

Washington's Wine and Food is on the menu for 2008

Below is just a sampling of upcoming events in Washington State:

FEBRUARY

Chocolate Extravaganza

February 8

Wahkiakum, WA

They say that the best way to a person's heart is through their stomach. Romantics can sample hundreds of luscious creations hand made by local pastry chefs and chocolatiers during a lively, but friendly competition to raise money for the Charlotte House, a local charity.

www.wahkiakumchamber.com

Chocolate at the Beach Festival

February 9-10

Moclips, WA

Rekindle romantic ties with fresh salt air, the soothing crash of ocean waves and best of all, chocolate. During this weekend, visitors can enjoy locally created delicacies at a chocolate baking contest and the local bakeries. With these and more to please the palate, stay tuned for more information on other events.

www.moclips.org

Red Wine & Chocolate

February 16-17

Yakima, WA

Lush valley vineyards just beginning to emerge from a winter's respite provide a perfect romantic getaway during President's Holiday Weekend in the Yakima Valley. This event pairs red wines with delectable chocolates at all participating wineries.

www.wineyakimavalley.org

MARCH

Poverty Bay Wine Festival

March 1-2

Des Moines, WA

With stunning views of the Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains competing with samplings of the finest northwest wines and gourmet nibbles, visitors will have a hard time deciding which experience to savor most. Highlighted by service in the grandeur of Landmark on the Sound, an historic mansion in the area, why not savor them all! Fifteen to 20 wineries will be featured.

www.desmoinesrotary.org

Razor Clam Festival

March 15

Ocean Shores, WA

Sample freshly dug clams in a variety of tasty chowders from all the local restaurants and look on with eager anticipation as judges taste test the local chef's creations. Events include local artisan crafts, music, and just plain clamming fun.

www.oceanshores.org

Oyster Games

March 25

Seattle, WA

Washington State's cooler, nutrient rich waters and optimal environmental conditions result in some of the world's best-tasting oysters. In demand nationwide, these tiny delicacies are the featured food of the Oyster Games, an annual entertainment and fundraiser that supports Puget Soundkeeper, a local charity. Festivities at the Oyster Olympics include the popular Celebrity Oyster Slurp, "Oystertainment," a fashion contest, live entertainment, oyster friendly wines & microbrews and of course, lots of oysters.

www.pugetsoundkeeper.org

Sharon Grange Oyster Feed

March 29

Grays Harbor, WA

Grays Harbor is home to breathtaking Pacific Ocean views and untamed beachfront communities. It's also home to the annual "all you can eat" oyster feed, which features a variety of locally raised oysters, plenty of activities and small town hospitality. Proceeds from the feed support community programs.

www.graysharbor tourism.com



Produce display at Pike Place Market

Credit: Sunny Walter

APRIL

Taste Washington

April 5-6

Seattle, WA

Two days of wine and food sampling complement educational seminars in a state quickly gaining national recognition for its world-class cuisine and renowned wines. Wine and food lovers will be able to indulge in a week's worth of culinary experiences all in just two days. Tickets will be available at

www.tastewashington.org

"World-Class" Crab Races and Crab Feed

April 19-20

Westport, WA

Best known for its world-class sports fishing, historic lighthouses and spring whale watching, Westport hosts crab lovers from all over the region. Participants race live crabs for prizes and nearby shops provide unique shopping. A crab feed compliments the day's activities.

www.westportwa.com

Spring Barrel Tasting in the Yakima Valley

April 25-26

Yakima Valley, WA

Spring is in the air in wine country and wine lovers always look forward to the trek to one of the most interesting and prestigious viticultural regions in the country. The Spring Barrel Tasting weekend in the Yakima Valley features winemakers and cellar staff who are on hand to share insights and answer questions on the winemaking process. A must see for wine lovers!

www.wineyakimvalley.org/events/index.asp



Kids and Crabs at Westport Crab Fest

Credit: Sunny Walter

MAY

Spring Release Weekend

May 3-4

Walla Walla, WA

The stoic and majestic Blue Mountains frame the Walla Walla valley, reminding visitors of the area's evocative natural beauty. More than just a pretty face, the area also possesses ideal growing conditions resulting in grapes of superb quality. Take in the rustic natural beauty, while sampling the season's newest releases.

www.wallawallawine.com

Seattle Cheese Festival

May 16-18

Seattle, WA

First of its kind on the West Coast, the Seattle Cheese Festival celebrates all things cheese, with an emphasis on local artisan cheese makers. Join 35,000 people, who will attend classes, buy cheeses and sample complimentary tastes, all at the cultural and culinary epicenter of the area, Pike Place Market.

www.seattlecheesefestival.com

JUNE

Vintage Walla Walla

June 6-7

Walla Walla, WA

Walla Walla's natural surroundings, year-round arts and music festivals and abundance of small town culture perfectly enhance the many flavors of the region's food and wine. Come celebrate art and wine in the Walla Walla Valley.

www.wallawallawine.com

Taste Washington Spokane

June 8

Spokane, WA

One hundred Washington wineries and nearly 30 area restaurants convene at Spokane's elegant Davenport Hotel, named by Conde Nast Traveler to its 2007 Gold List. Visitors can pamper themselves with an elegant spa treatment, or take in exceptional golfing as part of their experience. Enjoy wines from throughout the region and meet winemakers, mingle with Spokane restaurateurs and enjoy extraordinary delights from both.

www.tastewashington.org

Wine Country Celebration and Grand Gala

June 20-21

Yakima, WA

Home to eight highly coveted agricultural viticulture areas, Washington's wine region is on full display during this "can't miss" regional celebration of Washington Wine Country. Lush vineyards, moderate summer temperatures and outstanding natural beauty are punctuated by jazz performances, wine tastings and winemaker dinners throughout the area. A gala benefit dinner and auction supports Eastern Washington economic development programs.

www.winecountrywashington.org



Fertile Walla Walla Valley

Credit: John Marshall

JULY

Seattle International Beerfest

July 4-6

Seattle, WA

The Northwest is considered by many to be the birthplace of specialty microbrews. This celebration of beer and the art of brewing attracts 10,000 people and more than 100 beers from 15 different countries. Visitors may also want to take in a tour of the areas many breweries and wineries, or take in a visit of Vashon Island or Fremont, two of the region's unique communities. It's summer in Washington State, so find a friend with a boat to catch fireworks displays on the Puget Sound or Lake Union.

www.seattlebeerfest.com

Bite of Seattle

July 18-20

Seattle, WA

A "must" for anyone who wants to experience the Northwest's unique food, history and personalities – over the Labor Day Weekend. Savor fare created by local restaurateurs, take in performances by regional artists and see how Washingtonians celebrate summer! Museums, exceptional shopping and outdoor activities are close by. Includes 50 local restaurants, 25 Washington State wineries and 30 food product vendors. Local musicians and dance groups provide entertainment.

www.biteofseattle.com

Northwest Wine Tour Cruise

July 31-August 3

Bellingham, WA

All aboard! The Schooner Zodiac departs Bellingham, Washington for a 4-day cruise through the San Juan Islands and tours of five wineries! Visit San Juan Vineyards, Lopez Island Vineyards, Camaraderie Cellars, Olympic Cellars, and Mount Baker Vineyards during this all-inclusive cruise. Visitors should consider arriving a day or two early to take in the area's quaint villages or support the thriving arts scene.

<https://starsailcruises.com/p-100-northwest-wine-tour.aspx>

Skagit Valley Highland Games and Scottish Faire

July 12-13

Skagit Valley, WA

As if some of the region's best river rafting, kayaking and whale watching wasn't enough, Skagit Valley also offers two days of Celtic games, spectator sports, dancing, food, and music for everyone in the family. The area's Scottish and Irish heritage highlights these special events: Highland dancing, bag piping, sheep dog trials and traditional Scottish athletic events. Also includes a fabulous beer garden on-site with freshly made microbrews.

<http://www.celticarts.org>

Ballard Seafood Fest

July 26-27

Ballard, WA

The one thing synonymous with the Northwest is seafood and a rich Scandinavian history. Both are on full display in Ballard, Seattle's historic neighborhood, as it hosts its annual Viking-influenced seafood festival "Seafood Fest." The annual event features a salmon barbecue, unique arts and crafts and plenty of contests paying homage to Scandinavian culture (last year hosted a Lutefisk eating contest and a coverall fashion show).

www.seafoodfest.org

Raspberry Festival

July 18-19

Lynden, WA

Lynden celebrates the largest harvest of raspberries in North America during its annual Raspberry Festival, featuring live music, raspberry influenced food, and more. With a rich history in agriculture, the town invites visitors to also enjoy a vast assortment of berries, wines, cheeses and more during the festival. Or, visit the many unique shops in downtown Lynden, distinguished by its 72-foot windmill. Nearby the summits of Mt. Baker and the many hidden discoveries of San Juan Islands offer excellent day trips.

<http://lynden.org>



Vendor with fresh Dungeness crab

Credit: Tom Stiliz

AUGUST

Westport Seafood Festival and Craft Show

August 30

Westport, WA

Fresh salt air from the Pacific Ocean, beautiful beaches and the soothing comfort of ocean waves set the tone for the culinary delight to follow during the Westport Seafood Festival. Visitors will enjoy a rich abundance of seafood including fresh fish, succulent Pacific Northwest Oysters and other bounty from the sea while live music and unique shopping adds to the experience.

www.westportgrayland-chamber.org/calendar.htm



Roadside stands and farmers markets display fresh produce and seafood

Credit: Kitsap Peninsula Visitor & Convention Bureau/Jean Boyle

SEPTEMBER

Bumbershoot, The Seattle Arts and Food Festival

September 6-8
Seattle, WA

One of the nation's five largest arts and foods festivals, Bumbershoot features 2,500 regional, national and international performers which draw hundreds of thousands of people over its four-day run. People watchers, regional culture junkies and the culinary curious will marvel as they stroll the grounds of the 74-acre Seattle Center, stopping by the endless food booths, trying unique local fare, beer and wine. Live music and performances go well into the night.
www.bumbershoot.org

Tour de Vine Bike and Wine Tour

September 13
Wenatchee, WA

There's no better way to build up an appetite for Northwest fare and discover the stunning visual beauty of North Central Washington than this scenic bike tour. Winding through the back roads of the Wenatchee Valley, past rivers, wineries and orchards, bike riders stop and sample the finest Wenatchee has to offer in the fall. The end of the tour culminates in dinner created by local chefs, music, and wine tasting.
www.tourdevine.com

Fremont Oktoberfest

September 19 -21
Fremont, WA

The self-titled "Center of the Universe," Seattle's quirky and cool Fremont neighborhood kicks off the October harvest season with this annual beer-tasting festival. Taste a variety of local seasonal microbrews in the beer garden and food throughout, before hand, enjoy one-of-a-kind boutique shops nearby or take in unusual outdoor art, such as the Vladimir Lenin statue or the Fremont Troll.
www.fremontoktoberfest.org

Wenatchee Taste of the Harvest

September 20
Wenatchee, WA

Fall foliage and crisp fall days make the perfect backdrop for wine and food lovers, during this annual culinary event. Sample award-winning wines from Columbia River Wine Country while enjoying the culinary stylings of talented restaurateurs from Historic downtown Wenatchee.
www.wendowntown.org

Catch the Crush

September 27-28
Tri Cities, WA

Wineries of the picture-perfect Columbia Valley celebrate the start of the wine-producing season and open their doors for the fun-filled "crush" activities. Events include grape stomps, harvest and crush activities, winery tours, free run juice, hors d'oeuvres, live music, and of course – wine tasting. Take a long weekend to enjoy the (Richland) Market at the Parkway, Kennewick or Pasco Farmers' Markets, or a performance by the Mid-Columbia Symphony or Ballet.
www.columbiavalleywine.com

OCTOBER

Shelton Oysterfest

October 4-5
Shelton, WA

Washington State's oysters are world-renowned for their complex, delicate flavor and abundant, exotic varieties. Shelton Washington's Oysterfest features lots of seafood, wine and microbrews to satisfy any gastronome's tastes, while the full slate of events – oyster shucking and seafood cook-off contests – keep things lively.
www.oysterfest.com/home.htm

Dungeness Crab & Seafood Festival

October 10 -12
Port Angeles, WA

The freshest seafood from the home of the world famous Dungeness Crab! Washington's coastal waters produce some of the finest seafood in the world and this local tradition celebrates the best of the Northwest. Join the local community as it celebrates its northwest coastal and maritime traditions and enjoys the natural wonders and diverse beauty of the Olympic Peninsula. The festival hosts a fresh Dungeness crab dinner, wine and beer pairings, and cooking demonstrations with some of the region's finest chefs.
<http://crabfestival.org>

Cranberry Harvest Festival

October 11-12
Westport, WA

Comprised of more than 10 quaint towns along Washington State's pristine, beautiful Pacific Coast, the "Cranberry Coast" comes to life during the annual fall harvest of cranberries. Yielding nearly one quarter of the cranberries produced on the West Coast, the region explodes with festivities including cranberry bog tours, a cranberry cook off, firelight parade, and many other outdoor and shopping experiences.
<http://westportgrayland-chamber.org/calendar.htm>



Grapes on the vine in Washington wine country

Credit: John Marshall

NOVEMBER

Thanksgiving in Wine Country

November 21-22

Yakima, WA

There's nothing more beautiful than fall in Washington's Wine Country. Thanksgiving in Wine Country is a holiday full of wine and culinary pairings in the Yakima Valley. Extend your vacation with a day hike in the Yakima Greenway, by taking in a natural history or Native American cultural exhibit in the Yakima Valley Museum or catching a performance at The Seasons Performance Hall.

www.wineyakimavalley.org

DECEMBER

Holiday Barrel Tasting

December 6-7

Walla Walla, WA

Dramatic mountain views and rolling hills showcase the stunning natural beauty of Walla Walla, as the local wineries offer samplings of their new releases. Complement your wine tasting experience with a visit to the shops, restaurants and museums in downtown Walla Walla, named "one of America's Great Main Streets," by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

www.wallawallawine.com



Shopping for produce in the Pike Place Public Market

Credit: Sunny Walter