



WILL TRAVEL FOR Food Festivals

This summer, geek out on mushrooms, cherries, oysters, peanuts and garlic at these ingredient-centric celebrations.

By Karen Asp

1 GILROY GARLIC FESTIVAL, GILROY, CA All aboard the Garlic Train! Yes, actual trains that leave from San Jose and San Francisco bring allium adorers to the world's largest garlic fest (it's *Guinness World Records* official). Chefs use over 2 tons of the California-grown cloves to cook up garlic-laced calamari and shrimp in flaming skillet—and other deliciously pungent eats, including garlic fries, popcorn and bread. There are also cooking demos and competitions, live music and even the crowning of the garlic festival queen. Want to try something really bold? End the day with garlic ice cream or a garlic-infused cocktail. July 26-28; \$20 per day, children 9 & under free. gilroygarlicfestival.com

2 NATIONAL CHERRY FESTIVAL, TRAVERSE CITY, MI Welcome to cherry central, where 76 percent of all U.S. tart cherries are grown. Roughly 500,000 attendees gobble up a whopping 40,000 pounds of the sour fruit at this festival, served up in smoothies, salads and pie (naturally). Of the 150 events, favorites include orchard tours, learning the right way to pit cherries, and pit-spitting contests—champs can reach over 60 feet! Find all your cherry souvenirs at the farm market,

from the expected (but no less delicious) jams and wines to more creative uses, like salsa and mustard. June 29-July 6; most events are free. cherryfestival.org

3 SUFFOLK PEANUT FESTIVAL, SUFFOLK, VA This town may not be the country's biggest peanut producer anymore (Sylvester, Georgia, claims that honor), but the annual celebration of its nutty history is still going 42 years strong. Nowhere else will you find a peanut butter sculpting contest, where people mold 5 pounds of a specially formulated spread before your eyes—think lighthouses, mermaids and turtles. Sadly, the creations are made from extra-thick peanut butter that's not edible. But there's plenty of food you *can* snack on, like peanut pie and dry-roasted peanuts. October 10-13; \$10 per day, children 10 & under free. suffolkpeanutfest.com

4 WELLFLEET OYSTERFEST, WELLFLEET, MA About 130,000 pieces of shellfish (all types) are consumed during this Cape Cod festival, with oysters stealing the spotlight. Enjoy offerings like buttermilk fried oysters, oyster Rockefeller crepes and a stout made from Wellfleet oysters by Massachusetts-based Sam Adams Brewery. Then see who takes the prize for opening two dozen oysters the fastest at the Shuck Off. Last year's winner did it in 2 minutes 25 seconds. The organizer, Shellfish Promotion and Tasting, Inc., collects the weekend's discarded shells—about 5 tons worth—and returns them to the harbor to help create habitat for marine life. October

19-20; \$10 per day, children 12 & under free. wellfleetspat.org

5 TELLURIDE MUSHROOM FESTIVAL, TELLURIDE, CO "Some of the most prized wild mushrooms in North America are collected from the expansive nearby Colorado forests," says Britt A. Bunyard, the festival's executive director, making this the perfect—and a particularly stunning—spot for fungi festivities. Sign up for a full- or part-day mushroom foraging foray or sit in on a mushroom IDing class. At the chefs' cook-off, mushrooms appear in dishes like pizza topped with braised wild hawk's wing mushrooms, rainbow trout stuffed with chanterelles, and sweet candy cap mushroom ice cream. You'll also find a locally brewed mushroom beer. Be sure to check out the parade on Saturday, where people like mushroom advocate Art Goodtimes, *above*, dress up as their favorite fungi variety. August 14-18; \$300 for the weekend (but many events are free, so check the schedule). tellurideinstitute.org

Fest on the Move On your marks, get set, nosh! Part food fest, part fun run, the Fit Foodie Festival & 5K in Denver on August 3 will feature a cooking demo by *EatingWell's* Test Kitchen manager. Plus, we're psyched about the wellness offerings at Westin, the host hotel. For more locations and dates, visit fitfoodierun.com.