

OUT + ABOUT/SEASONAL FUN

Fantastic (and Mostly Free) Spring Festivals for Families

15 spring festivals to celebrate the season

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When spring springs, we all want to celebrate. To help your family come out of hibernation, we've rounded up some fun, family-friendly festivals. Whether you are looking to celebrate nature, the arts, or Norwegian independence, this list will fill your spring-into-summer bucket list.

Seattle Cherry Blossom and Japanese Culture Festival

(<https://www.seattlecenter.com/events/featured-events/festal/seattle-cherry-blossom-festival>)

The Seattle Cherry Blossom and Japanese Culture Festival was the event that launched Festal—the free cultural heritage festival series hosted at Seattle Center—back in 1976 and it is still one of the biggest. Whether or not the cherry trees cooperate with blossoms, come experience Japanese traditional music, dance, visual and martial arts, as well as games. (Check out the [Festal calendar](https://www.seattlecenter.com/events/featured-events/festal) (<https://www.seattlecenter.com/events/featured-events/festal>) to find a different festival nearly every weekend.)

Info: April 12–14, Seattle Center. Free.

Seattle International Children’s Friendship Festival

(<http://childrensfest.tacawa.org/>)

Organized by the Turkish American Cultural Association of Washington, this festival celebrates International Children’s Day with a weekend of performances (also live streamed) by children that represent various nationalities’ folk music and dance. Besides stage performances, there is a STEM challenge, visual arts showcase and display tables featuring cultural crafts and presentations.

Info: April 20–21, Seattle Center. Free.

Moisture Festival (<https://moisturefestival.org/>)

The 20th annual Moisture Festival’s programs will present comedy, feats of physical skill and quirky talent, and live music in family-friendly matinees (the late shows are 18+ while your age-appropriateness is subjective at the all-ages 7:30 p.m. shows).

Info: March 21–April 14, Seattle. \$45 for adults, \$32 for children 12 and younger; pay-what-you-can Wednesdays tickets start at \$10.



Just one of the amazing performances you'll see at Moisture Festival. Photo credit: Michelle Bates

Skagit Valley Tulip Festival (<https://tulipfestival.org/>)

Keep track of the flowers' progress online to choose the best week to drive up and see the fields. Visit midweek to avoid the traffic. Many fields can be viewed from the road, but tickets to on-farm experiences (from parking and flower shopping to workshops and trolley rides, and even elaborate date nights) are best purchased online in advance.

Info: The entire month of April, Skagit Valley. Looking is free.

University District Street Fair (<https://udistrictseattle.com/streetfair>)

The U District Street Fair kicks off the summer street fair season for the 53rd time this year, filling 10 blocks of University Way (a.k.a. "The Ave") with an arts and crafts fair, live music and performances, and more than 40 food options. Be prepared for crowds.

Info: May 18–19, Seattle. Free.

Mermaid Festival (<https://www.mermaidmuseum.org/festival/>)

Did you know that Washington has a Mermaid Museum? Located halfway between Aberdeen and Westport on the grounds of the Westport Winery Garden Resort, the museum is "dedicated to teaching ocean ecology from seashore to sea floor immersed in mermaid mythology unifying oceanic cultures." The festival combines the

museum's educational exhibits with storytelling, crafts, daily mermaid performances, unicorn appearances, music and fire dancing.

Info: April 6–14, Aberdeen. \$3 per person age 5 and older, or \$10 for the whole family.



Don't miss the daily mermaid performances during the Mermaid Festival. Photo credit: Capture.Share.Repeat.

[Viking Fest \(https://vikingfest.org/\)](https://vikingfest.org/)

Coinciding with the Norwegian Independence celebration [Syttende Mai \(https://www.17thofmay.org/\)](https://www.17thofmay.org/), Poulsbo's Viking Fest features a parade, carnival, street fair, road race, strongman competition (women compete, too) and a variety of performances. (And if you're looking for a Syttende Mai celebration closer to home, check out the free community festival in Ballard.)

Info: May 17–19, Poulsbo Waterfront. Attendance is free.

[UFO Fest \(https://ufofest.com/tickets/\)](https://ufofest.com/tickets/)

Oregon isn't too far for a family to travel to celebrate travelers from much further away. The McMinnville UFO Fest offers live music, a street fair, costume contests for people and pets, and a weekend full of speaker presentations (not to mention the special Alienator brew for parents).

Info: May 17–18, Hotel Oregon, McMinnville. \$125 for full speaker schedule, most speaker events \$25; other festival activities are free.

Washington State Spring Fair (<https://www.thefair.com/spring-fair/>)

If “Doin’ the Puyallup” sounds more overwhelming than entertaining for your family, check out the lesser-known spring fair. Started in 1990, the Washington State Spring Fair features animals, agriculture, booths, free entertainment, food and rides on the 165-acre fairground in the shadow of Mt. Rainier with much smaller crowds.

Info: April 11–14 and 18–21, Washington State Fairgrounds, Puyallup. Single weekday tickets start at \$13; \$11 for kids ages 6–12. More [ticket prices and packages](#) (<https://tickets.thefair.com/eventperformances.asp?evt=457>) available online.



Celebrate spring at the Washington State Spring Fair. Photo credit: Washington State Spring Fair

Whidbey Ren Faire (<https://whidbeyislandrenfaire.org/>)

The volunteer-run Whidbey Ren Faire is back with jousting tournaments and other live performances, including minstrels and jesters. Artisans will sell their handmade wares in the bustling marketplace and visitors of all ages can join workshops in traditional crafts, swordplay, archery and historical cooking. (Can’t wait for late May? Check out the smaller [Newport Ren Faire \(<https://www.facebook.com/events/3433245523600399/>\)](#) on May 11.)

Info: May 25–26, Whidbey Island Fairgrounds and Events Center. \$28 (youth discount available; children younger than 5 are free).

Northwest Folklife (<https://nwfolklife.org/>)

Generations of Seattle-area families have made a tradition of attending Northwest Folklife Festival every Memorial Day weekend. The theme this year is Meraki, a Greek word that means doing something with passion, soul and love. The many, many bands and musicians on stage are the most visible part of the festival. But “folklife” includes all kinds of creativity, so don’t miss the incredibly diverse panels, workshops, exhibitions, demonstrations and activities on offer.

Info: May 24–27, Seattle Center. Free.

HONK! Festival West (<https://honkfestwest.org/>)

HONK! Festival West is a community-supported music festival where acoustic street bands from around the country congregate to perform in public spaces around Seattle. Part of a global renaissance of street band culture, expect to hear New Orleans style brass bands, punk rock marching bands, European Klezmer, Samba and more.

Info: May 31, Georgetown; June 1, Columbia City; June 2, Pratt Park. All performances are free.



Rock out at HONK! Festival West. Photo credit: Dylan Lockard

Seattle Dragon Boat Festival

(<https://www.seattleflyingdragons.org/seattle-dragon-boat-festival.html>)

and Rainier Dragon Boat Festival

(<https://www.tacomadragonboat.org/rdbf/>)

Celebrate one of the four top traditional Chinese festivals by cheering on the teams as they race their dragon boats. It's traditional to eat sticky rice dumplings and Chinese pancakes, but food truck offerings are less work and just as tasty. Races will be held at Seattle's Lake Union and Foss Waterway at Tacoma's Thea Park.

Info: May 18, Thea Park, Tacoma. Free; June 8, Lake Union, Seattle. Free.

Kent International Festival (<https://kentinternationalfestival.com/>)

The Kent International Festival is a celebration of the community's rich cultural diversity. Explore folk dance traditions from all across the world and musical styles from taiko to sitar. Food trucks offer everything from Russian comfort food to cosmopolitan mash-ups (sushi burrito anyone?). Kids can fill their passports visiting cultural booths with interactive games, activities and fun challenges rooted in world cultures.

Info: June 1, ShoWare Center, Kent. Free.

Fremont Solstice Festival (<https://fremontfair.com/>)

The Fremont Fair celebrates the Summer Solstice, officially marking the transition from spring festivals to summer celebrations. And do they celebrate! There's a big parade, a smaller dog parade, a craft market that fills most of the neighborhood, a whole weekend of live performances and an art car show.

Info: June 22–23, Fremont, Seattle. Free.

More spring fun

[Spring Arts Preview \(<https://www.parentmap.com/article/spring-arts-shows-in-seattle-bellevue>\)](https://www.parentmap.com/article/spring-arts-shows-in-seattle-bellevue)

[Spring Crafts and Activities Your Kids Will Love \(<https://www.parentmap.com/article/spring-crafts-and-activities-your-kids-will-love>\)](https://www.parentmap.com/article/spring-crafts-and-activities-your-kids-will-love)

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[Best Spring Hikes in the Seattle Area for Kids and Families \(<https://www.parentmap.com/article/great-rainy-season-hikes-for-kids-seattle-area>\)](https://www.parentmap.com/article/great-rainy-season-hikes-for-kids-seattle-area)

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