

Capay Valley's almond centennial

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For the last century, Northern California's Capay Valley denizens have celebrated the frothy blossoming of their orchards each February with a grand, [country-syle Almond Festival](#) spread across several small towns. This year's centennial celebration runs from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Feb. 22 in Rumsey, Guinda, Brooks, Capay and Esparto — and there's wood-fired pizza, grilled oysters, homemade almond roca and wild almond blossom ice cream involved. (Plus a hay bale pyramid, rock and roll, kids' activities, a vintage car show and more.)



The almond orchards of Capay Valley burst into a frothy riot of blooms each February. (Photo: Susan Tripp Pollard/Bay Area News Group)

The ice cream is made from flowers gathered just before the festival begins — Camilla Barry, Rumsey innkeeper and Esparto chamber of commerce ambassador, describes the flavor as “a combination of almond and sweet honey.” And the candymaking is such a venerable tradition at Guinda's Western Yolo Grange that the other communities come to help. Who could resist such sweetness?

Wondering where Capay Valley is? It's day-tripping distance in the western part of Yolo County, along Cache Creek. Check out colleague [Martha Ross' charming story](#) about this rural getaway — and if you stop by the [new Seka Hills tasting room](#), be sure to try the olive oil as well as the vino.