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American idyll: Cast a vote for the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival

By Sheri Quirt

April 10, 2008

NWsource staff



ELLEN M. BANNER / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Tulips in full bloom near La Conner, Skagit Valley.

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Your April routine is well underway, isn't it? You're crumpling your blown NCAA bracket in disgust, rushing to wrap up your taxes and launching another round of excuses about why you're dismissing the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival.

It's easy to forget how lucky we are to have nature within such close range of our urban core, and it's not merely OK, but soul-restoring, to spend a day doing nothing more earth-shaking than looking at beautiful flowers. Not enough for you? The Festival, which runs through May 4, offers a host of activities to fill that unnerving silence:

- [Kiwanis Club Salmon BBQ](#): You can't beat \$12 a plate. Through April 20.
- [Cow Town](#): Fun for all ages at this third-generation family farm. Through April 20.
- [Apple Blossom and Barrel Tasting Event](#): Sample handcrafted wines and local cheeses. Through April 28.
- [Anacortes Quilt Walk](#): Stroll the avenue and view hundreds of colorful creations. Through May 4.
- [Alpacas of Misty Ridge ranch](#): Pick your own tulips and meet docile, downy-soft beasts. Through May 4.
- Local food, wine, products and crafts are everywhere you look. Through May 4.
- [Antiques Safari](#): Skagit's answer to the Roadshow. April 12.
- [Tulip Parade](#): Mild wackiness descends upon downtown La Conner. April 12.
- [Downtown Mount Vernon Street Fair](#): Music, children's activities and Northwest goods. April 18-20.
- [Bethany Bells Tulip Festival Concert](#): Choirs and bells ring in spring. April 19.

The Skagit Valley is 60 miles north of Seattle, directly off I-5 (use Exits 221 through 236). Or leave the car behind: [Victoria Clipper](#) sails from Seattle's Pier 69 (\$37-\$41 round-trip), [Amtrak's](#) Cascades train serves Mount Vernon (\$28 round-trip) and [Kenmore Air](#) seaplanes make the 30-minute flight from Lake Union to La Conner (\$98 round-trip).

Once you're there, take in the tulip fields on foot, bike or even by helicopter. Need more details? Check out recent articles from [The Seattle Times](#) and [Seattle Post-Intelligencer](#), or visit the [festival Web site](#) for more information and suggestions than you can shake a stem at.

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