

Summer Festivals and Family Fun in Missouri

Find the perfect event in this handy list broken down by region and city

Jefferson City, Mo. — Summertime! School's out. The days are long. It's vacation time. That doesn't have to mean an extended getaway and spending lots of money — in the Show-Me State, a vacation can be a single day or weekend when you attend our summer festivals and fun events. The Missouri Division of Tourism's website, **VisitMO.com**, highlights more than 340 summer events statewide . . . and the list grows daily.

From late spring through summer (for our purposes, May thru Labor Day), Missouri is home to a variety of events and festivals offering a myriad of activities from food to carnivals, artisans to concerts, beer and wine tasting to barbecue cook-offs, car shows to Civil War reenactments, games to fairs—there are events designed to suit every taste and budget. That in mind, we offer a few shining examples of the fun events in Missouri this summer. Enjoy!

If you crave adventure in the great outdoors, plus interesting places filled with history, Missouri's **southeast region** is your perfect destination.

Benton:

• August 31-September 1: Benton Neighbor Days Festival has been held since 1925; it offers a carnival; games such as mud racing and greased-pole climbing; and a parade.

Rolla:

- June 1-2: <u>Route 66 Summerfest</u>; celebrating the legacy of the "Mother Road," with the rumble of classic cars and
 motorcycles as they cruises down Historic Route 66; the sounds of classic "golden oldies" music; burn-out contests; a street
 dance; food; craft vendors; and lots of fun games.
- July 4-7: Rolla Lions Club Carnival; all the thrills of a summer carnival; food and games; and fireworks.

Cape Girardeau:

 May 26-28: <u>Fort D Memorial Weekend</u>; first observed after the end of the Civil War, Memorial Day honors the memory of U. S. soldiers who have died in military service; reenactors portray a timeline of events at <u>Fort D Historic Site</u>, an original 1861 earthworks fort.

Ironton:

• May 18-20: <u>Arcadia Valley Spring Mountain Music Festival</u>; bluegrass, country and gospel music, plus clog dancers and square dancers; food; craft vendors; artisan booths; horseback rides; a miniature train ride; and a children's tractor pull.

New Madrid:

• May 19: <u>Bass Pro Shops Big Cat Quest</u>; fishing teams from across the U.S. fish the Mississippi River in search of the largest catfish; 50 arts and crafts booths; military vehicles on display; plus other activities.

Farmington:

• June 1-3: <u>Farmington Country Days</u>; family fun, featuring great music; talent shows; a carnival; crafts and exhibits; concerts and entertainment; and plenty of competition for runners, walkers and bed racers – yes, you read that right.

East Prairie:

- June 22-23: <u>Sweet Corn Festival</u>; fresh corn and other foods; live entertainment; includes the Main Street Party and the Huskers 5k run/walk.
- June 23: <u>Tour de Corn Charity Ride</u>; a fun bicycle ride (not a race) for all ages and all levels; choose from routes of 15, 30, 65 and 100 miles; frequent, well-stocked rest stops; fresh-cooked sweet corn; live music; rolling support and gear.

Sikeston:

August 8-11: <u>Jaycee Bootheel Rodeo</u>; one of Missouri's largest rodeos; professional cowboys; nationally known musical
performers. The event includes the <u>Cowboy Up! Arts Festival</u>, August 11, where you can meet the rodeo clowns; enjoy
cowboy and western arts, crafts, and music; and kids can ride a pony.

Davisville:

May 12: Old Dillard Days Picnic at Dillard Mill State Historic Site; a 1900s picnic, with crafters and bluegrass music
throughout the day. Old-time activities include spinning and weaving, basket weaving, bee keeping, soap making,
woodworking, and a Civil War encampment.

Newburg:

• June 9: Newburg Days and Civil War Living History; Civil War demonstrations by members of the Missouri Civil War Reenactors Association, plus displays on the Civil War in Missouri; a craft show, an auction at the gazebo, old-time demonstrations, food, and a parade.

Frohna:

• June 30: <u>Saxon Lutheran Memorial's Bluegrass Music Fest</u>; wholesome bluegrass music fills the hills and hollers, as you sit outside under the shade trees and tap your toes; food and refreshments available; the evening ends with fireworks.

Ste. Genevieve:

• May 19-20: Master Gardeners Garden Walk; experience splendid gardens as you tour private and public gardens in French Colonial Ste. Genevieve; shop the farmers market and purchase plants for your garden.

West Plains:

- **June 7-9:** <u>Spring Bluegrass Festival</u>; numerous bluegrass and gospel bands; everyone is welcome to join the jam sessions; there is plenty of camping space available, from primitive sites to full hookups.
- **June 15-16**: Old Time Music, Ozark Heritage Festival; celebrating old-time music and the unique culture of the Ozark Highlands; musicians, artisans, and storytellers; mule jumping contests; cooking demonstrations; craft and food booths.

Here are just a few of the **central region's** major summer events.

Columbia:

- May 26-27: Pedaler's Jamboree Bicycle & Music Festival; Saturday, participants ride their bicycles down the Katy Trail, 30 miles from to Columbia to Boonville, with several stops along the way for live music and entertainment. Free camping in Boonville, with several concerts on the main stage. Sunday, reverse the route, with more music stops. (Your camping gear is shuttled both ways.) One fee covers all activities (younger than 16, free). Non-riders with a ticket are welcome at the concerts in Boonville.
- May 26-27: For the People Pow Wow; lots of Native American art and food, raffles, Indian drums and dancing, and prize drawings.
- June 2-3: Art in the Park; one of mid-Missouri's oldest and largest art festivals, features more than 100 artists from around the country; children's activities; musical acts; and food stands.
- June 8-10, July 20-22, 27-29: <u>Show-Me State Games</u>; an amateur Olympic-style sports festival, with more than 40 sports, for all ages and ability levels. Participants and spectators are welcome. (Some events are held in locations other than Columbia.)

Centralia:

• **June 1-3:** Anchor Festival; family fun with a carnival, concessions, crafts, a fun run, 3-on-3 basketball, anchor driving, antique tractor show, softball tournament, car show, parade, street dance, archery shoot, and washer tournaments.

Lake of the Ozarks Area:

- May 19: Oma and Noma Heritage Festival; the Bagnell Dam Strip reverts to the 1920s and 1930s, celebrating the famous Bagnell Dam, which was completed in 1931. In addition to food and normal festival activities, they have old-time Ozark concerts, vintage automobiles, outhouse races, a dog show, a bubblegum contest, tours of Bagnell Dam and some surprises. (Oma and Noma were the first private citizens to cross the dam.)
- June 1-3: <u>Blues and Barbecue Cook-off</u>; a Kansas City Barbecue Society sanctioned event, with heavy servings of blues music
- June 15-16: <u>Wakeboarding Competition</u> in Sunrise Beach; professional wakeboard riders from around the world compete. This is a new event at the Lake of the Ozarks.
- **July 21:** AquaPalooza, in Osage Beach; the largest family boating event at the Lake of the Ozarks, with live music, prizes and plenty of family activities.
- August 3-4: Hillbilly Bar-B-Que Cook-off in Laurie; a Kansas City Barbecue Society cook-off, with lots of family activities; even a Kid's Q challenge.

Buckhorn:

• **June 30:** <u>Buckhorn Blast</u>; a passport run for any motorcycle, car or truck; several routes from which to choose, covering the central Ozarks, with more than 30 stops available; games for children; family activities; free camping (no electric); live music; food and drink; fireworks.

Cole Camp:

May 18-19: <u>BBQ Contest and Motorcycle Show</u>; a judged barbecue contest including a "People's Choice" award, plus
live blues concerts and a motorcycle show.

Jefferson City:

• **July 30-August 1: Jaycees Fair**; carnival rides; games; 4H/FFA exhibits and activities; figure-8-scramble automobile race; monster trucks; tractor pulls; food and refreshments; and concerts.

Whiteman Air Force Base:

• May 19-20: <u>Air Show and Open House</u>; visitors get an up-close look at the personnel and equipment of the United States Air Force and other military branches. Military and civilian aircraft on display, including the B-2 Spirit Bomber; aerial shows and flying demonstrations; the USAF Band; U.S. Army Golden Knights parachuting team; and other exhibits.

Olean:

• **June 2:** <u>Testicle Festival</u>; the 19th edition of this legendary festival, where the main culinary delight is deep-fried turkey testicles (yes, other foods are served). Enjoy music and dancing, and a carnival.

Sedalia:

- June 6-9: Scott Joplin Festival; nearly 100 hours of music, concerts, dances and dinner shows at several free and paid venues, celebrating the life of one of the world's best known ragtime musicians and composers, Scott Joplin (1868-1917).
- August 9-19: Missouri State Fair; The 400-acre fairground is filled with livestock shows, exhibits, world-class
 entertainment, top headliner concerts, informative booths, arts and crafts, a thrilling carnival, and food and beverage vendors.

Boonville:

 June 20-24: <u>Boonville Heritage Days</u>; carnival, vendors, car show, dog show, concerts and loads of fun things for the family.

Kingdom City:

June 15-17: <u>Fantasy Fair at Boster Castle</u>; the future, the past and other dimensions converge when you walk into this
fantasy world of entertainment.

Waynesville:

- May 26: <u>Summer Jam</u>; start summer right at this musical entertainment extravaganza; there are vendors for shopping and food for eating.
- June 23-24: <u>Cave State Cruiser's Car Show</u>; the 25th edition of this mega car show, with vehicles displayed in 21 classes, plus vendor booths and food stands.
- July 28: Old Settlers Day; Waynesville's oldest festival is held on the banks of Roubidoux Creek; Kickapoo Trace
 Muzzleloaders encampment; YMCA Duck Race; a military band; a variety of traditional musicians; games; pony rides and
 other activities.

Lynchburg:

August 24-26: <u>Rubydoo Country Music Festival</u>; well-known country artists plus up-and-comers take the stage.
 Proceeds go to <u>Hope For The Warriors</u> to support U.S. service members and their families nationwide who have been affected by injuries or death in the line of duty.

Dixon:

- May 24-28: Memorial Day Bluegrass Festival; spend Memorial Day weekend listening to plenty of bluegrass music on the outdoor stage (take a chair); great food; take your instrument and sit in on the many jam sessions; camping available on-site.
- **July 27-29:** Gospel Bluegrass Festival; sip an ice-cold sweet tea and enjoy a unique blend of gospel, bluegrass, old-time, yodeling, southern gospel, and folk music on the outdoor stage (take a chair); food available; camping on-site.
- August 31-September 3: <u>Labor Day Bluegrass Pickin' Festival</u>; wind up your summer with some good food, and rousing bluegrass music on the outdoor stage (take a chair); camping on-site.

Lebanon:

• August 1-4: Brumley Gospel Sing; the 44th anniversary of one of the most the popular music events in Missouri; referred

to as the "Grandaddy of Gospel Sings"; dozens of performers; more than 30,000 gospel music fans.

While you're in the **northwest region**, take in some outstanding family friendly summer festivals.

Kansas City:

- May 26-27: <u>Jiggle Jam Family Music Festival</u>, the largest family music event in the Midwest, with youth-oriented performances on three stages, plus dance, crafts, train rides, musical chairs and exercise workshops.
- June 1-3: <u>Festa Italiana</u>; a celebration of Italian culture, featuring live music, authentic Italian food, wine tasting, an inflatable play area for kids, and a variety of family friendly events.
- **June 8-10:** Scottish Highland Games; Scottish clans assemble for bag-piping; Celtic music and dancing; and Scottish "heavy athletics" competitions.
- July 6-10: Major League Baseball FanFest and All-Star Game; the largest baseball-fan event in the world captures the thrills and excitement of the game, with a baseball activities theme-park, autograph sessions, displays from the MLB Hall of Fame, and dozens of family friendly activities—culminating with the 83rd All-Star Game, May 10, in Kauffman Stadium.
- August 31-September 2: <u>Irish Fest</u>; with seven stages of traditional music and Celtic rock, Irish comedians, heritage displays and workshops, ethnic food, a massive area just for kids, and an outdoor Mass on Sunday.

North Kansas City:

• June 27-July 1: North KC Centennial Festival; celebrating 100 years with a carnival and midway; arts and crafts; KidZone with pony rides, petting zoo, inflatable play area; puppet shows; a large variety of music; fun run and senior stroll; fireworks; rodeo; car show; and The Wall That Heals, a half-scale replica of the Vietnam Memorial Wall.

Parkville:

- June 15-16: River Jam Blues, Jazz and Fine Art Festival; a packed lineup of music, shopping, food and fun in English Landing Park, on the banks of the Missouri River.
- August 17-19: <u>Parkville Days Riverfest</u>; the last blast of summer, featuring nothing but fun, live music, arts and crafts booths, a carnival, food, games, and a parade.

St. Joseph:

- June 1-3: Northend Festival; live music; vendors; crafts; fireworks; children's activities; a parade; duck races; food; and a dance-school performance.
- June 15-16: Coleman Hawkins Jazz Festival; an outdoor event featuring local and regional Jazz entertainers.
- August 17-19: <u>Trails West</u>, Northwest Missouri's largest arts festival includes arts and crafts, artisans, food and drink, plus lots and lots of live music.

Glasgow:

 August 11: Glasgow Jamboree and Heritage Festival; demonstrations of 1800s crafts and chores, Dutch-oven cooking, tobacco processing and other skills; old-time games, lawn-mower races, and an evening dance.

Liberty:

• June 1-2: <u>Liberty Arts Squared Festival</u>; artists and artisans display and sell their works; live music; food; and lots of children's activities around the square.

Independence:

- June 2: <u>Strawberry Festival</u>; strawberry shortcake, strawberry ice cream and strawberry floats; more than 100 booths of antiques, crafts, flowers and herbs; plus carriage rides, vintage cars, children's crafts, live music and other entertainment at the 1881 Vaile Mansion.
- **July 14:** <u>Bingham-Waggoner Antique and Craft Festival</u>, more than 150 antique dealers and original crafters from a four-state area; a variety of food; and live music at the 1852 Bingham-Waggoner Estate.
- August 31-September 3: <u>Santa-Cali-Gon Days</u>; the largest festival in Independence celebrates the starting point of the Santa Fe, California, and Oregon Trails; 400 vendors; more than 100 food booths; local and nationally known country and gospel performers; a carnival; contests such as watermelon-seed spitting, ice cream eating, and root beer chugging; dancing; bingo; and other exciting activities.

Blue Springs:

• June 9: National Marina Day Festival; fishing and free family fun jam-packed with boat rides; fishing tips and tricks; raffles; children's crafts and contests; outdoor cooking demonstrations and other activities.

Kingston:

• June 1-2: <u>Caldwell County's Civil War Days</u>; the 1860s come to life with sutlers (an army camp follower who peddled provisions), demonstrations, military camps, artillery fire, period music and food, and reenactments of two Civil War battles.

Lee's Summit:

- June 1-3: <u>Downtown Days Festival</u>; a family friendly festival with live entertainment, arts and crafts, a carnival, Kansas
 City Barbeque Society sanctioned barbecue contest, street performers, food, and fun activities.
- June 2: <u>Children's Day and Natioal Trails Day</u>; at Missouri Town 1855, a day of games and activities specifically
 designed to introduce children to a simpler time in our history through time-honored activities such as tug-of-war, marbles,
 and gunny sack races.

Weston:

• **July 14-15:** <u>Sizzlers BBQ Festival</u>; a Kansas City Barbeque Society sanctioned contest; plenty of barbecue to eat; cold drinks; and five music stages offering country, bluegrass, a Celtic band, pub songs with comedy, and a jam session.

Visitors to Missouri's **southwest region**, in the Ozark foothills, and find numerous summer events.

Branson:

- May 17-19: <u>Plumb Nellie Days Arts and Crafts Festival</u>; a juried art and craft show with more than 150 artisans and crafters from around the country; a diverse food court; top-notch music and entertainment; past "American Idol" finalists; past "America's Got Talent" finalists; and lots of surprises.
- June 9-July 22: <u>Silver Dollar City's National KidsFest</u>; unbelievable shows bring out the kid in every member of your family; featuring the amazing fests of the legendary Fabulous Wallendas Family Circus. (Several other major festivals are held at Silver Dollar City throughout the summer.)
- August 18: <u>Guns & Hoses Fishing Tournament</u>; a trout-fishing tournament, on Lake Taneycomo, benefiting the Branson Fire and Police auxiliary funds.

Hartville:

• June 23, 24, 30, July 1: White Hart Renaissance Faire; Make merry with the jovial villagers when you visit the joy-filled times when Shakespeare trod the boards, Brave knights jousted, and high adventure was the order of the day.

Desloge:

 August 31-September 3: 31st Annual Labor Day Picnic; lots of family adventures, including parades, games, crafts, bands and food in the Desloge City Park.

Springfield:

- May 25-27: NSRA Mid-America Street Rod Nationals; more than 2,200 street rods; kids and adult games; arts & crafts; an automobile swap meet; and a church service. (A street rod is a modernized pre-1949 vehicle.)
- July 28-August 5: Ozark Empire Fair; still a huge event after 75 years; fun; food; midway rides; live shows and concerts; plus a huge variety of displays and exhibits.

Nevada:

• **June 6-9:** <u>Bushwhacker Days</u>; one of the southwest region's biggest festivals; on the square with a parade, costumes, great music, food, old-fashioned games, and activities for the kids.

Ash Grove to Branson West:

August 27: 100 Mile Long Garage Sale; booths, booths and more booths are set up along a 100-mile route, zigzagging
through the Ozarks; bargains, food, fun and a peaceful drive. Map available on the website.

Ash Grove:

• May 19: Frontier Children's Festival; a day of children's games and activities, including a 19th century baseball game.

Carthage:

- August 2-5: <u>Marian Days</u>; a celebration of the Virgin Mary, including daily mass, food Kiosks, and vendors. Hosted since 1978 at the Congregation of the Mother Coredemptrix.
- June 18: Kid's Fishing Day; fishing activities at Kellogg Lake for kids; take your own fishing gear.

Mindenmines:

- May 26, June 23, July 21, August 4, September 1: <u>Bison Hikes at Prairie State Park</u>; see one of our most magnificent mammals on these guided hikes; learn about American bison (buffalo) and how American Indians used bison as more than a food source.
- July 7: <u>Hug a Herp Day at Prairie State Park</u>; an event to dispel myths and rumors about reptiles and amphibians, while giving people a chance to see and touch them up close.

Seymour:

• **June 21-24:** Rock'n Freedom; sanctioned barbecue contests (with a Kids' Q), fireworks, classic cars, concerts, hot air balloons, 5k walk/run, food, winery, and a carnival.

Joplin:

• May 18-19: <u>Joplin 44 Truckers Jamboree</u>; concerts; antique truck display; barbecue cook-out; carnival rides and games; car and bike show; and fireworks.

When traveling Missouri's **northeast region**, clear your calendar to make time for a robust lineup.

Hannibal:

- June 9-10: <u>Downtown Hannibal Art Fair</u>; a juried art fair with more than 60 national and regional artists in more than a
 dozen categories.
- July 4-7: <u>National Tom Sawyer Days</u>; a Hannibal tradition for 57 years, the festival focuses on family fun in the hometown
 of author Mark Twain. Activities include the National Fence Painting Championships; a frog-jumping competition; concerts;
 fireworks; and other fun events.

Washington:

• May 18-20: <u>Fine Art Fair and Winefest</u>; more than 40 artists exhibit and sell their wares; more than 60 Missouri wines, from a dozen wineries available to sample; street musicians and a concert.

Chesterfield:

• May 19-20: <u>Spring Arts and Crafts Festival</u>; a juried art show, with artists from across the Midwest; lots of food and refreshments; plus tours of the mid-1800s <u>Historic Village at Faust Park</u>.

Hermann:

- May 19-20: <u>Maifest</u>; celebrated annually in Hermann since the early 1870s; German music and dance; beer and wine gardens; parades; games; and activities for children.
- July 6-8: <u>Cajun Concert on the Hill</u>; one of the most anticipated annual events at <u>Stone Hill Winery</u>; an aww-thentic Cajun band from the bayous of Louisiana; Cajun food and dancing; wine; cellar tours; and a parade.

Moberly:

• **June 6-9:** Railroad Days Festival; celebrating the railroad heritage of Randolph County, with a carnival; food vendors; nightly entertainment; ice cream social; sycamore queen contest; and other activities.

Florissant:

• June 23-24: <u>Fiesta in Florissant</u>; a celebration of Hispanic culture, with crafts, a children's pavilion, pinatas, and authentic food and dancing.

Kimmswick:

• June 2-3: <u>Strawberry Festival</u>; a wide selection of strawberry treats; hundreds of craft and food vendors; plus live music in the streets of the historic district.

Maplewood:

• May 19: <u>Taste of Maplewood Street Festival</u>; if you like food, drink, food, shopping, food, and two stages of music, this is the place.

St. Louis:

- May 25-27: <u>St. Louis Bluesweek</u>; blues music on two concert stages; a workshop/demo stage; crawfish boils; barbecue competitions; a unique selection of craft beers; and vendors with blues-related products.
- May 26-August 19: Lantern Festival: Art by Day, Magic by Night; an exhibition of larger-than-life, lighted works of art from China, at the Missouri Botanical Garden; one of China's most treasured events and ancient traditions.
- August 25-26: <u>Festival of Nations</u>; a multi-ethnic celebration with international dance, music, food, cultural exhibits, folk art demonstrations, and crafts.
- August 25-26: LouFest Music Festival; the biggest independent music event in St. Louis; music for all-ages, performed on three stages; food; and a special area filled with music and magic for kids.
- **September 1-2:** Big Muddy Blues Festival; one of the country's best blues music festivals, showcasing more than 30 bands, on three outdoor stages.

St. Charles:

May 19-20: Lewis and Clark Heritage Days; commemorating the arrival of Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery in

St. Charles; reenactments; military encampment; fife and drum corps muster; musket and cannon demonstrations; a skillet throw; plus period music, food and wares.

Stanton:

• June 1-30: <u>Lantern Tours of Meramec Caverns</u>; each Friday and Saturday evening in June, take an 80-minute guided tour of the caverns, lit only by hand-held lanterns.

Webster Groves:

• **June 1-3:** Art and Air Art Fair; more than 110 fine artists, in 12 categories; top-notch musicians perform; food and drink are available. Sunshine Artists Magazine gives Art & Air high marks for management, attendance and quality.

Kirksville:

August 3-5: <u>Battle of Kirksville</u>; Civil War reenactment; vintage baseball game; period medical tent; period costumes; and dancing.

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