



2016 Gilroy Garlic Festival  
July 29, 30, and 31, 2016  
[gilroygarlicfestival.com](http://gilroygarlicfestival.com)

## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Visitors Enjoy Great Garlicky Food and Family Fun at the 2016 Gilroy Garlic Festival

August 4, 2016 (Gilroy, CA): The 38th annual Gilroy Garlic Festival welcomed over 82,000 guests from around the world to Christmas Hill Park this past weekend to enjoy gourmet garlic food, live entertainment, cooking competitions, and family fun. Revenue from the three-day festival totaled an estimated \$2,305,234, which is up 7% from 2015.

2016 Gilroy Garlic Festival President Dave Reynolds said, "It was exciting to introduce two new cooking events at this year's Festival: the Champions for Charity competition and the Gilroy Garli-Que BBQ Challenge. I felt honored to serve as President and represent more than 4,000 volunteers who worked so hard to make this Festival a success. I really enjoyed seeing so many people out at the park having a great garlicky time all weekend long—no breath mints required!"

Competition on the Garlic Cook-Off Stage kicked off on Friday, July 29. CAL FIRE / South Santa Clara County Fire Protection District were the victors in the first-ever Gilroy Garlic Festival Champions for Charity cooking challenge. This live competition featured four teams of local first responders competing in three elimination rounds (appetizer, entrée, and dessert) to win \$3,000 for their favorite charity. CAL FIRE / South Santa Clara County Fire Protection District will be donating their winnings to the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

On Saturday, Rebecka Evans from Danville, CA claimed the coveted garlic crown –and \$5,000 cash prize – in the Great Garlic Cook-Off, one of the nation's most prestigious amateur cooking contests. Evans' winning dish was "Garlic Goat Cheese Bacon Soufflé with Creamy Garlic Mustard Sauce". Second place was awarded to Veronica Callaghan from Glastonbury, CT, for "Roasted Garlic Pizza with Spicy Rosemary Caramelized Onions, Figs & Bacon," and third place

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was awarded to Kelly Velasco from American Fork, UT, for “Garlic Risotto Stuffed Mussels with Garlic Herb Toast”.

On Sunday, four professional chefs faced off in the Iron Chef-style “Garlic Showdown,” where contestants had to prepare two dishes using a mystery basket of ingredients that included Silva sausage, Cracker Jacks, and orange flesh melon – and plenty of garlic, too, of course. Chef Michael Fisher from Fisher’s Delicatessen & Catering in Hollister, CA won the \$3,000 prize.

Things were really smoking on Saturday and Sunday during the first-ever Gilroy Garli-Que BBQ Challenge. On Saturday, Burnin and Lootin smoked the competition to win Overall Grand Champ in the official Kansas City BBQ Society-sanctioned competition. Smokey Luv BBQ was named Reserve. On Sunday, SHOWOFF BBQ claimed ultimate bragging rights among amateur BBQ chefs as winner of the Gilroy Garli-Que Backyard BBQ Rib Throwdown competition.

Special ceremonies this year honored three long-time Gilroy Garlic Festival volunteers and goodwill ambassadors. Gerry Foisy, who has worn a custom-made garlic bulb costume as “Mr. Garlic” for the last 29 years, officially retired and was honored with a Golden Ticket for lifetime admission to the Festival. Gene Sakahara and Sam Bozzo, past Gilroy Garlic Festival presidents who have delighted visitors for 25 years as the cooking/comedy duo “SakaBozzo,” made their final appearance together on the Garlic Cook-Off Stage alongside their grandchildren.

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#### *About the Gilroy Garlic Festival*

The 39th Annual Gilroy Garlic Festival will be held July 28, 29, and 30, 2017, at Christmas Hill Park in Gilroy, California. Presented by Raley’s, Bel Air, and Nob Hill Foods, this annual event draws tens of thousands of guests from around the world for a three-day celebration of great garlicky food, live entertainment, and fun for the whole family. For more information, see [www.gilroygarlicfestival.com](http://www.gilroygarlicfestival.com).