Sweet Apples & Blues

Julian, California

The lure of fall foliage, cool breezes and frontier atmosphere beckon many a Californian to historic Julian—a small town seemingly lost in time, tucked away among the Cuyamaca mountains. Founded in 1870, the former mining camp is a popular destination for anyone seeking a little country charm and a great slice of apple pie.

HARVEST DAYS

After the mining camps died out, it was Julian's rich soil and unusually chilly winters and warm, sunny summers that made it the perfect spot for apple growing. The first apple trees were brought to Julian in the late 1860s, and Julian apples won blue ribbons at the Chicago (1893), St. Louis (1904) and San Francisco (1915) World's Fairs.

Harvest Days are held mid-September through October where visitors can choose to pick their own or purchase already harvested fresh apples or pears from an assortment of local orchards and fruits stands. In October alone, 10,000 apple pies a week are baked in Julian.

[PHOTO dir="assets/news/story/pg54-2.JPG" align="Right" caption="Julian is a popular destination for anyone seeking a little country charm and a great slice of apple pie." width="300"]

JULIAN BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

Now in its 39th year, the Julian Bluegrass (a form of country music characterized by rapid tempos and jazz-like improvisation) Festival is the oldest bluegrass festival in California where some of today's most well known bluegrass acts got their start. Art vendors, a banjo/fiddle competition and a "bring your own instrument" open jam are traditions of the festival.

Presented by the Julian Lion's Club, the festival will be held Saturday, September 19, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday, September 20, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Frank Lane Park, 2645 Farmers Road. Topping the bill this year are artists Blue Creek Band, Trails and Rails, The Scott Gates Band and Highland Way.

Tickets can be purchased from the Julian Chamber of Commerce. The cost is $15, and children under 16 are free with a paid adult ticket. It is a good idea to bring along your own chairs, sunscreen and a hat. The park terrain is steep, so good walking shoes are a must.

ALL KINDS OF FUN

Once you've had your fill of apples and bluegrass, there are many diverse activities available to keep you busy in Julian. The community supports seven art galleries, a pioneer museum, and desert and town tours are offered. Carriage rides, boating, gold mine tours, gold panning, hiking, camping, fishing, horseback riding, bird watching and wine tasting are also popular. Check out the Julian Chamber of Commerce Web site for a complete list of things to see and do.

WHEN TO VISIT

This small town nestled in the mountains has four moderate but distinct seasons, and is truly an escape from daily city life. While Julian is at its most colorful and charming in the fall, it is also the most crowded. Weekday visits are suggested to take maximum advantage of Julian's quiet, peaceful countryside.

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