



For Immediate Release

**California Artisan Cheese
Festival**

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**18TH ANNUAL CALIFORNIA ARTISAN CHEESE FESTIVAL
ANNOUNCES EVENTS FOR THREE-DAY CELEBRATION**

March 22-24, 2024

*Farm and Producer Tours, Pairing and Tasting Seminars, Saturday Cheese Crawl,
culminating in the Artisan Cheese Tasting & Marketplace*

SANTA ROSA, Calif.—January 12, 2024—California’s premier cheese festival, the [18th Annual California Artisan Cheese Festival](#), will take place over three days from March 22-24, 2024. A celebration produced by experts and presenters from the world of artisan cheese, the festival promotes broad awareness of the artisan cheesemaking community and enjoyment of its products.

This year’s festival starts on Friday, March 22 with Farm and Producer Tours at locations throughout Marin and Sonoma Counties and beyond. On Saturday, March 23, cheese tastings, pairings and seminars will take place at a variety of wineries, breweries and farms throughout Sonoma County followed by the highly anticipated Cheese Crawl at The Barlow in Sebastopol. The Festival culminates on Sunday, March 24 at the Artisan Cheese Tasting & Marketplace, a grand finale tasting event at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds in Santa Rosa. Tickets are now on sale and, as in previous years, are sure to sell out quickly.

“We are over the moon with how the 18th Annual California Artisan Cheese Festival has come together for 2024 with events and tours at many community favorite farms, creameries and wineries including Toluma Farm, Silver Penny Farm, and Valley Ford Creamery—it will be a true celebration of the best of California cheese and the makers behind-the-scenes who create the

real magic,” says Sarah Simms, president of the California Artisan Cheese Guild and co-founder of Lady & Larder. She adds, “The California Artisan Cheese Festival has become a three-day event that people travel to Sonoma County for because it’s really the only opportunity for people to get an inside look—they can taste, learn and shop for artisan cheese over three days of incredible events, seminars and tours—there is nothing like getting the chance to meet your favorite cheesemaker at the Cheese Crawl or cuddle with a baby goat on one of the farm tours. Springtime in California is as good as it gets!”

The Festival, which began in March 2007, has grown into three days of cheese tasting, education and celebration that brings together California’s premier cheese makers and offers cheese enthusiasts of all experience levels an unparalleled opportunity to taste and purchase new, limited production, and rare artisan cheeses as well as meet with and sample products from Bay Area farmers, chefs, brewers, winemakers, distillers and artisan food purveyors.

The full schedule for the 18th Annual California Artisan Cheese Festival is as follows:

Friday, March 22, 2024

Producer & Farm Tours

Start and end times vary at locations around Marin and Sonoma Counties and beyond!

These fan-favorite intimate tours to various farms, creameries and artisan producers are some of the most popular and coveted events of the weekend, giving visitors a glimpse into the important role of the farmer and where cheese gets its start. Guests will be guided on behind-the-scenes walking tours where they can learn how cheese and other artisan products are made, meet the producers, farmers, animals and cheesemakers behind their favorite local products and, of course, taste the fruits of their labor.

Tour A - Truly Artisan: Bohemian Creamery, Gold Ridge Organic Farms, Valley Ford Cheese and Creamery, Wm. Cofield, Local Sebastopol Brewery (TBD)

Tour B - Flagship Creameries and New Boozy Purveyors: Silver Penny Ranch, Nicasio Valley Cheese Co., Achadinha Cheese Co., Goat Rock Cider, Barber Lee Spirits

Tour C - Heavy Cheese Hitters and Sparkling Mead: Marin French Cheese Co., Pt. Reyes, Farmstead Cheese Co., Heidrun Meadery, Nicasio Valley

Tour D - Approachable, Yet Refined with Cozy Lunch Vibes: Wm. Cofield, Tomales Farmstead Creamery, Valley Ford Creamery, Black Kite Cellars

Tour E - Anderson Valley - Behind the Scenes Wines & Friendly Lunch with Goats: Handley Cellars, Pennyroyal Farm, Goldeneye, Alley 6

*Please Note: there will be one tour beyond the Bay Area offered to Mendocino County. Please

check the information specific to each tour for start and end time, parking information and the location of bus departure.

****Specific details and tickets for the Producer & Farm Tours and locations may be found at <https://artisancheesefestival.com/schedule/tours/>**

Saturday, March 23, 2024

Seminars, workshops and Pairing Sessions

Various locations around Santa Rosa and Petaluma. Times vary.

Through a variety of interactive seminars and demos, cheese lovers can learn from some of the industry's most knowledgeable experts, chefs and cheesemakers. Seminars will touch on topics ranging from cheese and wine pairings to building a cheese and charcuterie board and tasting cheese with beer and aperitifs. Some seminar locations also feature a special add-on for guests who want to stay a little longer and enjoy the wines or participate in other tasting experiences.

Seminar 1: Cheese & Wine Pairing with Executive Chef and Certified Cheese Professional Tracey Shepos Cenami at the Kendall-Jackson Wine Center

Seminar 2: Cheese & Wine Pairing with Cheese Superstar/Edu-tainer Laura Werlin at Balletto Vineyards

Seminar 3: Cheese & Beer: Better Together with Janet Fletcher at Moonlight Brewing

Seminar 4: Aperitif and Cheese Pairing with Sam Sheehan, Founder of Mommenpop and Sarah Simms, Co-founder of Lady & Larder and President of the California Artisan Cheese Guild at Silver Penny Farm

Seminar 5: Cheese & Charcuterie Board Building Workshop with Alyssa Gilbert, owner of Graze + Gather Co. (Location TBD)

*Full lineup of seminars and pairing demos may be found at <https://artisancheesefestival.com/schedule/seminars/>

Cheese Crawl at The Barlow

3:00pm - 7:00pm

The Barlow (6770 McKinley St, Sebastopol, CA 95472)

Embark on a savory journey through The Barlow in Sebastopol for an evening of cheese tasting and discovery. Participants will receive a map directing them to various businesses where cheesemakers will offer samples, accompanied by featured food or beverage tastings. Tickets must be purchased in advance, and detailed check-in information and parking details will be

provided to ticket holders closer to the event date. This experience is exclusively for guests 21 and over.

*All sales are final and the event takes place rain or shine.

<https://artisancheesefestival.com/event/cheese-crawl/>

Sunday, March 24, 2024

Artisan Cheese Tasting & Marketplace

Early Entry: 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

General Admission: 12:00 Noon - 4:00 PM

Event location: Grace Pavilion at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds and Event Center, 1350 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

Ticket Prices:

\$90 per person Early Entry + Bubbles

\$65 per person General Admission

\$30 for children 12 and under

In this banquet for the senses, the Artisan Cheese Tasting & Marketplace brings together more than 100 artisan cheese and food producers, winemakers, brewers, distillers, cider makers and chefs who will offer their hand-crafted cheeses, delectable products that complement cheese, boutique wines, artisan-brewed beers and handcrafted ciders. Discover the next wave of interesting cheese products, books and recipes. Taste, sip, and explore! Bring your wallet as there will be an opportunity to purchase your favorite cheeses and artisan products. Every guest brings home a coveted Artisan Cheese Festival insulated cheese tote bag as well as a festive wine glass. Live entertainment included. (Strollers are not permitted in the Marketplace.)

*All sales are final. The event takes place rain or shine.

**Parking at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds and Event Center is complimentary at the Pavilion and Brookwood Lots.

Early Entry + Bubbles:

<https://artisancheesefestival.com/event/early-entry/>

General Admission:

<https://artisancheesefestival.com/event/ticket/>

For more updates and details and to purchase tickets to the California Artisan Cheese Festival visit, <http://www.artisancheesefestival.com/>.

Generous sponsors of the California Artisan Cheese Festival include Beehive Cheese Company, Cowgirl Creamery, *Culture Magazine*, Cypress Grove, Donald and Maureen Green Foundation, *Edible Marin & Wine Country*, Horizon Specialist, Laura Chenel, Marin French Cheese Co., Nicasio Valley Cheese Co., Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Company, Qualtech and Sonoma County Tourism.

About California Artisan Cheese Festival

A 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization, the California Artisan Cheese Festival strives to increase cheese appreciation, educate consumers about artisan cheeses, support the cheesemaking community and its sustainability and celebrate the creations of California's many farmers and cheesemakers. The festival began in March 2007 as the first-ever, weekend-long celebration and exploration of handcrafted cheeses, foods, wines and beers from California. In keeping with its dedication to the community, the Artisan Cheese Festival has donated more than \$180,000 in grants to nonprofit partners that support local sustainable agriculture including the California Artisan Cheese Guild. For more information about the California Artisan Cheese Festival, visit <http://www.artisancheesefestival.com/> or follow on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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