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Head to the Market! Family-Friendly Special Events and Activities at Pike Place Market This Fall

Celebrate the the birthday – and survival – of iconic Pike Place Market

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PHOTO: Credit: Thomas Le, Unsplash

Today it's almost impossible to imagine downtown Seattle without the 114-year-old Pike Place Market. But 50 years ago, we almost lost it to urban renewal. Last year, the market faced and survived its biggest threat since a citizens' initiative saved it from the wrecking ball back in 1971. With the world in lockdown, visitors to the market dropped from 15 million in 2019 to less than half that number in 2020.

While vendors, business owners and employees worked to stay open safely, the market community pulled together in myriad ways, from hosting educational workshops sharing online business strategies to essential vendors selling products on behalf of their shuttered counterparts. Throughout it all, just as they did in 1971, local supporters helped keep the market going. Now that the summer tourists have all gone home, Seattle families have the market to themselves once again, and Pike Place Market is ready to celebrate.

Birthday parties and seasonal celebrations

This fall, Pike Place Market has special events planned to entertain the whole family. On Oct. 23, celebrate the 50th anniversary of the citizens' initiative to Keep the Market (<http://pikeplacemarket.org/keep-market>) with purchases of commemorative gifts, craft demonstrations, scavenger hunts, live music and, of course, shopping.

On Nov. 27, the annual Magic in the Market event will kick off the holidays with festive entertainment, a visit from Santa Claus, seasonal craft vendors and a ceremony to brighten the market with holiday lights. Santa will be back at the market on Dec. 4 and 11 for free photos with the kiddos.



Eclipse Hat Shop

Family fun

You don't have to wait for a special event to visit the market (especially if you're still leery of crowds). ParentMap developed an age-by-age guide to Pike Place Market (<https://www.parentmap.com/article/best-activities-pike-place-market>) a few years ago. Nearly everything we loved back then can still be found at the market, and lots of new family-friendly shops and food spots have opened since then.

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Visit [Eclipse Hat Shop](https://www.eclipseshatshop.com/) (<https://www.eclipseshatshop.com/>) on Western Avenue, where your fashion-conscious offspring can find stylish chapeaux or even design their own. Pick up a Pastry Pet at [Marnin Saylor](https://www.marninsaylor.com/home) (<https://www.marninsaylor.com/home>), the DownUnder shop famous for its handmade Donut Cat and Éclair Bear plush toys. Check out the animal-themed art at [Gradient Art Gallery](https://www.gradientartgallery.com/) (<https://www.gradientartgallery.com/>) and La Ru's quirky creations at [Robot vs Sloth](https://www.robotvsloth.com/) (<https://www.robotvsloth.com/>). In the craft market, look for [tiny fairy houses](https://www.etsy.com/shop/FairyHousesbyKirsti) (<https://www.etsy.com/shop/FairyHousesbyKirsti>) and [Kate Endle Illustration](https://www.kateendle.com/) (<https://www.kateendle.com/>) and Fine Art's children's books and art. Worried about creating a spendthrift child with all this shopping? Encourage saving with a handmade ceramic piggy bank from [Pike Place Pigs](https://www.pikeplacepigs.com/) (<https://www.pikeplacepigs.com/>).

The market has always been a great place to eat, and its restaurants are still open. But if you're not comfortable eating inside, you don't have to limit yourself to snacking. Many of the market's full-service restaurants offer [outdoor dining or takeout](http://pikeplacemarket.org/blog/outdoor-dining-patios-balconies-pike-place-market) (<http://pikeplacemarket.org/blog/outdoor-dining-patios-balconies-pike-place-market>). There are lots of little [spots for a picnic](https://www.parentmap.com/article/best-activities-pike-place-market) (<https://www.parentmap.com/article/best-activities-pike-place-market>) hidden throughout the market, but if they are occupied, head through the [MarketFront](http://www.parentmap.com/article/pike-place-market-expansion-plans) (<http://www.parentmap.com/article/pike-place-market-expansion-plans>) for room to spread out on the public plaza, where you can enjoy an expansive view of Puget Sound. Don't forget to [say hi to Billie](http://www.parentmap.com/article/rachel-the-pig-pike-place) (<http://www.parentmap.com/article/rachel-the-pig-pike-place>) (Rachel the Pig's lesser-known twin) and pick up some [Indi Chocolate](https://indichocolate.com/) (<https://indichocolate.com/>) on the way there.



Veggies in Pike Place Market | Credit: Thomas Le, Unsplash

Safety first

In some ways, with its underground warren of shops and intense crowds, Pike Place Market is a pandemic nightmare, but you can avoid the throngs by visiting on a rainy weekday. (Take advantage of Seattle Public Schools' early-release Wednesdays.) And don't forget that much of the market is outdoors. Next to being in your own home, the open air is the safest place to be in a pandemic, and much more interesting.

Pike Place Market is doing everything possible to keep its workers and visitors safe. Employees and shoppers are required to wear a mask indoors and out. Six-foot markers have been installed throughout the market's 9 acres, and three public handwashing stations have been added in high-traffic areas. The market facilities department has also adopted an enhanced cleaning regimen and installed antimicrobial film to prevent germ transfer in elevators.

Normally, environmentally friendly public transportation is the most convenient way to reach Pike Place Market. But if you feel safer in your car, [Pike Place Market's parking garage \(http://pikeplacemarket.org/directions-parking?utm_source=homepage&utm_medium=slider\)](http://pikeplacemarket.org/directions-parking?utm_source=homepage&utm_medium=slider) is a surprisingly affordable option.

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Pike Place Market at home

If you can't even consider having fun in a busy public place until your kiddos are old enough to be vaccinated (and who can blame you?), you can enjoy a multitude of market resources from the comfort of home.

The [educator resources \(http://pikeplacemarket.org/educator-resources\)](http://pikeplacemarket.org/educator-resources) section on the market's website includes two interactive games that kids will love to play: [Now & Then \(http://pikeplacemarket.org/sites/default/files/games/now_and_then/index.html\)](http://pikeplacemarket.org/sites/default/files/games/now_and_then/index.html) matches new photos with old ones, and [What Do You Hear in the Market? \(http://pikeplacemarket.org/sites/default/files/games/market_sounds/index.html\)](http://pikeplacemarket.org/sites/default/files/games/market_sounds/index.html) plays audio clips for you to identify. A new digital book, "[Inside Pike Place Market \(http://pikeplacemarket.org/download-pike-place-market-free-digital-book\)](http://pikeplacemarket.org/download-pike-place-market-free-digital-book)," explores the unique characteristics and history of the market, and KOMO-TV will debut a 50th-anniversary documentary, "[Pike Place Market: A Love Story \(https://pikeplacemarketfoundation.org/events/50th-anniversary-of-saving-pike-place-market/\)](https://pikeplacemarketfoundation.org/events/50th-anniversary-of-saving-pike-place-market/)," in mid-October.

You can provide general support to Pike Place Market by donating to the [Market Foundation \(https://pikeplacemarketfoundation.org/get-involved/give/donate-today/\)](https://pikeplacemarketfoundation.org/get-involved/give/donate-today/) to help ensure it's still there when you're ready to return. And you can support your favorite shops and artisans directly: Nearly all of the market's vendors now offer online shopping.