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FOOD FESTS CELEBRATE LOCAL BOUNTY

BY TAMARA MULDOON

THERE'S NO DENYING that, for most of us, food and drink are significant factors when picking a travel destination. A recent study shows that more than 70 percent of American travelers seek places offering authentic, locally produced foods, and more than 60 percent seek out foods only available in a specific location. If you are among the many attracted by culinary experiences, consider this tantalizing menu of festivals and events featuring the best food and beverage that these Northwest regions offer.

CRAVE!, July 11–13, 2019

Spokane, Washington, has emerged as one of the Northwest's premier food and drink destinations. The region's agricultural richness plus quality of life attracts top chefs and culinary entrepreneurs. CRAVE! showcases this talent in a three-day annual event in Spokane Valley.

Thursday evening kicks off the festivities with a Seafood Bash. On Friday, it's Fire & Smoke, featuring barbeque paired with craft beer, local wines and cocktails. Saturday afternoon is all about sampling. Graze from booth to booth, enjoying offerings from 80 food and beverage purveyors. Cooking demonstrations and live music complete the day. Saturday evening, things go global with a focus on Foods from Around the World—international flavors along with beverage pairings, desserts and music.

Get the scoop on this fabulous foodie celebration at cravenw.com. For information on visiting Spokane Valley, go to visitspokane.com.

Bounty of Yamhill County, August 23–25, 2019

Yamhill County, Oregon, resides at the heart of the Willamette Valley American Viticultural Area (AVA), home to many premier vineyards and wineries. The Willamette Valley is also renowned for its agriculture, yielding more than 170 different crop and livestock products. This bounty is celebrated each year with a three-day food and wine festival.

Bounty of Yamhill County brings together notable chefs, winemakers and family farms who collaborate on a series of events focused on fresh local foods and Yamhill County wines. The highlight of the festival is BIG NIGHT, held at Sokol Blosser Winery. This walk-around dining experience features 20 local chefs creating exciting menu items using ingredients from 20 county farms, all paired with wines



© Bounty of Yamhill County, photo by Sarah Lessen

Bounty of Yamhill County



© San Juan Visitors Bureau

Savor the San Juans Farm Tours, Orcas Island



Chef Mike Aldridge shared his secret-recipe fish tacos with the crowd at Crave the Coast.

© Tillamook Coast, photo by Greg Kozawa

from 25 Yamhill County vintners. See bountyofyamhillcounty.com for event information, and visit.chehalemvalley.org for visitor information.

Savor the San Juans, September–November 2019

Savor the San Juans is more of a season than an individual event. Throughout the fall months, an abundance of activities take place across Lopez, Orcas and San Juan Islands, the three primary land masses in Washington's San Juan archipelago.

For example, there are the Lopez Island Vineyards Community Grape Harvest Festival, Hops on the Rock - Orcas Island Beer Festival and an Oktoberfest Celebration on San Juan Island. All three islands offer Farmers' Markets and fall farm tours, as well as dining and lodging specials. Check visitsanjuans.com/savor for details. San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau at visitsanjuans.com will help you plan your visit.

visit whidbeyislandgrown.com/whidbey-island-grown-week. See whidbeycamanoislands.com for visitor information.

Crave the Coast, Saturday, Sept. 28, 2019

Not that anyone needs an excuse to go to the Oregon Coast, but visiting during the annual Crave the Coast celebration makes it twice as fun. Enjoy culinary bounty from 40 local food and beverage producers showcasing produce, meat, cheese, seafood, beer, wine and spirits.

Held at the Port of Garibaldi overlooking Tillamook Bay, Crave the Coast features an oyster shuck-and-slurp and plenty of tasting samples. Complete the experience by booking seats on the Oregon Coast Scenic Railroad Dinner Train. Or, go early and join a festive fundraiser dinner on Friday evening, September 27. See cravethecoast.org for festival details and tillamookcoast.com for visitor information.



Whidbey Island Grown Week, September 27–October 6, 2019

Whidbey Island, located where Puget Sound meets the Strait of Juan de Fuca, boasts a mild climate and soils ideal for agriculture. Each autumn, marketing cooperative Whidbey Island Grown holds a 10-day celebration to highlight these local products.

Island farmers, specialty food purveyors, vintners and artisan producers of all kinds collaborate in a series of events such as farm tours, cooking classes and farm-to-table dinners. Visitors can experience meals prepared with hyper-local ingredients, paired with locally produced wines or other craft beverages. The island's pastoral beauty adds to the enjoyment. For event details,

Hood River Valley Harvest Fest, October 11–13, 2019

Cruise on out to the 36th annual Hood River Valley Harvest Fest, the largest harvest celebration in the Columbia River Gorge. At the riverside event site, you'll find more than 120 vendors representing local farmers, producers of artisan food and beverage, and artists. Oregon's Hood River Valley is renowned for its fruit orchards and wines.

This three-day, family-friendly festival includes live music, giant-pumpkin-carving exhibition, pie-eating contest and a children's activity area. While you're here, take a scenic drive around the Hood River County Fruit Loop (hoodriverfruitloop.com). Festival details and visitor information can be found at hoodriver.org/harvest-fest.