

TOP OLDEST NORTH AMERICAN FESTIVALS



People love celebrations. They always have and always will. That is why festivals were invented. People simply wanted to have fun and needed a reason. There are many kinds of festivals - music, movie, wine, food, historical and many others. Tourism-Review.com is proud to present some of the traditional festivals of the North American continent, some of them with a history of 400 years.

1/ Vermont Celebrates Champlain (400th Anniversary)

Montpelier, Vermont

DEC. 31, 2008-OCT. 31, 2009

The year 2009 will mark the 400th anniversary of the time when French explorer Samuel de Champlain traveled by canoe up the Richelieu River and came upon a lake spanning 120 miles in length and 12 miles in width. Vermont will commemorate this historic event in 2009 with festivals, pageants, exhibits, performances and much more. There will be something for everybody; and all are invited to share in the fun and help commemorate this historic moment. The first night in Burlington on Dec. 31, 2008, will kick off the celebrations. Other signature events will follow throughout the year, including the Independence Day celebration on the Burlington waterfront on July 3 and the quadricentennial special event on July 11. Other annual events will celebrate Champlain: the Vermont Maple Festival, April 24-26, the Lilac Festival at the Shelburne Museum in late May, the Burlington Discover Jazz Festival, June 5-14, the Vermont Quilt Festival, June 19-21, the Green Mountain Chew-Chew Festival, June 27-30, and the Champlain Valley Fair in late August.

2/ Hudson 400th Celebration of Discovery

Albany, New York

JAN. 1-DEC. 31, 2009

During 2009, Albany and New York's Hudson River Valley are celebrating the 400th anniversary of its discovery in 1609 by English navigator Henry Hudson for whom the majestic Hudson River is named. The Dutch East India Company sponsored the voyage that was to discover a shorter passage to the Far East. What Hudson found instead was a lush valley and a navigable waterway with escarpments and waterfalls in what we now call The Hudson Valley. The region and New York's capital city, Albany, are going all-out to celebrate this quadricentennial. Special events will be ongoing throughout the year on the Hudson River, along its shores, and at historic sites throughout the region. The yearlong celebration will showcase Albany's Dutch heritage and the rich history of the Valley through an abundance of theatre, music and visual arts. Other attractions: The Half Moon, a full-size replica of Henry Hudson's ship, city-wide riverfront celebration, special exhibits at the New York State Museum, Albany Institute of History and Art—Hudson River Panorama: 400 Years of Art, history and culture, festivals at historic homes, Annual Tulip Festival

3/ Tall Ships Nova Scotia Festival 2009 (250th Anniversary)

Halifax, Nova Scotia

JULY 16-20, 2009

Tall Ships Nova Scotia 2009 is a provincial event that encourages people to experience Nova Scotia's maritime culture and history firsthand. Tall Ships events have occurred in Halifax and Nova Scotia for the past two decades. Nova Scotia has become internationally renowned for its ability to host Tall Ships events. Tall Ships Nova Scotia Festival 2009 also marks the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Navy Dockyard at Halifax in 1759. A flotilla of longboats will perform a commemorative ceremony to mark this major milestone in Nova Scotia's history during the Festival in Halifax. The Festival will kick off the 2010 Canadian Navy Centennial, celebrating 100 years of the Canadian Navy. The aim of the Canadian Naval Centennial is to build and strengthen an appreciation in Canadians for their Navy and to promote the role of the Navy within the Canadian Forces.

4/ John Brown Sesquicentennial (150th Anniversary)

Harpers Ferry, West Virginia
APRIL 18-DEC. 18, 2009

This event, the anniversary of John Brown's raid on the U.S. Arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Va., will include re-enactments, concerts, an educational symposium, scholarships, living history, family and youth activities and ranger conducted programs. A recreation of John Brown's procession from his headquarters in Washington County, Md., to Harpers Ferry will take place. The city of Frederick, Md., will recreate the confusion and alarm that occurred when word of John Brown's raid hit the city. This observance will provide an unprecedented opportunity to reflect on and revisit the life of John Brown as it relates to the broader context of slavery, the abolitionist movement and the American Civil Rights Movement. All activities will lead up to the 150th anniversary of the Civil War. Other attractions: Charles Town Races & Slots, Antietam Battlefield, Civil War Medical Museum, Belle Boyd House, Historic Shepherdstown

5/ Iowa State Fair (150th Anniversary)

Des Moines, Iowa
AUG. 13-23, 2009

The Iowa State Fair is Iowa's great celebration, a salute to the state's best in agriculture, industry, entertainment and achievement. Excitement peaks all over the Fairgrounds, on the 10-acre Midway whirling with thrilling rides, shows and games in the sprawling exhibit buildings and in the barns crammed with prize-winning livestock. The fair has been held almost continuously since 1854. It is Iowa's largest event and tourist attraction. It is the home of a big 20-acre Farm Machinery Show, the largest arts show in the state, the largest foods department of any state fair and one of the world's largest livestock shows. Over 600 exhibitors and concessionaires feature quality merchandise and tasty foods—more than 30 of them served on a stick. Several ground stages feature more than \$400,000 worth of spectacular entertainment free with gate admission. Other attractions: Blank Park Zoo, Living History Farms, Prairie Meadows Racetrack and Casino, Adventureland, Science Center of Iowa

6/ Fiesta San Antonio (118th Anniversary)

San Antonio, Texas
APRIL 17-26, 2009

Fiesta San Antonio honors the memory of the heroes of the Alamo and the Battle of San Jacinto, and

celebrates San Antonio's rich and diverse cultures. 2009 marks the celebration's 118th anniversary. Ten days, 100 events, 100 nonprofit member organizations; approximately 3.5 million attending—a real Texas-sized festival! Other attractions: The Riverwalk, San Antonio Missions, Institute of Texan Cultures, The Alamo, Riverbarge Cruise.

7/ Plains of Abraham (100th Anniversary)

Quebec City, Quebec
JULY 30-AUG. 2, 2009

During four days, re-enactors from Canada, the United States and Europe will set up period encampments on this historical site to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, an event that changed the fate of North America and led to the Battle of Sainte-Foy. These four days of siege are perfectly in tune with the mandate of the Commission, which is to develop this historic site and make it accessible to everyone. More than 200,000 visitors are expected to attend this free spectacular activity. Many activities are planned, including guided tours of the military camps, a market where reproductions of historical items will be sold and a representation of the battles fought during this era. The representation will include life in military camps, uniforms and weaponry. In addition to those major events, the Musée national des beaux-arts de Québec with our collaboration will present an exhibition of the Seven Years' War. Other attractions: Martello Towers, Abraham's, Odyssey

8/ Pella Tulip Time Festival (74th Anniversary)

Pella, Iowa
MAY 7-9, 2009

The Pella Tulip Time Festival celebrates the Dutch Heritage of Pella, Iowa, and 2009 marks the 74th year for the annual event. Nearly half a million tulips are planted to create tulip lanes along the streets and gardens full of color. A highlight of the festival are the parades. Each day features two parades, an afternoon and a lighted evening parade. No Dutch celebration would be complete without the Street Scrubbers to ensure the parade route is Dutch clean. Dutch Dancers invite guests to join a dance or two. Grandstand seating provides a perfect view of all the festivities. The authentic Dutch working windmill and the historical village fascinate all who visit. Dozens of food stands provide a meal with a touch of Dutch and churches provide indoor sit down meals. The beautifully restored Pella Opera House features a daily Theatre Organ Concert. A flower show features various types of tulips and allows guests to order bulbs for home delivery. Other attractions: Pella Historical Village, Scholte House Museum, Living History Farms, Amana Colonies, Bridges of Madison County

9/ Provincetown Portuguese Festival (61st Anniversary)

Provincetown, Massachusetts
JUNE 25-28, 2009

The Provincetown Portuguese Festival began in 1947 as the Blessing Of the Fishing Fleet on the last Sunday in June. In 1998, it was expanded to a four-day festival weekend celebration of Provincetown's rich Portuguese heritage. This fishing village and art colony at the tip of Cape Cod where the Pilgrims first set anchor, decorates the town with flags the length of its main street, and shares the heritage at Portuguese Square in the center of town and other locations along its beautiful waterfront. Thousands of visitors from around the world attend each year to experience the tasty food, beautiful music and colorful dancing of Portugal. Children's games, exhibits, dancing,

face painting, FADO (the music of Portugal) on Fishermen's Wharf and a Gala Parade are just some of the more than 40 activities celebrating Provincetown's rich heritage, all coordinated from the Festival Booth in Portuguese Square. The four-day festival ends on Sunday with a procession from St. Peters Church to McMillan Pier, where the bishop blesses the fishing fleet for a safe and prosperous year. The festival has something for everyone. Other attractions: Whale Watch, Dune Tour, Pilgrim Monument, Provincetown Museum, Trolley Tour

10/ Tyler Azalea and Spring Flower Trail (50th Anniversary)

Tyler, Texas

MARCH 20-APRIL 5, 2009

For 50 years, the Azalea and Spring Flower Trail has been dazzling visitors from Texas and as far away as Europe and Asia. The trail features historic home tours, living history exhibits, historical re-creations, art shows and exhibits, walking tours, and flower displays and sales. In 2009, for the 50th anniversary, the Azalea and Spring Flower Trail will have walking garden tours, a national quilt show, guided historic garden tours and more. Visit the Azalea and Camellia garden or the newly designed Chamlee Commemorative Garden at the Goodman LaGrand Home. Enjoy a spring garden tea at Roseland Plantation. Other attractions: Ms. Daffodill Garden, historic plantations and home tours, Tyler Municipal Rose Garden and Rose Museum, Ida Brundrett Azalea Gardens at TJC, Rose Nursery tours

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