

TASTY, CLASSIC APPLES ARE THE FOCUS OF THE “HEIRLOOM APPLE CELEBRATION”

Wonderful, classic apple varieties—many now quite rare—are at the center of the Hood River County Fruit Loop’s Heirloom Apple Celebration, along with delicious fresh cider, gourmet food, baked goods, country fun, and lots more, October 25-26.....

Do you see the same few varieties of commercially grown apples at the supermarket month after month? All of them seem blandly similar? Don’t miss the Hood River County Fruit Loop’s Heirloom Apple Celebration. Oregon’s Hood River Valley is famous throughout the nation and the world for its outstanding tree fruit. The Fruit Loop Heirloom Apple Celebration takes place Saturday and Sunday, October 25-26, and honors apples now known as “heirloom” or “classic” varieties--which trace their heritage back 100 years or more.

These are the apples which were made into great-grandma’s flavorful pies, or were baked to serve at dinner. Many are also wonderful “eating” apples. Some “heirloom” apples may not store as well or as long as commercial varieties; they may be more difficult to grow, or they may bruise easily. But they taste so good! Their individual flavors and aromas have been compared to those of different vintages of wine.

Heirloom apples include such old-style and tasty apple varieties such as Spitzenburg, Rome Beauty, Newtown Pippin, MacIntosh, Winter Banana and Ortley. They were traditional favorites for mouth-watering apple pie and applesauce. And they were so delicious eaten right off the tree! Such special apples are still available, though often in small quantities, and likely not at your neighborhood supermarket. Many people have only heard of them, and have never had the opportunity to actually taste them.

Limited supplies of heirloom apples are available, and will be found all along the Hood River County Fruit Loop during the Heirloom Apple Celebration. Many Fruit Loop farms are offering special activities throughout the weekend.

Kiyokawa Orchards will serve up a huge selection of fruit at their “Heirloom Weekend & Hard Cider Tasting.” More than 100 kinds of apples and more than two dozen kinds of Asian and European pears are to be offered. More than 200 years of cultivation is represented by their unique flavors—some are very rare! The Solstice Café will have their mobile oven on site, serving up delicious wood-fired pizzas. Taste Portland’s Reverend Nat’s Hard Cider. Spend the day, have a picnic, select your apple and pear favorites, take a hay wagon tour of the orchard. It’s delicious history.

The weekend brings the “Cider Days Celebration” at Draper Girls Country Farm. Enjoy their renowned apple cider--theirs is the only licensed non-pasteurized cider mill on the Fruit Loop. In addition to apple cider, they’ll offer a collection of cider blends, including cherry, pear, and grape-apple. Enjoy hot cider and donuts and Grandma’s famous cinnamon and sugar-dried apples.

Stop by Apple Valley Country Store for the “Heirloom Apple Butter Festival and Country BBQ.” See apple butter being made the old-fashioned way, in a copper pot over an open fire. Stir the pot, and try fresh apple and pear butter and their signature fried biscuits. Fresh-baked pies and cobblers, pumpkin milkshakes, and the last chance this season for cherry-wood smoked barbecue ribs, pulled pork and chicken.

At Packer Orchards and Bakery, it’s “Apple Cider Overboard.” Enjoy fresh-pressed cider, hot apple pie sundaes, apple cinnamon rolls, and more. The bakery overflows with the warm aromas of freshly baked pies and cookies. Try homemade caramel apple ice cream. They’ll have lots of apples and pears, too.

The Foothills Yarn & Fiber shop at Cascade Alpacas hosts the Misti Alpaca Trunk Show. With four generations of alpaca expertise in Peru, Misti International brings North American knitters and crocheters a large color and weight yarn selection for one of the softest fibers on earth. See exquisite garments hand-knit from Misti alpaca yarns, and meet the newest alpaca babies at the farm.

Everyone will want to tour Rasmussen Farms’ famous Pumpkin Funland display, and to challenge the fun corn maze. Free admission. Enjoy pumpkin bowling! The farm boasts a huge and scenic u-pick pumpkin field. Also find ready-picked pumpkins, a large selection of apples, pears, squash, seasonal decorating items, gourds, and apple cider.

Looking for Pippins, MacIntosh, the standard Red Delicious, or other varieties with old-fashioned flavors? Find glacier-fed and orchard-fresh heirloom apples at Pearl's Place!

Aubert's Fruit Stand is offering a new twist on an old farm tradition with Hard Cider Days. Taste hard cider from Blue Mountain Cider Company. Check out the other products and fruit, too.

Hood River Lavender will be serving up hot Lavender Apple Cider and offering great deals on popular lavender goodies for winter and the holiday season.

On Saturday, October 25, Mt. View Orchards and Fruit Stand celebrates their traditional "Swiss-German Edelweiss Day" from 11a.m. to 4 p.m., with live music, hay rides, good food from Swiss recipes, Swiss apples, kraut, Swiss sausage, bratzelies, and chocolate pear fudge. Press your own cider using heirloom apples (5-gallon limit). Held rain or shine, with a covered, heated seating area.

Many other delicious treats and plenty of additional country fun can be found all along the Fruit Loop. Visit all the Fruit Loop's wineries and cideries to try wonderful local wines and hard ciders. Revel in delightful baked goods and gourmet fruit products. Try flavorful chestnuts and chestnut products. Select decorating items for your home. Everywhere there are selections of fall's finest fruit and produce. Create great family memories by bringing a picnic lunch and enjoying it at one of the free picnic sites made available by Fruit Loop members.

And why not get a jump on the holiday season by selecting special gifts from the collections of gourmet food products, wines, fine yarn and fiber items, and farm-themed offerings available at Fruit Loop attractions? Make plans for sending holiday gift packs featuring some of the best that Oregon has to offer.

Admission and parking at all Fruit Loop attractions is free. Farms and attractions along the Fruit Loop are open from at least 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily (wineries open at 11 a.m.). For complete information about the Heirloom Apple Celebration, for a listing of Fruit Loop farms, attractions and individual operating hours, and for an easy-to-follow map, visit the Fruit Loop website at www.hoodriverfruitloop.com. Printed copies are available at the Hood River County Visitors Center (Hood River exit 64 off Interstate 84), at various Hood River Valley area businesses, and at Fruit Loop locations. Have additional questions? Call the Fruit Loop information number at 541-386-7697. We're on Facebook and Pinterest, too.