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World's top 10 garlic festivals

By Reuters Life!

Got a penchant for the pungent? Then try a garlic festival.

Travel website VirtualTourist.com (www.virtualtourist.com) offers its picks for the World's Top 10 Garlic Festivals. This list is not endorsed by Reuters.

1. Gilroy Garlic Festival; Gilroy, California. Visitors to Gilroy can attest that the scent of garlic is in the air before you even get off the freeway. The grand-daddy of U.S. garlic festivals, this one has collected millions of dollars over the years for area charities and hosted over three million visitors in its over 30-year history.

2. L'aglio di Voghiera; Voghiera, Ferrara, Italy. Take the Italian countryside, Italian cooking, Italian music, add a little garlic and you have what might be the most blissful three days a human being could ever experience.

Among the many wonderful activities this festival offers is a garlic-braiding seminar.

3. Hudson Valley Garlic Festival; Saugerties, New York. This festival offers no fewer than five separate experts who give on-site lectures on the topic of garlic. Aside from various food products, vendors offer nearly 70 different varieties of garlic.

4. Isle of Wight Garlic Festival; Newchurch, Sandown, U.K. This festival offers garlic beer, garlic fudge, and garlic ice-cream. And they say England has a bad reputation for food.

5. Perth Garlic Festival; Perth, Ontario, Canada. Giant bouquets of the "Stinking Rose" are sold here the way cotton candy is sold at other festivals. The festival website even posts a recipe for garlic cough syrup.

6. La Foire à l'ail Fumé d'Arleux; Arleux, France. As many as 500 exhibitors set up shop during the three days of the Arleux garlic festival. Focusing on roasted garlic, this festival names a "Best Garlic Weaver" and offers garlic soup as its signature dish.

7. Takprü International Culture and Garlic Festival; Takprü, Turkey. Considered the garlic capital of the country, Takprü may be a relatively small city, but it hosts one giant of a festival. Once the festival is over, be sure to explore this ancient town's fascinating history.

8. Southern Vermont Garlic and Herb Festival; Bennington, Vermont. Proving that the New England state is more than just ice cream and cows, the Southern Vermont Garlic and Herb Festival celebrates the area's more flavorful side. Events include Garlic Golf (with a prize for a hole in one) and garlic balancing for children.

9. Hills Garlic Festival; New Denver, British Columbia, Canada. This gathering even has a garlic poem contest, so for those who have "Ode to a Clove" stuffed in a drawer, now's the time to take it out. Attendees without a gift for the written word may want to consider entering the "Heaviest Clove of Garlic" contest.

10. Elephant Garlic Festival; North Plains, Oregon. With a motto like "Fun Stinks" you know this has to be great. Growing from a small festival of just a few hundred people to attendances in the five-digit category, this annual event now crowns a festival king and queen and even hosts its own car show.



A man carries a string of garlic on his shoulder through the old part of town during San Fermin Festival in Pamplona July 10, 2006. (Reuters/Pablo Sanchez)