF WILLIAM ROBERTSON · OJAI, CALIFORNIA

WELCOME

From Chef William

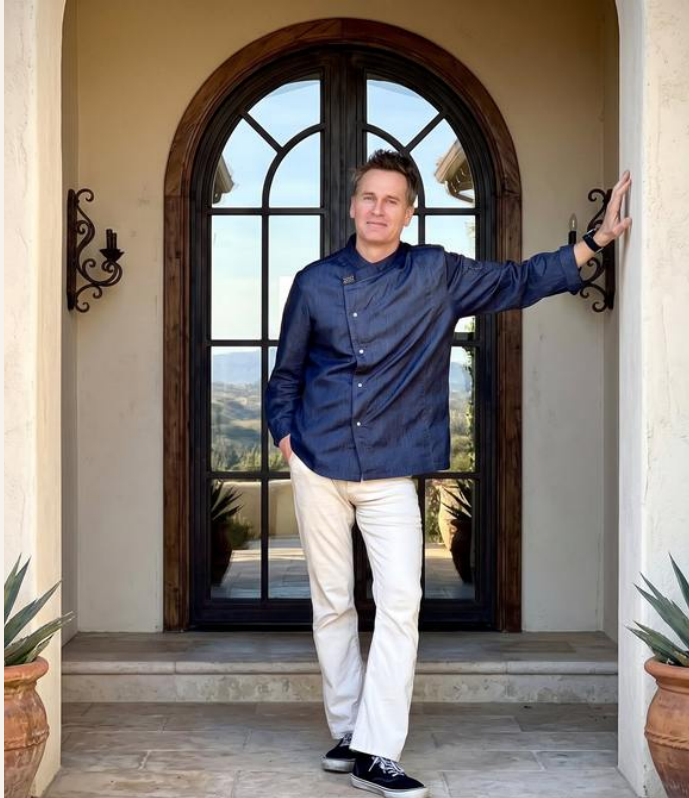
Under the Ojai sun, the days move a little slower. The light lingers on citrus groves, bees wander through wildflowers, and the valley seems to breathe with the orchards, vineyards, and gardens that surround us. This place is not just where I cook — it is my pantry, my inspiration, and my teacher.

As a farm-to-table chef, my work begins long before anyone sits down at the table. It starts in the soft dirt of local farms, in the shade of old trees at the market, and in conversations with the people who coax flavor from this land year after year.

May this guide lead you to new flavors, meaningful conversations, and meals that stay with you long after the plates are cleared. Welcome to Ojai.



Chef William in the olive grove — prepping, plating, and letting the valley do the rest.



PART ONE

Ojai on the Land

The valley's seasons, its farmers' markets, and the farms that have shaped twenty years of cooking.

THE VALLEY YEAR

Four Seasons, One Valley

Ojai is a true grower's valley — long warm days, cool nights, and a Mediterranean climate that keeps something in season almost year-round. Let the

season be your compass.



SPRING · MARCH – MAY

Citrus blossoms & tender herbs

◆ *Ojai Pixie tangerines · citrus blossoms*

◆ *Pea shoots · fava · spring garlic*

◆ *Borage · nasturtium · viola*

◆ *Asparagus · fennel · young leeks*

◆ *Strawberries · early stone fruit*



SUMMER · JUNE – AUGUST

Abundant · vivid · sun-saturated

◆ *Heirloom tomatoes · corn · peppers*

◆ *Summer squash · zucchini blossoms*

◆ *Stone fruit · figs · melons · berries*

◆ *Basil · bronze fennel · tarragon*

◆ *Avocado · cucumber · eggplant*



AUTUMN · SEPTEMBER –
NOVEMBER

Jewel-toned · roasted · deep



WINTER · DECEMBER –
FEBRUARY

◆ *Pomegranate · persimmon · quince*

◆ *Delicata squash · pumpkin · yam*

◆ *Grapes · apples · pears · late figs*

◆ *Wild mushrooms · truffle · sage*

◆ *Blood orange · mandarin · walnut*

Citrus-gold · root-deep · preserved

◆ *Blood orange · Meyer lemon · grapefruit*

◆ *Avocado · olive · fennel · celery root*

◆ *Hardy winter greens · beets · parsnip*

◆ *Dried herbs · preserved citrus · nuts*

◆ *Rosemary · thyme · bay · black garlic*

WHERE TO SHOP

Farmers Markets & Farmstands

The markets are the heartbeat of Ojai. This is where you feel the valley's seasons most clearly — in the colors of each week's abundance.

Thursday · Ojai Community Farmers Market

EVERY THURSDAY · 414 E OJAI AVENUE · 3:00 – 7:00 PM

A golden-hour market: sunlight through crates of greens, live music, and locals picking up produce for dinner. Organic growers including Frecker Farms and Earthtrine, along with artisans from across the region.

Sunday · Ojai Certified Farmers' Market

EVERY SUNDAY · 300 E MATILIJA STREET · 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

A weekly ritual behind the Arcade. Peak-season produce, local jams, honey, olive and walnut oil, free-range eggs, flowers, bread, and prepared foods. Half the valley shops here before noon.

CHEF'S SHOPPING PHILOSOPHY

Color and weight. Produce that looks vibrant and feels heavy for its size — firm greens, glossy peppers, citrus with a little give.

Smell. Melons, herbs, and stone fruits that are fragrant even at arm's length mean the flavor is ready.

Conversation. I always ask farmers what's tasting best this week. Their answers become the starting point for my menus.

Choose one ingredient that speaks to you — a bunch of basil, a basket of Pixies, a head of lettuce — and build everything around it.



A harvest dinner at golden hour — long table, local wine, the Ojai hills glowing behind.

THE FARMS

Featured Farms of Ojai

These are the growers whose work has most deeply shaped the way I cook over twenty years. Each farm has its own character, its own philosophy, its own flavor. When you cook with their ingredients, you carry a piece of this landscape back to your table.

BD Dautch — The Organic Alchemist

Robert "BD" Dautch has been farming in Ojai for nearly forty years — one of Southern California's original certified organic growers. Known by many as the "Organic Alchemist," BD turns soil into extraordinary flavor. His farm produces over 100 varieties of heirloom crops, with a particular focus on culinary herbs so diverse and vibrant they've made Earthtrine famous among chefs across the region.

Signature crops: 20+ varieties of culinary herbs including Thai basil, lemon basil, chervil, lovage, chamomile, and tarragon; heirloom salad greens; 10 varieties of figs; mixed vegetables; citrus; edible flowers.

Where to find them: Sunday Ojai Certified Farmers' Market. Earthtrine also supplies more than 20 restaurants in the region.

At home: toss Earthtrine cherry tomatoes with their own olive oil, torn basil, and a flake of sea salt. Nothing more is needed — the tomato is the dish.



Earthtrine Farm — burrata with fresh herbs and oil. Fig porridge in morning light.

Sixteen Acres Above the Ventura River

Steve Sprinkel has been farming since 1976, and Rancho Del Pueblo — his 16-acre certified organic farm on the hillside above the Ventura River — is the living heartbeat of Ojai's farm-to-table culture. Steve grows the produce for his market, his CSA program, and for the community that has gathered around his table for decades. A poet-philosopher of the soil, he's as likely to answer a farming question with a limerick as with a lesson.

Signature crops: Beets, head and leaf lettuce, summer vegetables, greens, carrots, herbs, seasonal succession planting of 15–20 crops.

Visit: The Farmer and the Cook — Steve's organic café and market at 339 W El Roblar Drive — is where his farm comes to your plate. An Ojai institution since 2001. Run by Steve and his wife Olivia Chase, it's the place locals shop for produce, grab a smoothie, and feel the pulse of the valley.

At home: make Steve's simple approach your own — choose one thing at the market that looks extraordinary and build the whole meal around it.

John Fonteyn & Elizabeth Del Nagro — River of Joy

Rio Gozo — "river of joy" in Spanish — is an eight-acre certified organic farm set on the beautiful campus of Besant Hill School above the Ojai Valley. John Fonteyn and Elizabeth Del Nagro grow herbs, flowers, and vegetables for their CSA program and a carefully selected group of restaurants in Ventura, Ojai, and Los Angeles. The farm has a quiet devotion to flavor and soil health that shows in every leaf.

Signature crops: Arugula, kale, carrots, French breakfast radishes, leeks, beets, broccoli, lettuces, salad mix, herbs, edible flowers, and seasonal vegetables.

How to access: Rio Gozo operates a CSA program (riogozofarm.com) and supplies local restaurants. If you want their produce, joining the CSA is the most direct way — a weekly box of what the farm considers its best.

At home: Rio Gozo's lettuces are exceptional dressed simply — a few drops of Ojai olive oil, a squeeze of lemon, fleur de sel. Let the green speak.

TOTEM RANCH · 478 CARNE RD, OJAI

Reynolds Fleming — Biodynamic Citrus, 62 Acres

Totem Ranch is a historical orange orchard — originally established as the Lismore Ranch in 1810 — now farmed biodynamically and certified organic by Reynolds Fleming. Sixty-two acres of citrus, livestock, and diverse horticultural cultivation, managed with an emphasis on holistic land stewardship and ecological nuance. Their citrus carries the character of old Ojai: deep-rooted, unhurried, grown in harmony with the land rather than against it.

Signature crops: Valencia oranges, Navel oranges, Pixie tangerines, Lisbon lemons, and Cara Cara oranges — all organically and biodynamically grown. Also includes animal livestock and native habitat restoration.

Certifications: Demeter biodynamic certified and USDA organic certified since 2018.

At home: Totem citrus needs nothing done to it. Peel a Cara Cara orange over a plate and let the essential oils mist the air. That fragrance tells you everything about what biodynamic farming means.

OJAI ROOTS FARM & MARKET · 315 N MONTGOMERY ST, OJAI

Reiana Onglengco & Evan Graham — Regenerative & Hyper-Local

Ojai Roots is a newer voice in the valley's farm ecosystem — and one of the most exciting. A regenerative farm that also operates a beloved farmshop and wine garden, Ojai Roots brings the farm-to-table experience full circle: grow it, sell it, cook it, and sip alongside it. Chef Peter Marcus collaborates with the farm to create grab-and-go meals and market fare

directly from their seasonal harvest. The wine garden has become one of Ojai's favorite gathering spots.

What they offer: Farm boxes (weekly CSA), regenerative-grown produce, artisan market with curated grocery, local olive oil and wines, grab-and-go meals, and a wine garden open Wednesday–Sunday.

Visit: The farmshop and wine garden at 315 N Montgomery Street is a perfect afternoon stop. Order a glass and share a farm snack board while watching Ojai slow down around you.

At home: sign up for the Ojai Roots Friday Farm Box and let the week's best harvest decide your menu rather than the other way around.

A NOTE ON THE FULL FARM COMMUNITY

These five farms represent the core of my farm relationships in Ojai — but the valley has many more growers, each with their own story and specialty. As you explore the markets, let the farmers themselves be your guide. Ask what they're proudest of this week. That answer is usually the best thing on the table.

A CURATED DIRECTORY

Restaurants, Spas & Inns

Places Chef William recommends — aligned with the values of quality, locality, and the particular beauty of the Ojai Valley.

WHERE TO EAT

Restaurants Worth Your Table

Ojai's dining scene is small, personal, and deeply connected to the land. These are the places I send guests — and return to myself.



The Chef William table — jewel colours, abundance, intention.



The Chef William table — jewel colours, abundance, and beauty arranged with intention.

The Farmer and the Cook

339 W EL ROBLAR DRIVE · ORGANIC CAFÉ, MARKET & FARM · EST. 2001

Steve Sprinkel and Olivia Chase's organic café and market is Ojai's most beloved institution. Everything on the menu comes from Steve's farm or the surrounding valley. The salad bar is legendary, the smoothies are exceptional, and the Mexican vegetarian food — Swiss chard enchiladas, cauliflower burritos, raw tacos — is unlike anything else in the region. The patio and garden stage make it a gathering place as much as a restaurant.

Order: the salad bar with the soup-on-salad trick locals swear by, and one of the daily specials. Save room for a smoothie. Go on a Thursday or Friday evening for live music.

Nocciola

314 EL PASEO ROAD · ITALIAN FINE DINING · FAMILY-OWNED · TUES-SUN FROM 5PM

Ojai's finest dinner restaurant, housed in a historical Craftsman home with porch and patio seating that faces the Topatopa Mountains at sunset. Chef-owner Pietro Biondi makes all pastas fresh daily and sources local

organic produce to create dishes that feel authentically Italian and genuinely seasonal. The Chef's Tasting Menu is the way to experience the full range. Reservations essential.

Order: the handmade pasta (squid ink tagliatelle, sweet potato tortellini), the cicoria salad, and the 5-course tasting menu if you're celebrating. Call ahead — this place fills.

Ojai Roots Farmshop & Wine Garden

315 N MONTGOMERY STREET · FARM MARKET, WINE GARDEN & GRAB-AND-GO · WED-SUN

Part farm shop, part wine bar, entirely Ojai. Order a glass of well-chosen natural or local wine, share a snack board of farm-sourced produce, and settle into the garden for an afternoon that feels quietly extraordinary. Chef Peter Marcus's grab-and-go meals use produce from the farm's own regenerative operation. One of the best recent additions to the valley's food scene.

Go for: a slow afternoon glass of rosé with the Parmesan sardine dip or boquerones toast. Stay longer than you planned.

OMF · Ojai Mountain Farm

242 E OJAI AVENUE, THE ARCADE · MARKET, DELI & RESTAURANT · OWNER: TONY YANOW

One of Ojai's most exciting recent additions, OMF is part farm market, part artisan deli, part restaurant — a from-scratch operation where the kitchen, bar, and market shelves all talk to each other. Owner Tony Yanow (also behind The Naturalist wine tasting room) has built a hyper-local food ecosystem: house-made market goods, a scratch beverage program, local honey, hemp milk, walnut liqueur, and a rotating menu of hot and cold dishes built from Ojai's best seasonal produce. Kitchen staff are trained to know the sourcing story behind every ingredient they serve — ask them. The bar program features local spirits, wines, and house-made cordials. The Arcade patio is one of the best places in town to linger over a glass and a plate.

Go for: the deli case grab-and-go, a house cocktail with local spirits, and whatever seasonal dish the kitchen is most proud of that week. Ask the staff — they'll tell you.

WHERE TO STAY

Inns & Retreats

Ojai has a distinct lodging character — from one of California's great resort properties to intimate hilltop retreats and one-of-a-kind Airstream hideaways. Choose what matches the pace you're after.

THE LANDMARK · 905 COUNTRY CLUB ROAD

Ojai Valley Inn & Spa Ojai

The definitive Ojai resort — a 1920s Spanish Colonial compound sprawling across 220 oak-studded acres with views of the Topatopa Mountains. Spa Ojai, a 31,000-square-foot Forbes Five-Star spa, draws on Native American traditions and local botanicals (citrus, lavender, white sage) for a treatment menu unlike anything else in California. The resort maintains its own Pixie tangerine grove and herb gardens, and five dining concepts ranging from wood-fired casual to The Oak's elegant farm-to-table dinners.

The alignment with Chef William: the Inn's culinary philosophy — local farms, seasonal menus, the valley as pantry — mirrors his own. For guests who want the full Ojai experience in one place, this is the address.

THE HILLTOP SANCTUARY · 160 BESANT ROAD

Ojai Retreat & Inn

Twelve guestrooms on a five-acre hilltop, with panoramic views of the valley, private gardens and patios, walking paths, and a daily organic breakfast. No TVs, no phones — just the sound of the valley and room for genuine rest. A nonprofit retreat center

with a long history as a place of quiet and renewal. The most authentically "Ojai spirit" lodging in the valley.

Best for: visitors who want to slow down completely, connect with the valley's contemplative side, and wake up to views that remind you why you came here.

THE AIRSTREAM ADVENTURE · 317 BRYANT CIRCLE

Caravan Outpost

Eleven beautifully appointed Airstream caravans set in a botanical garden in the heart of Ojai. Each caravan has a private garden, a full kitchen, and the feeling of being somewhere genuinely different. Complimentary bikes let you reach the farmers market and vineyards in minutes. The outdoor common area and fire pit make it a wonderful spot for small retreats and group gatherings — the property accommodates up to 30 guests for events.

Best for: visitors who want charm and independence, couples on a weekend escape, or groups who want a private gathering space with style.

THE ROMANTIC BOUTIQUE · 108 PAULINE STREET

Emerald Iguana Inn

A romantic boutique inn tucked away on a quiet Ojai lane, welcomed by a magnificently tiled fountain and lush gardens. Individually designed rooms and cottages, each with its own character. Walkable to downtown, with the intimate scale and personal service of a true inn rather than a hotel. One of Ojai's most beloved places to stay for those who appreciate craft, quiet, and beauty.

Best for: couples and romantic escapes, guests who want something intimate and beautiful without the scale of a full resort.

WELLNESS & SPA

Spas Aligned with the Valley

Ojai has long been a destination for wellness and renewal. These are the spa experiences that reflect the valley's ethos.

Spa Ojai · Ojai Valley Inn

905 COUNTRY CLUB ROAD · FORBES FIVE-STAR · 31,000 SQ FT · DAY SPA ACCESS AVAILABLE

The defining spa experience of the region — a palatial 31,000-square-foot spa village whose treatment menu is deeply rooted in the land. Treatments draw on local botanicals: citrus, lavender, and white sage from the surrounding hills. The acorn scrub, stone massage, and Kuyam mud treatment (a chamber experience unique to Spa Ojai) reflect the valley's Native American heritage. Two pools, a spa café with health-focused seasonal menu, and mind-body fitness classes complete the offering. Day spa access is available without staying at the resort.

Book: the Kuyam mud treatment and the citrus-herb body scrub for a full Ojai sensory experience. Allow a full day.

The Oaks at Ojai

122 E OJAI AVENUE · WELLNESS SPA & FITNESS RESORT · DAY PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

A destination wellness spa and fitness resort that has been part of Ojai's health culture for decades. The Oaks offers spa treatments, fitness classes, and day spa programs for visitors looking for a more active, health-

focused experience. Located on Ojai's main avenue, it's walkable and accessible without needing a reservation at the resort itself.

Consider: a day program that combines spa treatments with fitness classes and a healthy lunch — an ideal companion to a market morning and afternoon wine tasting.

THE BAKERS

Bread Worth Seeking Out

In Ojai, even the bread tells the story of the land. Two bakers in particular represent the valley's commitment to slow craft, honest ingredients, and the deep nourishment of something made by hand.

CLAUD MANN · OJAI RÔTIE · 469 E OJAI AVE

The Bread Mann of Ojai

Claud Mann is one of Ojai's most beloved culinary figures — chef, food television host, writer, and now, above all, a baker of bread. As co-owner of Ojai Rôtie, the French-Lebanese rotisserie and artisan bakery on Ojai Avenue, Claud bakes hundreds of loaves each week using a sourdough mother he has fed every single day for twenty years. The bread is classified as Pain au Levain — naturally fermented, no commercial yeast, mildly tangy, deeply complex — and contains at least 30% whole grain. Organic wheat, whole spelt, dark rye, sea salt, filtered water, and that ancient starter. Nothing else.

Where to find it: At Ojai Rôtie on Ojai Avenue, and every Sunday morning at the Ojai Certified Farmers' Market. The bread regularly sells out — arrive early.

At home: buy a whole loaf, let it cool completely, then slice and eat with Ojai olive oil and a pinch of good salt. The bread needs nothing more. It is a complete thing.

A Starter That Has Crossed Continents

Linn Bjørnland is a former actor and ballet dancer who found her way to bread during the pandemic — baking in a remote cabin in Northern Michigan, then carrying her sourdough starter with her across continents and eventually back to Ojai, where she put down roots and built a micro-bakery from her home kitchen. Her bread undergoes a 36-hour fermentation. The starter, she says, has been everywhere. You can taste the history in it.

Bluebell Bakehouse specializes in long-fermented organic sourdough loaves, croissants, cookies, brownies, and yogurt — all made by hand from organic flour, salt, and water.

Linn also sells at her home farm stand alongside candles, handmade brooms, and naturally dyed fabrics. It is exactly as Ojai as it sounds.

Find her: @bluebellbakehouse on Instagram for weekly availability and pop-up locations. A genuinely small operation — order ahead when you can.

At home: a Bluebell sourdough loaf, a wedge of Earthtrine goat cheese, and a Pixie tangerine from the Sunday market. That is the Ojai breakfast.

PART TWO

Vineyards & Wine

Tasting rooms, wine pairings, and how to put the valley's bottles in conversation with its farms.

Where to Taste in Ojai

Ojai's wine scene is intimate enough that you can often meet the person behind the bottle. These are the places I return to most.



The Ojai Vineyard Tasting Room

DOWNTOWN · INTIMATE · SERIOUS WINE, RELAXED FEEL

Small-lot wines sourced from cool sites across the region — Syrah, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and more. The heartbeat of Ojai wine culture for three decades.

Pair with: local cheeses, olives, citrus-marinated vegetables. Bright, savory wines that love salt, acid, and herbs.

Majestic Oak Vineyard

CENTER OF TOWN · CASUAL · WALKABLE PATIO UNDER OAK TREES

A family-run vineyard with an outdoor patio shaded by ancient oaks. Friendly, approachable, and deeply local in spirit.

Pair with: grilled vegetables, roasted chicken, farm-style picnics. Reds and blends love rustic, olive-oil-driven food.

Ojai Mountain Vineyards

HILLSIDE ESTATE · SCENIC · RHÔNE VARIETIES SHAPED BY ELEVATION

Perched above the valley, this estate focuses on Syrah and Rhône varieties shaped by mountain winds. Steep slopes, big skies.

Pair with: slow-roasted meats, mushrooms, deeply caramelized vegetables. Structure and spice stand up to bold, dark flavors.

The Naturalist Organic Winery & Tasting Room

208 E OJAI AVE, THE ARCADE · CALIFORNIA'S FIRST CERTIFIED ORGANIC CENTRAL COAST WINERY · MON-SUN (CLOSED TUES)

Formerly known as Casa Barranca, The Naturalist has been crafting certified organic and biodynamic wines for over twenty years — the first to earn that certification on California's Central Coast. Their tasting room sits in the heart of the historic downtown Arcade: intimate, vinyl-spinning, unhurried. The wines are handcrafted from organic and biodynamic grapes with minimal intervention; no commercial yeasts, minimal sulfites. Their Arts & Crafts Red is a valley signature. This is genuine wine culture, not performance.

Taste: the Arts & Crafts Red, the rosé, and whatever single-vineyard white they're pouring. No reservation needed for parties under six.

Ojai Roots Wine Garden

FARM MARKET ADJACENT · HYPER-LOCAL · CASUAL AND GENUINE

Attached to the farm market, with curated wines alongside food sourced from steps away. Very Ojai.

Pair with: seasonal salads, grain bowls, anything with tomatoes or citrus. Wines tend to be fresh and food-friendly.

PAIRING BASICS

Wine & Farm in Conversation

When you think about pairing, imagine putting two parts of the valley in conversation: the bottle in your hand and what's just come from the farm.

WHITES & SPARKLING

Citrus salads, herb-dressed greens, grilled local fish, fresh goat cheese with olive oil and herbs. Acidity brightens fresh produce and cuts through richness.

ROSÉ

Tomato salads, grilled zucchini and eggplant, grain bowls, charcuterie. Rosé loves dishes that are both bright and savory — perfect for August market baskets.

LIGHT REDS

Roasted carrots and beets, mushroom dishes, herb-roasted chicken, lentil plates. Pinot Noir and Grenache echo earthy sweetness and gentle spice.

FULLER REDS

Braises, grilled meats, smoky eggplant, charred brassicas with garlic and olive oil. Syrah and blends stand up to deeper, darker flavors.

Match intensity with intensity. Or look for a bridge — shared flavors like herbs, citrus, or earth — or a contrast, like a crisp wine to balance a rich, olive-oil-heavy dish. Over time you'll build your own instinct for pairing the valley's farms and vineyards at the same table.

Cooking from the Valley

The Ojai pantry, three farm-to-table recipes, and a seasonal dinner menu you can make at home.

THE PANTRY

Essentials of the Ojai Kitchen

Every valley has its own pantry. In Ojai, mine begins with olive oil — green, peppery, vivid — pressed from local groves that catch the same late light you see on the hills.



Olive Oil

Local extra virgin as both seasoning and sauce. Over lettuces, grilled vegetables, the

Citrus

Oranges, Pixie tangerines, lemons, limes, grapefruit. Their juice seasons dressings and

final gloss on fish or grains. Treat it like a fine wine — pour it with intention.

pan sauces; their zest perfumes oils, salts, and desserts. Often replaces vinegar entirely.

Herbs & Lavender

Basil, parsley, mint, rosemary, thyme, oregano, sorrel, fresh turmeric, culinary lavender — used by the handful. Lavender, sparingly, adds a floral note that feels distinctly Ojai.

Local Honey

Orange blossom, avocado, and wildflower honeys. Floral depth in vinaigrettes, glazes, and desserts — reflecting exactly what's been in bloom around the valley.

Nuts & Seeds

Walnuts, pistachios, almonds, pumpkin seeds. Lightly toasted and scattered over salads or roasted vegetables — warmth and texture that completes a dish.

Grains & Legumes

Farro, einkorn, lentils, chickpeas from regional growers. Anchor the meal while letting vegetables and herbs remain at the center.

RECIPES

Three Farm-to-Table Recipes

Few ingredients, clean technique, space for you to respond to what you find at the market. The elegance comes from attention — temperature, seasoning, restraint.



Stone fruit panna cotta · Ojai cocktails — the valley's flavors carried through to the end of the evening.

Ojai Citrus & Garden Herb Salad

SERVES 4 · SPRING & WINTER · 10 MINUTES

Peel and thinly slice 3–4 Pixie tangerines or oranges, removing all pith. Lay the slices on a wide plate or shallow bowl.

Tear a generous handful of soft herbs — basil, mint, flat-leaf parsley, tarragon — and scatter them over the fruit. Add a few whole small leaves.

Drizzle generously with local olive oil. A thin drizzle of honey. A flake of good sea salt. Nothing more is needed.

Serve as a first course or alongside grilled fish, roasted chicken, or a cheese plate. With a glass of Ojai Vineyard Chardonnay or a bright rosé.

Roasted Market Vegetables with Olive Oil & Walnuts

SERVES 4 · ALL SEASONS · 45 MINUTES

Choose what looks best at the market — carrots, fennel, squash, peppers, beets, roots. Cut into generous pieces and toss with olive oil, salt, and fresh thyme or rosemary sprigs.

Roast at 400°F until edges caramelize and sweetness concentrates — about 30–35 minutes, turning once halfway through.

Once out of the oven, dress like a salad: another thread of olive oil, a squeeze of lemon, a spoonful of honey vinegar. Scatter with toasted walnuts.

As appropriate for a Tuesday at home as for a candlelit dinner. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Honeyed Stone Fruit with Fresh Cheese & Herbs

SERVES 4 · SUMMER & EARLY AUTUMN · 15 MINUTES

Halve 4–6 ripe peaches, apricots, or plums. Brush the cut sides with local honey. Roast at 375°F for 10 minutes, or serve raw if perfectly ripe.

Spoon fresh ricotta, chèvre, or strained yogurt generously onto each plate. Set the fruit alongside, cut-side up.

Scatter with fresh thyme or torn mint. Finish with a final drizzle of honey and a crack of black pepper.

A sweet course that lets you leave the table feeling clear rather than heavy — a Mediterranean instinct at the heart of Ojai cooking.

A SEASONAL DINNER

Early Summer Under the Ojai Sun

A complete menu you can recreate at home, or adapt to whatever the markets are offering this week. A template, not a script.



A long farm table set in the citrus grove — the Ojai Harvest Table in its element.

WELCOME BITE

STARTER

Sliced Ojai citrus with olive oil & sea salt

*One mouthful that introduces the valley's
pantry: brightness, fruit, and oil.*

Ojai Citrus & Garden Herb Salad

*With local olive oil, honey, and a whisper of
sea salt. A glass of crisp local white or rosé
alongside.*

MAIN COURSE

Lavender–Pistachio Chicken Roulade

*With Ojai olive and Riesling pan sauce,
roasted market vegetables, ancient grain pilaf.*

DESSERT

Honeyed Stone Fruit & Fresh Cheese

*With thyme, mint, and honey — tying the
course back to the bees and blossoms that
began the meal.*

THE LIVING VALLEY

Hikes, Plants & the Pink Moment

*Ojai's trails are botany lessons. Its air carries sage, lavender, and citrus. Its evenings
end in a color that has no name but pink.*

ON FOOT

Walks Worth Taking

The trails around Ojai are where you understand the valley at a different scale.

The food and the landscape are the same story — told from different heights.

SHELF ROAD TRAIL · VALLEY VIEW PRESERVE

The Valley Walk

The most accessible introduction to Ojai on foot. Shelf Road follows the cliffs along the northern edge of the valley, giving you panoramic views of the Ojai basin, the Topatopa Mountains, and the citrus groves below. The trail is lined with native oak, chaparral, and in spring, carpets of wildflowers. Moderate, well-maintained, open year-round. Also connects to Luci's Trail for a longer loop.

Go in the late afternoon and stay for the Pink Moment — the valley lit in rose and lavender from this vantage is something you'll carry with you for years.

PRATT TRAIL · LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST

Into the Chaparral

The Pratt Trail climbs from the valley floor into Los Padres National Forest through groves of towering oaks, meadows of wildflowers, and dense chaparral. In spring the hillsides are alive with color; in summer the sage and artemisia fill the air with a dry, resinous perfume that is unlike anything grown in a garden. Views of the Topatopa Mountains and the full sweep of the Ojai Valley open as you climb.

Bring water, wear layers. The chaparral on a warm afternoon smells like everything the valley tastes like — rosemary, wild thyme, dry earth, sage in the sun.

VENTURA RIVER PRESERVE · OJAI VALLEY LAND CONSERVANCY

The River Walk

A 1,600-acre preserve with trails ranging from easy river-level walks to moderate ridge-top loops. Old-growth oak canopy, fern grottoes, deep swimming holes, lush riparian woodland, and rare wildflowers. The Wills-Rice Loop is the favorite among locals — five

miles of trail that crosses the river, climbs Wills Creek, and comes back down through Rice Canyon.

Visit in late winter or early spring for the wildflower bloom and the waterfalls. In summer, the swimming holes offer shade and cool water mid-hike.

OJAI MEADOWS PRESERVE · OJAI VALLEY LAND CONSERVANCY

The Morning Walk

A gentler alternative — seasonal wildflowers, native grasses, wetlands, and abundant birdlife. Trails wind through meadows at the edge of town, connecting walkers to a landscape that existed here long before the orchards arrived. Particularly beautiful in the early morning when the light is still low and the birds are most active.

THE AIR ITSELF

What the Valley Smells Like

There are places in the world where the air carries a character so distinct you can close your eyes and know exactly where you are. Ojai is one of them.

Walk the Pratt Trail in summer and breathe in white sage — the valley's signature plant, its silver-green leaves releasing a clean, ceremonial smoke scent when brushed or warmed by sun. Native Americans have used it for thousands of years; you will understand why immediately. Beside it grows black sage, darker, more resinous, and purple sage, fragrant with purple flowers that open in late spring. Together they form the aromatic foundation of Ojai's chaparral — a dry perfume that changes with the time of day, the temperature, and the moisture in the air.

Closer to the valley floor, the citrus groves release something different: the orange blossom scent that fills late winter and early spring mornings with something almost narcotic — sweet, floral, impossibly clean. The Pixie tangerine harvest in March brings it to its peak. Drive slowly through the groves with your windows down.

After rain, the hillsides smell of artemisia — California's wild sage relative — and coastal chaparral in combination: complex, medicinal, ancient. The Chumash called this valley Ojai, meaning "moon" in their language. Walking the hills after a winter rain, you begin to understand that relationship between land, air, and light.

Wild rosemary and thyme grow on the rocky slopes above the valley, joined by toyon (California holly), laurel sumac, and in spring, wildflowers — blue-eyed grass, California poppy, owl's clover, lupin — that turn the hillsides briefly vivid before the heat returns them to gold.

And in the lavender fields — which bloom in late spring — an entire region of bees, butterflies, and visitors in linen clothes arrives at once. The lavender at sunset, near the Pixie groves, with the Topatopa Mountains going pink behind them, is one of the most sensory-complete experiences this valley offers. Breathe it slowly.

THE PINK MOMENT

Ojai's Daily Magic

Every evening, when conditions are right, the Ojai Valley experiences something that locals simply call the Pink Moment. As the sun drops below the western

ridge, the last light catches the Topatopa Mountains from below and ignites them in shades of rose, peach, coral, and lavender — lasting ten to fifteen minutes before the colors deepen into dusk.

It is one of the few places in the world where this particular topographic alignment creates this particular quality of light. The valley acts as a light trap, concentrating and reflecting the final rays in a way that makes the mountains glow as if lit from within.

The best places to watch it: Shelf Road Trail, Meditation Mount, the Ojai Valley Inn terrace, the roof of Caravan Outpost, any farm table with an unobstructed westward view. Set an alarm for twenty minutes before sunset. Bring something good to drink.

PART FOUR

Your Ojai Food Journey

Two-day itineraries, how to visit mindfully, and how to book a hosted dinner with Chef William.

SAMPLE ITINERARIES

Two Days in the Valley

No single right way to eat and drink your way through Ojai. These are gentle frameworks — bend them around the season, the weather, and how you feel that day.



Day 1 · Market to Glass to Table

MORNING

Market Walk

Start at the Thursday afternoon market or Sunday morning market. Stroll slowly, taste what's offered, choose a handful of ingredients that speak to you — citrus, greens, herbs, stone fruit, a loaf of bread, cheese and olives.

AFTERNOON

Vineyard or Wine Garden

Visit The Ojai Vineyard, Majestic Oak's patio, or the wine garden at Ojai Roots. Taste at an unhurried pace and notice which wines feel most alive with the flavors from the market.

EVENING

Cooking from the Valley

Back at your kitchen or rental, cook simply. Make the citrus and herb salad, roast the vegetables, open the bottle you loved. Or let this be the evening you book Chef William for — a private farm-to-table dinner built around your market finds.

Day 2 · Fields, Hills & a Hosted Dinner

MORNING

Farm or Farmstand Visit

Drive into the valley to visit a farmstand, lavender field, or orchard. Walk the rows if offered, feel the soil, see where the ingredients you've been tasting actually grow.

AFTERNOON

Rest & Small Sips

A light lunch in town, a short hike, a nap. Drop into a second tasting room or enjoy a single glass with a view. The point is not to fit everything in — it's to let the valley's pace slow you down.

EVENING

Under the Ojai Sun Dinner

A more elevated meal: cook from the seasonal menu in this guide, or book a hosted dinner. A multi-course experience surrounded by market vegetables, local wines, and the flavors of the valley at its peak.



The long table at harvest — this is what a Chef William evening looks like from the outside.



A Note on This Place

Ojai is small, sensitive, and deeply loved. The same attention you bring to your plate can be extended to the land and community around it.

Move gently. Drive slowly on country roads. Many farms are also family homes.

Ask first. Only enter fields or orchards where visits are clearly welcomed.

Support local. Choose locally owned shops, restaurants, wineries, and farmstands — your spending keeps this food culture alive.

Leave no trace. Treat natural spaces as you would a friend's garden.

A Table in the Valley

Private dinners, seasonal events, and twenty years of farm relationships built in the Ojai Valley.



Chef William is a private chef based in Ojai, cooking intimate farm-to-table dinners, retreats, and celebrations that highlight the valley's farms, markets, and vineyards. His menus are ingredient-led and rooted in the belief that food should nourish the body and the land at the same time.

When he's not in the kitchen, you'll find him at the farmers markets, walking the rows with growers, or tasting new vintages at small local wineries. Each dinner he cooks is a reflection of who is at the table and what the valley is offering that day.

BOOK AN EXPERIENCE

Website

privatechefwilliam.com

Phone

(805) 798-7864

Email

william@privatechefwilliam.com

Instagram

[@organic_ojai](https://www.instagram.com/organic_ojai)

*Serving Ojai · Malibu · Montecito · Santa Barbara
· Los Angeles*

*"In a partnership between earth and ocean, nature's treasures become the
palette for my craft. Each dish a reverent passage to your table."*

— CHEF WILLIAM ROBERTSON

privatechefwilliam.com · [@organic_ojai](https://www.instagram.com/organic_ojai)

william@privatechefwilliam.com · (805) 798-7864

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