

9 One-of-a-Kind Summer Festivals for Seattle Kids and Families - ParentMap

Thursday, October 30 2014, 1:24 PM

[OUTINGS + ACTIVITIES](#) | [FAMILY FUN](#) | [FAMILY FUN](#)

9 One-of-a-Kind Summer Festivals for Seattle Kids and Families

By Gemma Alexander

Finding a summer festival is easy. Finding one that stands out from the crowd of massive markets and noisy parades is the real challenge. Here are nine family-friendly festivals with loads of character that your kids are sure to enjoy.

Gotta dance!

Art on the Fly

Seattle

Friday, June 13, 4:30–7:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 14 noon–6 p.m.

Art-on-the-Fly kicks off the ten-day Seattle International Dance Festival. While the festival proper requires tickets to view local, national, and international performers at venues all over Seattle, Art on the Fly offers two free afternoons in South Lake Union. Three stages will host a variety of dance performances and classes, while roving performances could pop up anywhere. There will be food trucks, beer and margarita gardens, and a family activity area.

What floats your boat?

Lake Union Wooden Boat Festival

Seattle

Friday–Sunday, July 4–6

Lake Union on the Fourth of July is strictly for folks who love a crowd, but this free waterfront festival has a relaxed, family atmosphere the rest of the weekend. Besides boat tours and free boat rides on Lake Union (sign up early), activities for kids include toy boat building and a scavenger hunt. The Quick and Daring Boat Race, in which teams have 24 hours to build the boat they will race, is as much about seeing which boats sink as which will win.

Parking is limited, so consider public transportation.

Lions, dragons and Seafair

Dragon Fest

Seattle

Saturday–Sunday, July 12–July 13

The largest pan-Asian festival in the Northwest includes lion and dragon dances, Japanese taiko drumming, martial arts demos and an anime costume contest for kids. Dozens of restaurants offer \$2 tasting plates on the Food Walk. With over 30,000 visitors each year, avoid the stress of finding parking by taking the train or bus (King Street Station and the bus tunnel are convenient to the festival). Consider stopping by the relative calm of the Danny Woo Community Garden (620 South Main Street) or International District Library (713 Eighth Ave. S.) if a break from the crowds is needed.

Got milk cartons?

Seafair Milk Carton Derby

Seattle

Saturday, July 12, 9:30 a.m.– 4 p.m.

The Milk Carton Derby is fun to watch, but even more fun to join. Your family can build a boat out of donated milk cartons from PCC Natural Markets and race it on Seattle's Green Lake. Free online registration has already begun. Racing categories are divided by age, including a category for family projects. Boat building guidelines and race rules are posted on the website. Life jackets are required. For nonboaters, there will be a kid's entertainment area at the southwest end of the lake with bouncy houses, Seafair characters in costume, and face painting. For once the playground on the northeast shore may seem like the quietest spot at the lake.

Feeling a little blue(grass)

Bainbridge Island Bluegrass Festival

Battle Point Park

Saturday, July 26, 10 a.m.–8 p.m.

If you're looking for a music festival without the hype, hop a ferry to Bainbridge Island on July 26. Save stress and money by walking on the ferry and taking the free shuttle from the Bainbridge ferry terminal to the festival. Festival tickets can be purchased online (\$30/family of four, children six and under, free). Featuring bands such as North Country Bluegrass and the Warren G. Hardings, the lineup includes Northwest bluegrass bands ranging from traditional to radio-friendly; at least one band includes children as members.

Battle Point Park (which was chosen by ParentMap readers as [best local park](#) in 2013), has a fantastic, community-built playground and lots of room for kids to run around. You can choose to eat festival food, tour the observatory or just listen to music on the lawn with a picnic.

Look out for Timber!

Timber! Outdoor Music Festival

Carnation

Thursday–Saturday, July 24–July 26

Now in its second year, Timber! Outdoor Music Festival aims to unite music, community, and the natural environment in an immersive three-day experience at Tolt-MacDonald Park in Carnation. Musical acts run the gamut from Charles Bradley to J. Mascis, with a special kids' stage in the mornings. Other activities include organized star-gazing and an outdoor movie. Ticket prices vary from \$20 for a Thursday day pass to \$125 for a single full-festival pass with camper van parking, but children under 12 are always free.

Get in the spirit

In the Spirit Festival

Tacoma

Saturday, August 9, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

Sponsored by the Washington State History Museum (free the day of the festival), this annual celebration of Native American culture closes out the museum's Contemporary Native Arts exhibit, which will feature the work of two dozen Native artists this year. Entrance to the festival is free and museum admission fees are waived on this day. The festival includes traditional dancing, drumming and singing. Vendors will be selling works by contemporary Native artists. The Tacoma Art Museum, Museum of Glass, and the Children's Museum of Tacoma are all within walking distance if you want to make the most of your day downtown.



Art on the Fly | BQDanza, credit: Wendy Simons



Dragon Fest by [issSeattle](#) on flickr CC





Timber Outdoor Music Festival, credit: Jason Tang

All aboard!

Railroad Days

Snoqualmie
Friday–Sunday, August 15–17

This 76-year-old festival has a historical slant, with demonstrations of old railway equipment at the Snoqualmie Depot. Train rides on antique rail carriages take visitors on a 75-minute round trip excursion through North Bend and Snoqualmie Falls (check website for price). Vintage car and model train shows may have more appeal for adults, but a painting station and free wagon rides are sure to please the little ones.

Other kid-friendly attractions include a pancake breakfast, parade, fun runs, and entertainment on three stages. Although only one is called “Kids Stage,” the entire line-up is geared for whole family entertainment.

Oktoberfest in September

Wallingford Wurst Festival

Seattle
Friday–Saturday, September 19–20

Started as a fundraiser for St. Benedict Catholic School in Seattle, the Oktoberfest-style Wallingford Wurst Festival has grown to a neighborhood-defining event that draws 10,000 people every year. With its unusual mix of street fair and school fair, the Wurst Festival offers both biergarten and bake sale; carnival rides and raffle tickets. And since it is all to benefit education, there is a book sale, too. Oktoberfest is a traditional way to end the summer. Why not try the Wurst one?

June 8, 2014

