

WONDERFUL SUMMER FRUIT, COUNTRY FUN ARE THE HEART OF CELEBRATION

The incredible bounty of the Hood River Valley takes center stage during the Summer Fruit Celebration, August 16-17, all along the famous Hood River Valley Fruit Loop. Find berries, peaches, cherries, Gravenstein apples, the earliest pears, all kinds of fresh summer garden produce, wonderful apple treats, wine and hard cider tasting, country fun for the whole family, and beautiful Hood River Valley scenery....

August is a special month along the famous Hood River County Fruit Loop. An incredible variety of wonderful summer fruit is available. The Summer Fruit Celebration is set to take place Saturday and Sunday, August 16-17, all along the famous Fruit Loop winding through picturesque Hood River County orchards and vineyards, serving up a weekend of relaxed country fun and delicious food for the whole family. Admission and parking are free at Fruit Loop sites.

Find a good selection of luscious berries during the Summer Fruit Celebration. Delectable peaches are at the height of the harvest season. Later-ripening varieties of cherries await picking into August. And while the heart of the Hood River Valley's commercial and specialty pear and apple harvest won't arrive for a few weeks, highly-prized heirloom Gravenstein apples, considered "the best" by many bakers and cooks for pies, applesauce and desserts, are ripe. They're a tart and tasty eating apple, too.

Participating fruit stands and attractions along the Fruit Loop will have all manner of the freshest summer fruit and produce during the celebration, as well as gourmet food products, wines and hard ciders, delicious bakery goods, and a range of tasty food—along with activities and entertainment. Some farms and wineries have planned special offerings during the weekend event.

At the Draper Girls Country Farm, it'll be the "U-Pick Gravenstein & Peach Extravaganza." Enjoy the old-fashioned fun of picking your own Gravenstein apples and peaches. Visit the country market and try fresh-pressed non-pasteurized cider or Grandma's famous cinnamon-sugar Gravenstein dried apples. Take time to enjoy spectacular scenery, walk through the beautiful gardens, and feed and pet the animals. Live music and food.

All kinds of family fun will be on tap at Rasmussen Farms, including pie walks and treasure hunts for the kids. The popular free Corn Maze will be open! There will be Gravenstein apples, Gravenstein apple turnovers, and recipes, as well as lots of other fresh-picked produce, including Bartlett pears, peaches, and summer vegetables. Fields of blooming sunflowers, too.

Packer Orchards and Bakery serves up the best the season has to offer during "Sensational Summer Fruits at Packer Orchards & Bakery." Find sweet dark cherries, Rainier cherries, and lots of peaches during the peak of peach harvest. It'll be the optimal time for juicy and crisp Gravenstein apples. The bakery will be overflowing with delightful choices, and the shelves stocked with an amazing selection of jams.

Visit the delightful Foothills Yarn & Fiber full-service yarn shop, and see the beautiful designs in the Brown Sheep Lamb's Pride Trunk Show. The Brown Sheep Company provides handworkers of all levels of knitting experience with delightful and gratifying projects, and examples of beautiful designs knit from Lamb's Pride yarn. While there, meet Cascade Alpacas' adorable alpaca babies.

Stop by Grandma Mary's Fruit and Produce for delicious burgers and steaks during "Grandma's BBQ Bash," featuring local beef from the Jones Boys Farm, and fresh-from-our-farm "fixings."

There'll be plenty of variety at Apple Valley Country Store's "Summer Fruit Festival and BBQ." The first apple pies of the season will be ready. There'll be plenty of fresh fruit and berries. Enjoy a huckleberry or Marionberry milkshake. Choose from more than 50 kinds of

jams, syrups, pie fillings, and pepper jellies. Savor cherry-wood smoked barbecue ribs, pulled pork, or chicken, all served with cider baked beans and pear coleslaw.

Hood River Vineyards and Winery celebrates the fruits of summer with scrumptious tastes of their fruit ports and sherry, as well as their hard ciders. They also have red, white, and late harvest wines to enjoy. Bring a picnic, and the family, too!

Phelps Creek Vineyards will be featuring new "Beehive" Pinot Noir. Vines for this single-block Pinot Noir were planted by owner Robert Morus in a beehive design on land once used for commercial beekeeping. Salute bees and the end of summer with 2010 "Beehive" Pinot Noir complemented by honey and lavender treats.

Celebrate summer along the Fruit Loop with a stop at Mt. Hood Winery. They'll be pouring their newest releases--along with old favorites--and pairing them with tasty fruit treats.

There are many more great stops along the Fruit Loop. Why not bring a lunch and make family memories of a country picnic at one of the free picnic sites made available by Fruit Loop members? And, of course, there will be plenty of marvelous summer fruit, as well as fresh produce, flowers, gourmet food products and bakery goods, wines, ciders, and much more.

Most 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 Summer Fruit 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 and lodging facilities, and at Fruit Loop locations. Have additional questions? Call the Fruit Loop information number at 541-386-7697. We're also on Facebook and Pinterest.