

# California Strawberry Festival

Contact: Diane Rumbaugh, 805-493-2877, 805-407-1888 (cell), [diane@rumbaughpr.com](mailto:diane@rumbaughpr.com)

## **California Strawberry Festival 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, May 19 & 20, An Over-The-Top Tribute To The Tasty Goodness of Strawberries**

Oxnard, Calif.—Strawberry tacos, strawberry pizza, berry kabobs—these are just a few of the unique strawberry delights in store for attendees of the [California Strawberry Festival 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration](#), May 19 and 20, at [Strawberry Meadows of College Park](#) in Oxnard.

Consistently ranked as one of the nation's top festivals, this berry bonanza is a strawberry lover's dream. Besides dozens of available strawberry tastes, there will be live concerts and entertainment on multiple stages, more than 200 fine arts and crafts booths, the Strawberry Promenade with cooking demonstrations, Strawberryland For Kids with rides and attractions and free strawberry-themed contests.

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.

All 50 of the festival's food booths are required to serve at least one strawberry selection. Attendees can stop by the “build you own” strawberry shortcake tent to try their hand at creating their own delicious dish. One-hundred percent of the proceeds from the non-profit food booths go to support their worthy causes. Over the past 10 years, \$4.65 million generated from the festival has gone back into the community.

“Last year, we expanded the entire festival by 50 percent and it was a big hit,” says California Strawberry Festival Chairperson Mike Thompson. “The volunteers who run the festival are always looking for ways to enhance the festival experience.”

Official sponsors for this year's festival are Smart & Final, Budweiser and Coca-Cola. Media sponsors include the Ventura County Star, KTLA-TV, The Wave, KEARTH, KOST, Myfm, Gold Coast Broadcasting, Cumulus Media, Radio Lazer, Jack FM and Oxnard Convention & Visitors Bureau.

### **Festival Highlights:**

**Strawberry Promenade** A huge tent known as the Strawberry Promenade features non-stop cooking presentations and demonstrations (mandatory ingredient: strawberries!).

**Berry Blast Off Recipe Contest:** On Saturday, May 19 (3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.), two finalists will battle it out to be named the Berry Blast Off Recipe Contest champion. The two were chosen out of hundreds of entries and were winners of an earlier semi-finals round. They will have one hour to prepare their recipe entries before judges who will be looking for best taste/texture, ease of preparation, creative use of strawberries and presentation. The winner receives a Welk Resorts vacation getaway and Cutco chef knives. The contest takes place in the Strawberry Promenade.

**Contests:** Festivalgoers can sign up for the Strawberry Pie Eating Contest, gooey Tart Toss and the timed Strawberry Relay Race (teams attempt to go through a series of obstacles to assemble and eat a strawberry creation in the fastest time). The Berry Best Hat Contest is in the Strawberry Promenade while the Berry Best Dressed Baby Contest is in Strawberryland at the Strawberryland Kids Theatre. Contest signups take place onsite. Winners all receive prizes.

**Entertainment:** From classic rock to boogie to Latin beats, bands will perform on two stages. Comedian Phil Medina will perform in between acts. New this year is a third stage featuring local talent. All three stages are spread out on soccer fields to give everyone plenty of room to dance and enjoy the tunes.

**Arts & Crafts Showcase:** The talents of 200 artists will be on display at the festival. Paintings, sculpture, ceramics, jewelry, specialty foods, furniture, children's toys are just some of the items featured. Artists are on hand to visit with festival guests and will often personalize gifts.

**Strawberryland For Kids:** Kids can enjoy non-stop live performances throughout the day under the tented "Jest In Time" Family Fun Stage with its puppet, magic and live animal shows. The play area also includes carnival rides (\$1 each), bounce houses and climbing walls.

**Getting There:** [Free Strawberry Express](#) shuttle service offers multiple convenient Park 'N Ride locations off the 101 Freeway. [Amtrak](#) offers rider discounts and free festival shuttles meet the trains. Parking is available at the festival for \$10.

**Where to Stay:** The [Holiday Inn Express Port Hueneme](#) is the festival's official hotel. In addition, there is an array of lodging choices with something to fit every budget. For more info, visit <https://visitoxnard.com/>.

**Admission and Hours:** Adults: \$12; seniors 62 and older, active military and dependents with ID card: \$8; Youths (5-12): \$5, Free for kids 4 and under. Hours are 10:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m., both days.

**How It Started:** In the 1980s, then Oxnard Mayor, Dr. Tsujio Kato, gathered with City of Oxnard officials and a handful of local strawberry growers to explore ways to celebrate the strawberry industry. The festival premiered in 1984 at Channel Islands Harbor. After eight years, the increasingly popular event outgrew its original site so it moved in 1992 to its current location at Strawberry Meadows of College Park. From its humble beginnings, the festival now attracts over 60,000 over its two days.

**Positive Impact:** The International Festival & Events Association and the Library of Congress have recognized the California Strawberry Festival for its extensive community programs benefiting education, arts and youths. The Association's research estimates the festival's economic impact to the community hovers at approximately \$7.5 million for the two-day event.

For more information, call 888-288-9242 or go to [www.castrawberryfestival.org](http://www.castrawberryfestival.org).

Online Information Sources:

Visit us: <http://www.castrawberryfestival.org>  
Like us: <http://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaStrawberryFestival>  
Follow us: <http://twitter.com/CAStrawFestival>  
See us: <http://instagram.com/castrawberryfest>  
Handle & Hashtag: @castrawfestival #CAStrawberryFestival