

A Weekend of Italian Music, Culture and Interactive Fun Awaits at the 93rd Annual Festa Italia on September 11-13, 2026

August 31, 2026. Monterey, CA. The award-winning 93rd Annual Festa Italia, also known as Monterey's Santa Rosalia Fisherman's Festival, invites locals and visitors alike to celebrate Monterey's rich Italian Sicilian heritage while honoring the enduring contributions of Monterey's local fishermen, past and present on September 11-13, 2026. The festival is proud to add even more great entertainment to its line-up.

This beloved, 3-day free, family-friendly festival offers fun for all ages with great food, live music, dancing, bocce tournament, shopping, networking and more. Drawing attendees from across the United States, Festa Italia remains one of Monterey's most cherished cultural traditions, capturing the sights, sounds, flavors, and spirit of Italy in a welcoming community setting celebrated at 20 Custom House Plaza – Monterey State Historic Park in Downtown Monterey adjacent to Old Fisherman's Wharf. Festa Italia is proud to be the First Place winner for "Best 2025 Community Event" in the annual Monterey Herald's Readers' Choice Awards.

Festa Italia Entertainment 2026:

Along with Festa Italia Festival favorites entertainers, Pasquale Esposito (<https://pasqualeesposito.com>), Mike Marotta and the Italian Allstars, The Money Band (Saturday, September 12th only - <https://www.moneyband.org/>) , The Anthony Lane Band (<https://www.anthonylaneband.com/>) , there will also be two new additions to the entertainment schedule: Lost and Found Band (Friday, September 11th <https://thelostandfoundbands.com/>) and The Musica of Jimmy Rossi and Luca DePaolis.

New this year! Lost and Found Band

Blending authenticity with a bold, modern edge, The Lost and Found Band brings timeless songs to life with rich grooves, dynamic brass, and soulful energy—crafted for audiences who appreciate musical precision and an electrifying live performance. They feature dance music from Rock n Roll - Jazz - R & B - Reggae. For more information, go to www.TheLostandFoundBands.com

New this year! The Musica of Jimmy Rossi and Luca De Paolis

Luca de Paolis lives in Rome, Italy and began playing the traditional folk accordion (organetto) at the age of three. Jimmy Rossi lives in Carson City, Nevada and plays multiple instruments; including the mandolin. Luca and Jimmy met 10 years ago at the Salt Lake City Festa Italiana. The two of them performed in separate acts, but over the years, they

often shared the stage in impromptu performances. Their love for performing together and their energy on stage was infectious and before you knew it, the SLC FESTA committee began working their collaborations into the festa schedule. This year, Jimmy asked Luca to fly out 10 days before the Salt Lake City Festa for a 10 day California/Nevada Tour, beginning at the famous Monterey Santa Rosalia Festival and culminating at the Salt Lake City Festa Italiana. Luca and Jimmy's repertoire consists of traditional Italian songs and dances, Italian/American songs arranged by Jimmy, singer songwriter originals, lots of sing-alongs, and some really fun stories. Come on out and enjoy some of this international collaboration's infectious energy. It's guaranteed FUN!

Festival Returning Entertainment Favorites:

Pasquale Esposito

Pasquale Esposito is an internationally acclaimed Italian tenor and crossover recording artist known for his captivating blend of pop, opera, and traditional Italian music. Born and raised in Naples, Italy, he immigrated to the United States in 1998 and earned his Bachelor of Arts in Music from San Jose State University, where he was named a Distinguished Alumnus in 2009. Esposito has released nine albums, toured internationally, and created and starred in several PBS concert specials celebrating Italian music and culture, including *Pasquale Esposito Celebrates Enrico Caruso* and *Pasquale Esposito Celebrates Italian Piazzas*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2015 in Marco Tutino's *Two Women* and has performed alongside and collaborated with renowned artists including Plácido Domingo and Sophia Loren. In 2012, he founded the nonprofit Notable Music and Arts Organization to support music education and provide opportunities for underserved students. For more information, go to <https://pasqualeesposito.com>.

The Anthony Lane Band

Anthony "Nino" Lane began performing in the Italian community at just 10 years old, later becoming a rock recording artist before moving to the Monterey Peninsula, where he operated the popular Planet Gemini for 25 years and purchased the legendary Fox Theater in Salinas. Today, he has returned to his musical roots as the lead vocalist of the Anthony "Nino" Lane Band, performing classic and contemporary Italian favorites at festivals and events throughout the country. Based out of Monterey CA, this 6-piece band headlines Festa Italia events all over California, Oregon, Utah, and Nevada. Joining Nino are Amalia Diaz on violin and vocals, Ramon Vallejo on keyboards and vocals, Alfredo "Sharkey" Mendez on drums, Juan Carlos Mejia on bass guitar, and Nathan McGriff on saxophone and vocals—an accomplished group that brings tremendous musicianship, energy and Italian spirit to every performance. They perform traditional Italian classics as well as up-to-date Italian hits. From Pavarotti to Zucchero, this band is always a crowd pleaser! For more information, go to <https://www.anthonylaneband.com>

Mike Marotta and the Italian Allstars

Mike Marotta and the Italian Allstars bring together decades of musical talent and a shared love of Italian music. Monterey native Mike Marotta Jr. is the third generation of the Marotta

family to entertain Monterey Peninsula audiences and has performed popular music on accordion and piano for more than 45 years. Singers include Erasmo “Orazio” Aiello, Dave Marzetti, Rachel Marotta Halim and Anna Marotta Halim. Originally from Palermo, Sicily, Aiello is known for his outstanding performances of traditional Italian songs and opera. The ensemble’s musicians include Mike Marotta Jr. on accordion, Dennis Murphy on bass, Paul Tarantino on sax/clarinet, and Skylar Campbell on drums. Paul Tarantino plays with several bands in both the Santa Cruz and Monterey areas, performing with Mike Marotta for the last 10 years. Dennis Murphy on bass has been named the area’s best musician by the Monterey County Weekly. Skylar Campbell is the area’s most in demand drummer who brings energy, rhythm and enthusiasm to all of his live performances.

The Money Band

Did anyone say, “local legends”? The Money Band gets pretty close! For more than 20 years, this high-energy band has entertained audiences throughout California, across the U.S. and internationally, earning a reputation as one of the Monterey Peninsula’s premier party bands. Frequently voted Best Band on the Monterey Peninsula by readers of the *Carmel Pine Cone*, *Monterey Herald* and *Monterey County Weekly*, The Money Band is fronted by charismatic lead vocalist and harmonica player Zoe Alexander and features an accomplished lineup of musicians. The band has shared the stage with major artists including Journey, Steve Winwood, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Kenny Chesney and Smash Mouth. Their crowd-pleasing repertoire spans country, funk, disco, classic rock, reggae and pop, featuring favorites from The Beatles and Rolling Stones to Michael Jackson and Bon Jovi—all delivered with The Money Band’s own energetic twist. For more information, go to www.moneyband.org.

David Marzetti, Master of Ceremonies and Singer

This is David’s 33rd year in a row emceeing and performing with his close friend Mike Marotta. David comes from a radio background that spans over 50 years in Radio and TV. Besides his weekly M-F Afternoon show 3-6 pm, David hosts the “ShagBag Show” every Saturday morning as well as “Sundays with Sinatra: Live from Little Napoli Restaurant in Carmel CA. All of David’s shows are broadcast on KMBY 106.7fm/1240am. He is highly regarded as “Monterey’s Emcee” and hosts many local functions and fundraisers including Festa Italia Festival, Santa Rosalia Queen’s Coronation Ball, La Merinda the City of Monterey’s Annual Birthday Celebration. The City of Monterey’s 4th of July on the Lawn, Old Fisherman’s Wharf’s Annual Birthday Party, The Carmel Summer Live Music Series, and the Italian Heritage Society Awards Ceremony. David is the Winner of BEST TV & RADIO PERSONALITY in the Monterey Herald Readers Poll. And, a 3-time winner of the PGA, Media Person of the Year Award. Congressman Jimmy Panetta calls David “The Voice of Monterey”.

Tarantella Dance

Lively music and dancing are included throughout all three days, adding to the cultural experience. Tarantella dance lessons are offered in front of the main stage on Sunday plus performances on both Saturday and Sunday. The lively Tarantella, one of Italy’s most beloved traditional folk dances, brings people together with its fast-paced music, spirited steps and joyful celebration of Italian culture.

Bocce Tournament

One of the biggest draws to the Fisherman's Festival is the Bocce Tournament. Each year, teams travel from far away to compete for cash prizes and bragging rights. There is an entrance fee per team, which includes lunch. Teams are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis and play on Saturday and Sunday at the Festa Italia Bocce Court. Once a team is confirmed, tournament rules are sent to them. Have fun cheering on your favorite team, and learn the rules and strategies at this exciting event.

Food and Drink at Festa Italia

Held over three days, Festa Italia features an abundant selection of authentic Italian cuisine available for purchase, including calamari, steak and sausage sandwiches, pasta, several types of pizza, arancini (it sells out early!), cannoli, and a vegetarian Eggplant Parmesan sandwich. Guests can also enjoy three refreshing Italian ice flavors (lemon, watermelon and strawberry) along with wine, beer, sodas, and water.

Calamari Cooking Demonstration

Another highlight of the weekend will be a Classic Fisherman's Wharf calamari cooking demonstration led by Gourmet Realtor Chef Tene Shake, with recipes for attendees, too. Born and raised on the Monterey Peninsula and part of the iconic Shake family, Tene is an award-winning chef who trained at the California Culinary Academy and attended Le Cordon Bleu and the International Culinary Center/French Culinary Institute. Tene Shake is also a former celebrity chef and host of Coastal Cuisine, which won a Telly Award in 2009. He was named Chef of the Year in 2014 and has long been active in the local culinary community.

Enjoy the Dessert Court on the Upper Custom House Plaza with delicious authentic Italian Cookies and Coffee.

Procession to the Wharf & Blessing of the Fleet:

A special procession will bring the statue of Santa Rosalia from Custom House Plaza down Old Fisherman's Wharf to the finger pier for the traditional Blessing of the Fleet. Santa Rosalia is the patron saint of Palermo, Sicily, and has long held special significance for Monterey's Sicilian fishing families, who brought their faith, traditions and fishing heritage to Monterey generations ago. The statue will be escorted by Saint Carriers and the Knights of Columbus as well as accompanied by the Tarantella Dancers following the Welcome Ceremony, beginning at Noon on Saturday, September 11th. At the finger pier, the procession will culminate with the Blessing of the Fleet, a time-honored tradition asking for protection and safe passage for local fishermen, their vessels and all those who make their

living on the sea. The names of all Italian-Sicilian fishermen that have perished at sea will be read and remembered.

Activities for the Kids on the Upper Custom House Plaza

New this year! Festa Italia Coloring Contest from 11 am – 1 pm on both Saturday and Sunday, September 12 and 13, with prizes!

Also enjoy these low-cost family fun activities on the Upper Custom House Plaza during Festa Italia:

Euro Bungee

This amazing bungee trampoline flings you 25 feet into the air as you jump and flip on a trampoline. The Euro Bungee air power jump gives you the sensation of being completely weightless. Experience the adrenaline rush of a bungee jump as you perform gravity-defying moves at your own speed/pace. You control the amount of fun you can have. Weight limit: 30 lbs. - 200 lbs.

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Inflatable Slide

Kids will have a blast climbing, sliding and enjoying the thrills of a giant 19-foot inflatable slide!

Festa Italia Merchandise and Vendors

Beyond the food and entertainment, Festa Italia offers Italian-themed and Festa Italia-exclusive merchandise, along with a variety of vendors showcasing unique crafts, clothing, and specialty items.

Tickets will also be sold for a 50-50 Drawing (need not be present to win).

Festa Italia History

The festival's roots trace back to 1933, when Sicilian fishermen in Monterey donated a statue of Santa Rosalia, their patron saint, to the San Carlos Cathedral in gratitude for safe voyages and abundant harvests. That act of faith and community gave rise to a tradition that continues today as a meaningful celebration of Monterey's Italian and fishing heritage. Join us for the 93rd Annual Festa Italia and be part of a living legacy that honors the past while keeping these cherished traditions vibrant for generations to come.

At a Glance

What: 93rd Annual Festa Italia held by the Festa Italia Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization

Festival Entry Cost: Free

Where: Custom House Plaza – Monterey State Historic Park, Downtown Monterey

When: Friday – Sunday, September 11-13, 2026

Friday, September 11th – 3 pm – 9 pm

Saturday, September 12th – 10 am – 9 pm

Sunday, September 13th – 10 am – 6 pm

Where: Custom House Plaza – Monterey State Historic Park, Downtown Monterey

Bocce Tournament – Saturday, September 11th and Sunday, September 12th at the bocce courts at the Custom House Plaza – Monterey State Historic Park

Information: [\(831\) 633-4444](tel:8316334444) or email mail@FestaItaliaMonterey.org

Additional information and updates will be posted on the website: www.FestaItaliaMonterey.org

FESTA Italia 2026 Entertainment Schedule

Friday Night, Sept. 11th, 2026

6:00pm to 9:00pm Dancing Under the STARS with
The Lost and Found Band

Dance Music from
Rock n Roll - Jazz - R & B - Reggae

Saturday, Sept. 12th. “Opening Ceremony Celebration”

10am Mass San Carlos Cathedral/Crowning the Statue of Santa Rosalia

11:30am – 12 noon Custom House Plaza

Opening Ceremony Main Stage

Procession to Wharf & Blessing of the Fleet

12:00 noon -1:00pm Anthony Lane Band

1:00pm - 1:25pm Cooking Demonstration

Master Chef Tene Shake

Classic Italian Calamari

1:30pm - 2:30pm Pasquale Esposito

2:30pm – 2:45pm The Musica of Jimmy Rossi and Luca DePaolis

2:45pm – 3:45pm Mike Marotta & the Italian All Stars
3:00pm Tarantella Dancers (Approximate time)
4:00pm - 5:00pm Anthony Lane Band
5:15pm - 6:15pm Pasquale Esposito
6:15pm -6:30pm The Musica of Jimmy Rossi and Luca DePaolis

Saturday Night, Sept.12th. 6:30pm - 9:00pm
Dancing Under the Stars with
The Money Band
Voted Best Band in Monterey County 2022

Sunday, Sept.13th. 2026

11am-11:30am Tarantella Dance Lessons in front of main stage -- “Free”
Phyllis Grillo, Master Tarantella Dance Instructor
Everyone welcome to attend and learn the Tarantella
11:30am – 11:45am The Musica of Jimmy Rossi and Luca DePaolis
11:45am –12:50pm Anthony Lane Band
12:30 Tarantella Dancers (Approximate time)
1:00pm - 1:25pm The Musica of Jimmy Rossi and Luca DePaolis
1:30pm - 2:30pm Pasquale Esposito
2:45pm - 3:45pm Mike Marotta & the Italian All Stars
3:45pm – 4:00pm The Musica of Jimmy Rossi and Luca DePaolis
4:00pm - 5:00pm Pasquale Esposito
5:00pm - 6:00pm Anthony Lane Band
Bocce Awards Closing Announcements

Schedule Subject to Change