

5 Outdoor Summer Music Festivals Perfect for Families

Truly family-friendly music and nature fests you and your kids will love



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PHOTO: Pickathon Music Festival. Credit: Leah Nash

Outdoor summer music fests the whole family will love

There was a time when summer music festivals meant only Folklife and Bumbershoot. Not anymore. While those stalwarts still bookend the summer festival season, Puget Sound-area families have a multitude of options for truly family-friendly outdoor music festivals. It doesn't matter if you're looking for a weekend in the woods or something closer to home. Whatever your budget and taste in music, there is a Northwest music festival for you. Several local festivals are not particularly planned with families in mind – think Sasquatch and lately, Bumbershoot – but we've picked out fests that welcome and cater to all ages.

At these five terrific summer music fests, music-loving grown-ups and their kids can all have a wonderful time. Use the arrows above the image to scroll through all the options.



PHOTO: Campfire stage at Timber! Credit: Bryan John Appleby

Timber! Outdoor Music Festival

[Timber! Outdoor Music Festival](#) is a weekend of fun, nature and community at [Tolt-MacDonald Park](#), with a musical line-up of local and better-known indie rock acts, like Car Seat Headrest, Thao Nguyen and Naked Giants. It's close enough to the city that families can sleep in their own beds at night but camping at the park might be more fun. Timber is expressly family-friendly, with free admission for kids 12 and under and "Camp Timber" on Friday and Saturday mornings with special kids' concerts, arts, crafts and science experiments. Parents can join kids for festival-sponsored S'mores-making on Friday and Saturday nights. Splashing in the river is a popular activity for folks attending this fest.

When: Thursday-Saturday, July 12-14

Where: Carnation, Wash.

Cost: \$40-\$50/day or \$110/weekend pass for adults; ages 12 and under free. Camping \$40/tent and parking \$20/car.



PHOTO: Camping at Summer Meltdown. Credit: Megan Kathleen

Summer Meltdown

The much-loved home of the Darrington Bluegrass Festival is also host to [Summer Meltdown](#). Ninety minutes outside of Seattle, the 40-acre venue nestled between a glacier-capped mountain and the North Fork of the Stillaguamish River offers shaded camping, swimming and hiking. Children ages 8 and under are free. The Kids Zone, filled with hula-hoops, play-dough, bubbles, and costumes, is also home to face-painting, derby car races, and music and craft workshops. The mostly-local lineup is as eclectic as our music scene, ranging from electronic Bassnectar, to Greensky Bluegrass, dream-pop Lemolo and the hip-hop of Dave B. Don't forget to bring your [costumes](#) for Saturday night!

When: Thursday–Sunday, Aug. 2–5

Where: Darrington, Wash.

Cost: \$260/weekend pass for adults, \$130/weekend pass for youth ages 9–15, ages 8 and under free. Car camping spot \$150 and parking \$30.



PHOTO: Kids at Pickathon. Credit: Alec Carrier

Pickathon Music Festival

Described as equal parts summer camp, music festival and family reunion, [Pickathon](#) turns 20 this year. Extensive programming for kids (12 and under attend the fest for free) includes classes, crafts, chill zones, kinder-camp and day care hosted by Cedarwood Waldorf School at Windmill Hill. Pickathon kids can also learn wilderness skills, fiber arts and archery with foam weapons. There are three full days of circus arts classes, and one of the music stages is dedicated to kindie favorites. Everything from world music to punk and hip-hop is represented on the other stages scattered in the woods of [Pendarvis Farm](#), but the line-up skews towards indie and Americana. Tickets for this classic fest are already running low, so be sure to buy yours now or risk waiting until next year.

When: Friday-Sunday, Aug. 3-5

Where: Happy Valley, Ore. (20 minutes from Portland)

Cost: \$320/weekend pass for adults, \$160/weekend pass for teens 13-16, ages 12 and under free. Camping is included and weekend parking costs \$75. Day passes are also available for \$125-\$150/day for ages 13 and up; parking \$30/day.



PHOTO: Music at CHOMP! Courtesy CHOMP! Festival

Chomp

[CHOMP](#), King County's local food and sustainable living festival that launched a few years ago, has really ramped up this year. The primary focus of this one-day celebration at Marymoor Park is still on food – the Garden Party (\$25) features small bites from [Lark](#), the Community Kitchen includes live cooking demos and flat-fee restaurant samples and there's an onsite farmers market. Besides the food and a variety of sustainable living workshops and activities, CHOMP now has the makings of a fine music festival for families. This year's music line-up favors kids' tunes. Kindie rockers Recess Monkey and Caspar Babypants will perform, plus enjoy the irresistible soul of the True Loves, rhythms of Native drummers Unkitawa and the improvisational rap of Matisyahu.

When: Saturday, Aug. 18

Where: Redmond, Wash.

Cost: Festival admission is free for all ages; select activities and parking extra



PHOTO: Arts in Nature Festival. Courtesy Arts in Nature

Arts in Nature

The [Arts in Nature Festival](#) in West Seattle's [Camp Long](#) is a one-of-a-kind festival that breaks down the barrier between artist and audience to celebrate creativity of all kinds. Yes, there are dance and music performances, including Pat Wright and the Total Experience Gospel Choir, Naomi Wachira, Gamelan Pacifica and more. But families will also have many opportunities to participate with open mics, workshops on everything from marimba to creative writing, interactive art exhibits, Native American storytellers and naturalist events – including a costumed hike through the forest!

When: Saturday-Sunday, Aug. 25-26

Where: Seattle, Wash.

Cost: \$10-\$12/day for adults, \$8-\$10/day for students and seniors, \$5-\$6/day for youth ages 10-17, ages 9 and under free. Weekend passes available for \$8-\$20. A \$50 Friend of the Festival ticket admits one adult all weekend and sponsors attendance for a low-income youth.