



Agritourism, A part of the Experience Based Economy

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Your Customers Want to Bring Home Memories

One of the largest growing, experience based tourism niches here in California is agritourism. Agricultural tourism is a commercial enterprise at a working farm, ranch or agricultural plant conducted for the enjoyment or education of visitors, and that generates supplemental income for the owner. Agritourism can include farm stands or shops, U-pick, farm stays, tours, on-farm classes, fairs, festivals, pumpkin patches, Christmas tree farms, winery weddings, orchard dinners, youth camps, barn dances, hunting or fishing, guest ranches, and more.

Travelers have become more interested in how their food is produced. They want to meet farmers and processors and talk with them about what goes into food production. For many people who visit farms, especially children, the visit marks the first time they see the source of their food, be it a dairy cow, an ear of corn growing in a field, or an apple they can pick right off a tree.



In order to increase length of stay at your campgrounds, you need to be providing things to see and do. Are you including agritourism activities in your lists? Are you promoting events hosted by your local farmers & ranchers? If not you are missing a growing trend with today's traveler. Consider working in tandem with your local farmers and create a unique package tailored just to your campers. A perfect example is Angels Camp RV Park, east of Sacramento. They are partnered with a local winery who is now hosting an exclusive event 4 times a year just for campers staying at Angels Camp. It features a tour of the vineyard, wine-tasting and food pairings. Customers at Angels Camp can buy a weekend package or purchase their tickets upon arrival. Flying Flags RV Resort has put a different twist on their partnership. They have different wineries come directly to the park and provide wine tastings.

Not sure where to start? Try calagtour.org. The University of California has put together a searchable database of agritourism opportunities. Check here to find local growers and ranchers near you that have discovered the financial benefits of agritourism. Some examples include:

- Thornton Ranch Hike - This season you can be among the first to hike across the spectacular Thornton Ranch, the newly MALT-protected 1,013-acre sheep and cattle ranch, established in 1852. Join MALT Stewardship Director Patricia Hickey, rancher Gary Thornton and his daughter Marissa on a tour, five-mile hike and celebration with bubbly and cookies to go with your picnic lunch. Cost \$50.

- Artisan Cheese Tour - Visit the Petaluma creamery where you'll view the production process, sample cheese at different ages and participate in a curd making demo. Each visitor receives cheese to take home. Cost \$30.
- Good Land Organics Coffee Tour - The tour will be led by Good Land Organics owner and grower, Jay Ruskey. It will begin at our main facility at 10am, where you will be welcomed with fresh coffee, juice and seasonal fruit. Here Jay will give an overview of the coffee research collaboration that has been conducted with the assistance of the University of California Small Farm Program. You will then be lead on a moderate level hike where Jay will explain the dynamics of new crop adaptation and integration of organic tree fruit agriculture. The walk will take you through the eclectic mix of exotic fruit varieties that grow on the farm. Upon reaching the coffee you will discover the dozen Arabica varieties at various stages of development. The trees always have fruit so you are guaranteed to see beans on the trees. Each person will have an opportunity to taste a fresh picked coffee berry and discover the original flavors of the coffee bean, while discussing coffee cultivation and post-harvest processing. On your return hike, there will be time for open discussion and for any further questions. At Noon you have the option enjoy your picnic lunch at our pond. We ask that everyone please depart the facility by 1pm. Cost \$40.
- Farm & Barn Tour - The Placer Farm & Barn Tour celebrates Placer County's agricultural heritage and the family farms that feed us. It is a one-day self-guided tour of nine working farms, ranches, and vineyards in the beautiful countryside of Placer County, California. Each venue features different activities; tours, demonstrations, farm animals, equipment displays, food and wine tasting, live music, artists, locally grown produce and prepared food for sale.

These and other similar events are going on all over California. Use them to create wonderful memories.

What is the Experience Based Economy?

James Gilmore and Joseph Pine II explain the science of the Experience Based Economy. They argue that businesses must orchestrate memorable events for their customers, and that memory itself becomes the product - the "experience". More advanced experience businesses can begin charging for the value of the "transformation" that an experience offers. As goods and services become commoditized, the customer experiences that companies create will matter most. The basics of The Experience Economy can be found on [Wikipedia](#). A summary of Gilmore & Pine's concept was published in the Harvard Business Review. [Click here to read](#). Additionally, videos are available on [YouTube](#). Want even more detail? You can purchase their book [online](#) or at your local book store.