

OPULENT OCTOBER: GRAPES, SHELLFISH & AVOCADOS ABOUND

Freshness Guaranteed on the American Riviera®

October means grapes and avocados from the land and lobster, shrimp and prawns from the sea. Local eateries and amazing public events throughout the county highlight these and other seasonal regional specialties.

Festivals

The crush is on in the world-famous Santa Ynez and Santa Maria valleys, with harvest in full swing. Grapes are Santa Barbara County's second largest agricultural product by acreage (behind broccoli), with 17,000+ acres planted. During October, wineries open their doors with harvest events, crush parties and tasty tributes to all things grape. From the vintners to the pickers who work the fields by hand, nearly every individual feels a close connection to the hallowed vine and its fruit this time of year. Uncork a fine time at the annual Santa Barbara County Vintners' **Celebration of Harvest Festival**. Enjoy 60+ wines, local cuisine, live music, a silent auction and plenty of local color in the lush valley setting.

Bask in the bond between community and crop at Firestone Vineyard's winemaker dinner, **Vintners for Humanity Oktoberfest**, featuring seasonal foods and hand-crafted **Firestone Walker Brewing Company** beers and **Firestone** wines. For a spicy time, tap into **Rideau Vineyard** for a special Creole/Cajun party paired with award-winning wines and live jazz at the **Celebration of Harvest Open House**. Iris Rideau, a native of New Orleans, drives the stove at this turn-of-the-century abode and winery. Farther north, the **Autumn Arts Grapes & Grains Festival** in Santa Maria is another great stop for celebrants to graze on regional cuisine and locally made wines and beers.

Ocean-side Carpinteria guarantees the world's greatest guacamole at the **Carpinteria Avocado Festival** with three days of fabulous food, 60 vendors and 40 live acts on three stages! Try the avocado ice cream for a cool delight with an emerald twist.

Landlubbers and old salts alike will dance a jig at the **Santa Barbara Harbor and Seafood Festival**. Have a *dram o' the grog* and taste test fresh-from-the-sea barbecued albacore and boiled crab prepared right on the spot. Better yet, bring home some fresh halibut for the ultimate memoir.

Pucker up at the annual **Goleta Lemon Festival**. The event presents nearly every lemon culinary creation known along with regional wine tasting. Don't miss the lemon cooking competition and the best pie-eating contest ever.

Culinary Travel Planner & Visitor Information

Foodies rejoice! Planning a culinary adventure in Santa Barbara County just got simpler. Contact the Santa Barbara Conference & Visitors Bureau (tourism@santabarbaraCA.com or 800.676.1266) for your copy of the 32-page **Get Fresh on the American Riviera®** culinary travel planner. The free-for-the-asking guide highlights culinary attractions and tours, including gourmet food product purveyors, regional seafood specialties, farmers' markets, cooking classes, food and wine events, wineries, and much more! Visitor and culinary travel information is also available via www.santabarbaraCA.com or www.santabarbarafresh.com.

Suggested Itinerary

Be sure to check the dates of all events. Details follow this suggested itinerary.

Begin at Santa Barbara Harbor on Cabrillo Boulevard. Pass the wonderful line-up of crafts on the left and turn left on Harbor Way. Follow your nose to the **Santa Barbara Harbor and Seafood Festival**.

Next, get on Highway 101 north to the **Goleta Lemon Festival** held annually at Girsh Park. Take the Storke Road exit off of the 101 Freeway and head left toward the ocean on Storke Road. Turn right on Phelps Road, and Girsh Park is on the right.

If a visit to the wine country is in order, continue north on Highway 101 to the 246 east (Solvang). A variety of events unfold throughout the month, check the calendar of events (www.santabarbaraCA.com) for a listing. Other options include continuing north on Highway 101 to Santa Maria for the **Grapes & Grain Festival**. Exit on Betteravia Road turn left then turn right on South Broadway (CA Hwy 135). Turn right on Boone Street and an immediate right onto McClelland Street, and the festival is on the left.

Other adventures include popping over to Carpinteria (Highway 101 south) for the **Carpinteria Avocado Festival**. Exit at Linden Street and follow event-parking signs. The Avocado Festival has evolved into one of the largest festivals in California with three days of fabulous food, terrific music, and great, safe family fun.

Details:

Fall Celebration of Harvest Festival: Oct. 8, Santa Ynez Valley, 805.688.0881, www.sbcountywines.com

Vintners for Humanity Oktoberfest: Oct. 8, Firestone Vineyards, 5000 Zaca Station Rd., Los Olivos, 805.688.3940

Celebration of Harvest Open House at Rideau Vineyard: Oct. 8, 1562 Alamo Pintado Rd., Solvang, 805.688.0717, www.rideauvineyard.com

Santa Barbara Harbor and Seafood Festival: Oct. 15, Santa Barbara Harbor, 805.564.5531

Carpinteria Avocado Festival: Oct. 7-9, Linden Ave., Carpinteria, 805.684.0038

Goleta Lemon Festival: Oct. 16, Girsh Park, 7050 Phelps Rd., Goleta, 805.967.4618, www.californialemonfestival.com

Autumn Arts Grapes & Grains Festival: Oct. 1, Abel Maldonado Youth Center, 600 S. McClelland, Santa Maria, 805.925.2403, www.santamaria.com