

California State Fair 2026: Dates, Tickets, Events & Travel Guide



The California State Fair is one of the largest and most diverse [*state fairs in the United States*](#). Held annually in Sacramento, it attracts visitors from across the state and beyond. The fair brings together agriculture, entertainment, food, and culture in one place.

From award-winning wines to live concerts and cultural exhibits, the event offers a wide range of experiences. It reflects the diversity and creativity of California. Whether you are visiting for the first time or returning, the fair provides something new every year.

What is the California State Fair 2026?

The California State Fair is a long-standing event that celebrates the state's agriculture, innovation, and cultural diversity. It has been held for over a century and continues to evolve with modern attractions and experiences.

The fair is widely known for its wine competitions, farm exhibits, and creative arts displays. It also highlights California's role as a leader in agriculture and food production. Visitors can explore exhibits ranging from livestock and crops to technology and sustainability.

Unlike many other state fairs, this event combines traditional agricultural elements with a strong focus on food, wine, and entertainment. This makes it one of the most unique and well-rounded fairs in the country.

California State Fair 2026: Key Details

- **Date:** July 17 - August 2, 2026
 - **Venue:** Cal Expo, Sacramento, California
 - **Tickets:** [Check Tickets](#)
 - **How to Get There:**
 - **By Air:** Fly into Sacramento International Airport (SMF), about 15-20 minutes from the fairgrounds
 - **By Car:** Accessible via Interstate 80 and Highway 50
 - **Local Transport:** Public buses, ride-sharing services, and parking facilities are available
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What to Expect at the California State Fair

Experience one of the most diverse and feature-rich state fairs in the country.

- **Award-Winning Wine and Food Exhibits:** The fair is famous for its wine competitions. You can explore tastings and award-winning selections from

across California. Food vendors offer a wide variety of options, from classic fair snacks to gourmet dishes.

- **Agricultural Exhibits and Farm Displays:** The fair highlights California's strong agricultural industry. You will see livestock, crops, and farming innovations. These exhibits are both educational and engaging.
 - **Live Concerts and Entertainment:** The fair hosts major concerts and performances. Many shows are included with admission. Expect a mix of popular artists and local talent.
 - **Carnival Rides and Midway Attractions:** The midway offers rides for all age groups. From family-friendly rides to thrill attractions, there is something for everyone.
 - **Cultural Exhibits and Art Displays:** The fair celebrates diversity through art, crafts, and cultural showcases. Visitors can explore creative exhibits from across the state.
 - **Shopping and Vendor Booths:** Browse a wide range of vendors offering handmade goods, local products, and unique souvenirs.
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Best Time to Visit the California State Fair

Plan your visit carefully to enjoy the best weather and avoid large crowds.

- **Weekdays for a More Relaxed Experience:** Weekdays are less crowded. You can explore exhibits and attractions without long wait times.
 - **Evenings for Cooler Weather:** Summer temperatures in Sacramento can be high. Evenings are cooler and more comfortable. The fair also feels more vibrant at night.
 - **Early in the Fair Schedule:** Visiting during the first week helps you avoid peak crowds. It also gives you better access to popular attractions.
 - **Special Event Days:** Check the schedule for concerts, wine events, and themed days. These can enhance your visit but may draw larger crowds.
 - **Weather Considerations:** July weather is typically hot and dry. Wear light clothing, use sunscreen, and stay hydrated.
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Things to Do in California While Exploring the State Fair

Extend your trip and explore more of the state beyond the fairgrounds.

- **Explore Downtown Sacramento:** Visit Sacramento for museums, restaurants, and riverfront views. The downtown area offers a mix of history and modern attractions.
- **Visit Old Sacramento Waterfront:** This historic district features wooden sidewalks, shops, and river views. It is a popular spot for tourists and families.
- **Explore California State Capitol Museum:** Learn about the state's history and government. The building and gardens are open to visitors.
- **Take a Day Trip to Napa Valley:** Napa Valley is known for its vineyards and scenic beauty. It is perfect for a relaxing getaway.
- **Visit Lake Tahoe:** Lake Tahoe offers stunning landscapes and outdoor activities. It is ideal for nature lovers.
- **Discover Local Food and Markets:** California is known for its diverse food scene. Explore local markets, cafes, and restaurants.

For a complete itinerary, explore this [California travel guide](#) or browse more ideas on our [US destinations](#) page.

Travel Tips to Visit the California State Fair

Plan ahead to enjoy a smooth and comfortable visit.

- **Arrive Early to Avoid Crowds:** Parking and entry lines can get long. Early arrival saves time.
- **Use Public Transportation When Possible:** Traffic around the fairgrounds can be heavy. Public transport and ride-sharing are convenient options.
- **Dress for Hot Weather:** Summer temperatures in California can be high. Wear light clothing and comfortable shoes.
- **Stay Hydrated Throughout the Day:** Carry water and drink regularly. The heat can be intense during the day.

- **Plan Around Event Schedules:** Check concert timings and special events in advance. This helps you make the most of your visit.
 - **Set a Budget for Food and Activities:** Food and rides can add up quickly. Planning ahead helps control spending.
 - **Visit in the Evening for Comfort:** Evenings are cooler and more enjoyable. This is also when the fair feels most lively.
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Conclusion

The California State Fair offers one of the most diverse and engaging fair experiences in the country. It combines agriculture, entertainment, food, and culture on a large scale. Visitors can enjoy everything from wine tastings to live concerts and family-friendly attractions. Whether you are visiting Sacramento or exploring California, this fair adds real value to your travel plans.

Frequently Asked Questions

When is the California State Fair 2026?

The fair is expected to take place in July 2026 and usually runs for about 2 to 3 weeks.

Where is the California State Fair held?

It is held at Cal Expo Fairgrounds in Sacramento.

What is the California State Fair known for?

It is known for wine competitions, diverse food options, live concerts, and cultural exhibits.

Is the California State Fair family-friendly?

Yes, the fair includes rides, games, and activities for visitors of all ages.

How do I get tickets for the California State Fair?

Tickets can be purchased online through the official website.

What is the best time to visit the California State Fair?

Weekday evenings are the best for fewer crowds and cooler temperatures.