

California Strawberry Festival

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California Strawberry Festival 35th Anniversary Celebration is Berry Fun

Oxnard, Calif.--Now celebrating its 35th anniversary, the [California Strawberry Festival](#) is the nation's premiere showcase for every type of strawberry food or taste creation. This year's event takes place May 19 and 20 at [Strawberry Meadows of College Park](#) in Oxnard (3250 South Rose Avenue).

The festival's 50 food vendors are all required to serve at least one tasty strawberry-themed item. They get very creative. Besides the traditional strawberry shortcake, pies and shakes, you'll be able enjoy a strawberry twist on favorites: strawberry nachos, strawberry pizza, strawberry tacos, berry kabobs, strawberry tamales, strawberry chimichangas...the list goes on...and sip strawberry smoothies, beer, margaritas and daiquiris. Festivalgoers can also build their own strawberry shortcakes at the Strawberry Shortcake Tent.

The 60,000 attendees can indulge guilt free. The non-profit food booths reap 100% of sales for their cause. Over the past three decades, more than \$4.65 million dollars has benefitted more than 30 southland charities.

Strawberries and Ventura County are a perfect match. Strawberries are Ventura County's number one crop—farmers grow over 250,000 tons annually (Source: Ventura County Farm Bureau). More than 1.5 million of the red berries will be eaten during the two-day festival.

Berry Blast Off Recipe Contest: On Saturday, May 19 (3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.), two finalists will battle it out in the Berry Blast Off Recipe Contest. They will have one hour to prepare their recipe entries before judges in the festival's Strawberry Promenade tent. Contest recipes have to be original, non-baked, sweet or savory-tasting strawberry dishes. That means sauces, desserts entrées, dips, drinks, jams, spreads--any food or drink creation that includes strawberries, fresh ingredients and shows a creative flair. It will be an intense showdown!

The festival will also feature live concerts, over 200 arts and crafts booths, Strawberryland for Kids, free strawberry themed contests for festivalgoers and cooking demonstrations.

Official sponsors for this year's festival are Smart & Final, Budweiser and Coca-Cola. Official media sponsors are the Ventura County Star, KTLA-TV, The Wave, K-EARTH, Cumulus Broadcasting, Gold Coast Broadcasting, Azteca TV and Jack FM.

Oxnard is located just 60 miles north of Los Angeles and 30 miles south of Santa Barbara. The California Strawberry Festival free Park & Ride "Strawberry Express" shuttles from multiple convenient locations off the 101 freeway make getting there a breeze. Amtrak California offers a special family discounts (shuttles meet the trains). Parking is also available on site for \$10. General admission is \$12, seniors 62 and over and active military are \$8, and youth ages 5 through 12 are \$5. Kids 4 and under are free. The California Strawberry Festival toll free information line is 888 288-9242 or go to www.CAstrawberryFestival.com.

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Berry Trivia:

There are about **200 seeds** on an average size strawberry

Strawberries are the only fruit that **wear their seeds on the outside.**

It takes **30 days** for each strawberry to mature from flower to fruit.

Most people think the strawberry got its name because children in the nineteenth century **threaded the berries into straw** and offered them for sale

Strawberries grow year-round in California but **April, May and June** are the peak months.

Within one day after they are picked, strawberries are **on their way to market** in refrigerated trucks.
(Source: California Strawberry Commission)

Strawberries aren't true berries, like blueberries or even grapes. Technically, a berry has its seeds on the inside. And, to be über technical, each seed on a strawberry is considered by botanists to be its own separate fruit.

According to the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, **Americans eat an average of three-and-a-half pounds of fresh strawberries each per year.**

California produces some 80% of the strawberries in the U.S. They grow about **2 billion pounds** of the heart-shaped fruits per year.
(Source: Food Republic)