



# California Strawberry Festival

NEWS RELEASE

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## Berry Delights at 36<sup>th</sup> Annual California Strawberry Festival

Oxnard, Calif.--The [California Strawberry Festival](#) is celebrating its 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary on May 18 and 19 with something for every strawberry lover. The two-day event that attracts visitors from throughout California takes place at [Strawberry Meadows of College Park](#) in Oxnard (3250 South Rose Avenue).

Satisfying your taste buds will be easy. Each of the festival's 50 food vendors is required to serve at least one tasty strawberry-themed item. Festivalgoers can stick to traditional strawberry favorites such as shortcake, pies and funnel cakes or be a little daring with strawberry nachos, deep-fried strawberries, berry kabobs, strawberry tamales and strawberry chimichangas. Strawberry smoothies, beer, margaritas and daiquiris will also be served. For do-it-yourselfers, festivalgoers can build their own strawberry shortcakes at the Strawberry Shortcake Tent. They can load their bowl with as much shortcake, whipped cream and strawberries that can fit.

Many nonprofit groups are behind these tasty items. The non-profit food booths reap 100% of sales for their cause. Over the past three decades, more than \$4.5 million dollars has benefitted more than 30 southland charities. Each nonprofit organization receives a stipend or grant to participate. It adds up to over \$127,000 given out by the festival each year.

Strawberries and Ventura County are perfect for each other. Ideal weather and fertile soil mean strawberries are Ventura County's number one crop—farmers grow over 350,000 tons annually (Source: Ventura County Farm Bureau). More than 1.5 million strawberries will be picked fresh from the fields and eaten during the two-day festival.

**Berry Blast Off Recipe Contest:** On Saturday, May 18, 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 while a crowd roots them on. Contest recipes have to be original, non-baked, sweet or savory-tasting strawberry dishes. Judges score for best taste/texture, preparation ease, presentation and creative use of strawberries.

The festival will also feature live concerts and entertainment on three outdoor stages, over 200 arts and crafts booths, Strawberryland for Kids, cooking demonstrations and free [strawberry themed contests](#) for festivalgoers (including strawberry pie eating contests, strawberry relays, strawberry tart tosses, a "Berry Best Dressed Baby Contest" and "Berry Best Hat Contest").

Official sponsors for this year's festival include Oxnard Convention and Visitors Bureau, Southern California Acura Dealers, Stella Rosa Wines, Stella Artois and Wells Fargo.

Official media sponsors are the Ventura County Star, KTLA-TV, The Wave, KOST, K-EARTH, MyFM, Cumulus Media, Gold Coast Broadcasting 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.org](http://www.CAstrawberryFestival.org).

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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 farmers produce 75% of the strawberries in the U.S.** They grow about **1 billion pounds** of the heart-shaped fruits per year. (Source: California Strawberry Advisory Board)

If all the strawberries produced in California in one year were laid berry to berry, they would go around the world 15 times. (Source: California Strawberry Advisory Board)

Each acre of land in California in strawberry production produces an average of 21 tons of strawberries annually. (Source: California Strawberry Advisory Board)

23,000 acres of strawberries are planted in California each year. (Source: California Strawberry Advisory Board)

**Eight medium strawberries are only 50 calories but provide 110 percent of the daily amount of vitamin 5 (96mg)** (Source: California Strawberry Commission)