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## Oceanside's Swell Plates Series Returns January 14–February 11, 2026

*The Second Annual Culinary Celebration Highlights Local Ingredients, Chefs, and Creativity*

**Oceanside, Calif. (November 2025)** — Oceanside's culinary community invites visitors and locals to celebrate its vibrant dining scene during the second annual Swell Plates Series, taking place January 14 through February 11, 2026. Aligned with California Restaurant Month, the Swell Plates Series underscores Oceanside's culinary creativity, diversity, and excellence, spotlighting the chefs and restaurants that have helped establish the city as one of San Diego County's most notable dining destinations, home to multiple award-winning and Michelin-recognized establishments.

"Food is a leading factor in travel decisions, and Oceanside's culinary scene offers remarkable depth and innovation," said Leslee Gaul, CEO of Visit Oceanside. "The Swell Plates Series offers a personal passport to some of the most delicious things to eat and places to experience while supporting local businesses."

### How Swell Plates Works

Participating restaurants will feature a chef-crafted "swell plate" — a special dish that captures the spirit of Oceanside through locally sourced ingredients such as fish fresh from the harbor, produce from South Morro Hills farms, and handcrafted local spirits. Each dish will be marked by the "Season of Swellness: Swell Plates Series" logo on menus.

During the 2026 series, diners can experience dishes from venues led by female entrepreneurs, plant-forward innovation and sustainability, hyper-local seafood from Oceanside's renowned harbor, and collaborative plates inspired by exhibits from the Oceanside Museum of Art and local artisans. This year's lineup features more than 18 of Oceanside's most beloved eateries: Michelin-starred Valle, Bib Gourmand Diya Mara, Michelin Guide-recommended 24 Suns, allmine, Odie's Pizza Co., Merenda, Matsu, Magia e Bevi, Rose Café, Jitters Coffee Pub, The Plot, The Victorian, The Market at the Victorian, Piper, 333 Pacific, Flying Pig Pub & Kitchen, Lighthouse Oyster Bar & Grill, and Wrench and Rodent— plus special Swell cocktails at The Privateer and Frankie's.

### **New: Swell Plates Food Tours**

A new addition to this year's programming, visitors can participate in Swell Plates Food Tours, offered Saturdays and Sundays throughout the series. Each tour includes four tasting stops, chef introductions, and insights into local history and culture from local hosts. Tickets are \$99 per person and include a Swell Plate at each location. Reservations are available at [www.shoesandchews.com](http://www.shoesandchews.com).

### **Creative Plates, Local Stories**

Some of the standout Swell Plate dishes include a collaboration between The Plot and nearby Jitters Cafe, which showcases a shared passion for zero-waste efforts by reimagining ingredients including coffee grounds and banana peels into a rich barbecue sauce and vegan "carnitas" in a Banana Peel Torta. Another collaborative dish comes from Merenda Wine Bar which draws inspiration from Oceanside Museum of Art's Future Rituals exhibit to craft a plate that explores connection and creativity in a Jambon-Beurre sandwich paired with a Gruner Veltliner.

Matsu celebrates its close relationship with local harbor fishermen through an artfully presented Sheepshead Tartare, dry-aging the locally caught fish using the ike jime technique and paired with raspberry ponzu. Odie's Pizza Co. celebrates two local Oceanside favorites, Craft Coast's award-winning birria and Odie's signature sourdough pizza crust, in a crave-worthy tribute to Oceanside's creative spirit and coastal cool.

Piper partners with local artist Lydia Kardos to craft a dish that blends heritage, artistry, and Oceanside's coastal bounty. Chef Marvin Maldonado's Braised Lamb — inspired by his childhood barbacoa — is paired with Tehachapi blue corn polenta, JR Organics legumes d'hiver, and candied kumquat and served on colorful ceramic plates handcrafted by Kardos. Together, plate and pottery create a multisensory celebration of flavor, color, and community.

### **Passport for Fun and Rewards**

The Swell Plates Series isn't just about great food—it's also about fun and rewards! Diners can pick up a Swell Plates passport at the California Welcome Center or any participating restaurant, then collect stamps each time they order a Swell Plate. After earning three or more stamps, diners can enter to win a \$50 restaurant gift card. Guests can also follow @VisitOceanside and tag a picture of their plate for another way to win at the end of the series.

Taking place during Oceanside's off-season — known as the [Season of Swellness](#) — the series invites visitors to enjoy an opportune time to visit with fewer crowds, bigger waves, and epic events that showcase the city's authentic coastal vibe. For more information about the Swell Plates Series, including a list of participating restaurants, featured dishes, and a downloadable mobile guide, visit [www.swellplates.com](http://www.swellplates.com).

### **About Oceanside**

Perfectly situated between metropolitan San Diego and Los Angeles, Oceanside is a quintessential California coastal escape that includes wide sandy beaches, a quaint New

England-style harbor, a historic wooden pier and charming bungalow neighborhoods. O'side (as locals affectionately call it) is a destination of discovery where visitors can explore everything from California history at the "King of Missions" to surf culture at the California Surf Museum and awe-inspiring sea life through exciting ocean adventures. This playful and fun destination thrives on taking recreation to the next level and boasts world-class surfing, skateboarding, bike riding, boating and even skydiving. Flourishing farm-to-table food and craft beer, wine and spirit scenes reflect Oceanside's creative and entrepreneurial spirit, as do exciting arts and culture programs that earned Oceanside one of just 14 California Cultural District designations in 2017. Classically charming, eclectic and always genuine, Oceanside is an ideal place to stay and a true O'iginal. [www.visit oceanside.org](http://www.visit oceanside.org).