

GREAT PEARS, COUNTRY FUN, FOOD AT HEART OF FRUIT LOOP PEAR CELEBRATION

World-famous pears grown in Oregon's Hood River Valley are the focus of the Hood River County Fruit Loop Pear Celebration, September 20-21.

Oregon's Hood River Valley is known throughout the nation and the world for the highest-quality pears. The pear is Oregon's official state fruit! In honor of that wonderful fruit, the Pear Celebration takes place Saturday and Sunday, September 20-21, all along the famous Hood River County Fruit Loop. Fruit stands, wineries, farms and attractions along the valley's scenic "loop" will be offering the best fresh pears, pear products and more.

A wide variety of pears will be available to taste and purchase. There will also be pear wine, pear desserts, pear recipes, and many more special treats. In addition, pear lovers will find all sorts of other fine food, produce and products, and country fun along the Fruit Loop during the Pear Celebration.

Don't miss "Desserts Galore!" at Kiyokawa Family Orchards. They're teaming up with some of the area's best bakers to prepare a mouthwatering selection of pear, apple, and peach desserts using fruit from the Kiyokawa orchards. Take recipes and fruit home to make your own sweet creations! Kiyokawa's is also a place to enjoy a picnic, take a free orchard tour or hay wagon ride, let the kids romp in the play area, pick your own fruit in their huge U-pick orchard, and enjoy other family fun. Visit the well-stocked fruit stand for fresh cider, local honey, and more.

Visit Rasmussen Farms for the original Pear Party--since 1985. Rasmussens claim the best selection of pears in the valley. Enjoy live music each afternoon, wine tasting, pear pie, tasty selections from the food cart, samples of Northwest food products, many varieties of fresh pears to try, and lots of free recipes. Kids will love the free themed corn maze, and a sneak preview of Pumpkin Funland. There is a picnic area, and fresh fall fruit, vegetables, autumn decorating items, and cold beverages in the sales barn.

Find "Family Fun on the Farm" at Draper Girls' Country Farm. During September they have a large selection of U-pick fruit and more available, including pears, nectarines, peaches, plums, raspberries, and apples, including Honey Crisp. Ready-picked fruit and vegetables, gifts, and treats, too. They will have their refreshing non-pasteurized cider, jams, jellies, honey, and Grandma's famous cinnamon-sugar dried apples.

See why they love pears at The Gorge White House. Try a delicious pear-gorgonzola pizza from the food cart, complimentary tastes of their Heritage Bosc Pear Wine in the historic tasting room, and the ice cold pear-based hard ciders on tap. Fresh Bartlett, Starcrimson, Anjou, Bosc, and Comice pears will be available in the fruit stand, along with pear recipe ideas, sauces, syrups, cookies and more.

Cody Orchards and Fruit Stand celebrate with the "Pear Party at Cody Orchards." Special for the weekend are Donna's Pear Pies, food to savor from Ahi's Ohana Catering Co., canning and preserving demonstrations, scavenger hunts and a wagon and tractor area for kids, and a "Give a Hand to Farmers" mural. Bring your own bags and boxes to their U-pick orchard—and a camera to record the experience. (Check their website for u-pick varieties available.) Friendly dogs on leash are welcome at Cody's.

It's "Pear Season at Pearl's!" Sample many varieties of orchard-fresh, glacier-fed pears grown in the heart of the Hood River Valley. Taste the healthful goodness while surrounded by beautiful, fruitful orchards.

Find wonderful pear dumplings, stuffed with sugar and spices, wrapped in a flaky pie crust and baked to perfection, vanilla pear pies, cranberry pear crisp, and much more at "Apple Valley Country Store's Pear Festival." Enjoy a meal of cherry-wood smoked BBQ ribs, pulled pork, and chicken, all served with cider baked beans and pear coleslaw.

Foothills Yarn & Fiber is hosting the "60 Quick Baby Blankets" Trunk Show. Wrap baby in something cozy, comfy, and cuddly! The show features adorable blankets, throws, afghans, and cuddlies in a variety of sizes and styles—projects for every skill level. Meet the farm's adorable new alpaca babies, too.

It's all about pears at the Mt. Hood Winery. Stop by to sample their delicious Comice Pear Wine, and take advantage of special case discounts all weekend.

Pear sodas will be featured all during the Pear Celebration weekend at the Old Trunk, Treats & 'Tiques. It's the first event for their new soda fountain following an early September 2014 opening.

The Fruit Loop has many other great stops. Why not bring a lunch and give the family memories of a country picnic at one of the free picnic sites made available to visitors by Fruit Loop members? This time of year there are marvelous pears, as well as plenty of other kinds of autumn fruit, fresh produce, lavender and lavender products, flowers, gourmet food products, bakery goods, cute animals, and lots of family fun.

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.**), and charge no admission. For complete information about the Hood River Pear 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 area restaurants, stores, and lodging facilities, and at Fruit Loop locations. Have additional questions? Call the Fruit Loop information number at 541-386-7697.