

Indiana State Fair 2026: Dates, Tickets, Concerts, Food & Complete Visitor Guide



The Indiana State Fair 2026 is one of the Midwest's biggest annual celebrations, bringing together agriculture, live entertainment, thrilling carnival rides, local food, concerts, family attractions, and Hoosier traditions. Every August, hundreds of thousands of visitors head to the Indiana State Fairgrounds & Event Center in Indianapolis to experience one of oldest and most respected [*American state fairs*](#).

Whether you are planning your first visit or returning for another year of fun, the Indiana State Fair offers something for every age. Families can enjoy interactive exhibits and animal encounters, food lovers can sample famous fair treats, music fans can attend live concerts, and children can spend hours exploring the Midway and Kid Zone.

The 2026 fair will once again showcase Indiana's agricultural heritage while introducing new entertainment, competitions, educational exhibits, and delicious fair foods. With nearly three weeks of events, it's one of the best summer experiences in the state.

This complete guide covers everything you need to know about the **Indiana State Fair 2026**, including dates, ticket information, concerts, attractions, food, travel tips, nearby hotels, and frequently asked questions to help you plan the perfect visit.

What Is the Indiana State Fair?

The Indiana State Fair is an annual celebration of Indiana's agriculture, food, education, entertainment, and community. First held in **1852**, it has become one of the state's most anticipated summer events, welcoming visitors from across Indiana and neighboring states.

The fair is organized by the **Indiana State Fair Commission** and takes place at the **Indiana State Fairgrounds & Event Center** in Indianapolis. While agriculture remains at its heart, today's fair has grown into a family-friendly festival featuring:

- Livestock competitions
- 4-H exhibits
- Giant Midway carnival
- Live concerts
- Food vendors
- Educational exhibits
- Farm demonstrations
- Artisan markets
- Children's activities
- Seasonal entertainment

The Indiana State Fair continues to celebrate Indiana's farming traditions while providing modern attractions for visitors of all ages.

Indiana State Fair 2026 Dates, Location & Tickets

- **Date:** August 7 - 23, 2026
 - **Venue:** Indiana State Fairgrounds, Indianapolis
 - **Tickets:** [Check Tickets](#)
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How to Get to the Indiana State Fairgrounds

The Indiana State Fairgrounds are conveniently located just north of Downtown Indianapolis.

By Air

The nearest airport is:

Indianapolis International Airport (IND)

Approximately 16 miles from the fairgrounds.

Transportation options include:

- Rental cars
 - Uber
 - Lyft
 - Taxi services
 - Hotel shuttle services
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By Car

Indianapolis is easily accessible via:

- Interstate 65

- Interstate 69
- Interstate 70
- Interstate 74
- Interstate 465

Parking is available at the fairgrounds, though advance purchase is recommended.

By Public Transportation

IndyGo buses provide service to areas surrounding the Indiana State Fairgrounds during the event.

Ride-Sharing

Uber and Lyft offer convenient transportation throughout Indianapolis and designated pickup and drop-off locations near the fairgrounds.

Indiana State Fair 2026 Theme: Always a Hit

The official theme for the **Indiana State Fair 2026** is “**Always a Hit.**”

The theme celebrates the fair’s long-standing tradition of bringing together agriculture, entertainment, music, food, family fun, and community spirit. Visitors can expect themed decorations, interactive exhibits, live performances, and activities inspired by this year’s celebration.

Throughout the fairgrounds, guests will experience colorful displays, family-friendly entertainment, and special events designed around the annual theme while continuing to honor Indiana's agricultural roots.

Indiana State Fair 2026 Highlights

With hundreds of daily activities taking place across the fairgrounds, planning your visit in advance helps ensure you don't miss the biggest attractions.

Some of the top experiences include:

Giant Midway

One of the largest attractions at the fair, featuring:

- Roller coasters
 - Ferris wheel
 - Family rides
 - Kiddie rides
 - Carnival games
 - Nighttime lights
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Livestock Shows

Agriculture remains the heart of the Indiana State Fair.

Visitors can watch:

- Cattle competitions
 - Horse shows
 - Sheep judging
 - Swine exhibitions
 - Goat competitions
 - Poultry displays
 - Rabbit exhibits
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Pioneer Village

Step back in time by exploring historic Indiana.

Visitors can enjoy:

- Blacksmith demonstrations
 - Historic buildings
 - Traditional crafts
 - Old-fashioned farming equipment
 - Heritage demonstrations
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Glass Barn

One of the fair's signature attractions, the Glass Barn allows visitors to watch live dairy farming demonstrations while learning how milk travels from the farm to the grocery store. Families especially enjoy the interactive presentations.

Animal Encounters

Children love visiting the animal barns to see:

- Baby chicks
 - Piglets
 - Calves
 - Lambs
 - Alpacas
 - Horses
 - Goats
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Indiana Arts Building

Discover local creativity through:

- Photography

- Fine art
 - Quilts
 - Crafts
 - Handmade products
 - Community competitions
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Free Entertainment

Throughout the day, visitors can enjoy:

- Live music
 - Magicians
 - Circus acts
 - Acrobatic performances
 - Comedy shows
 - Educational demonstrations
 - Street performers
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Indiana State Fair Concerts & Entertainment

The Indiana State Fair has become one of Indiana's premier summer concert destinations. National recording artists perform throughout the fair, offering visitors the opportunity to enjoy live music after spending the day exploring exhibits and attractions.

Concert genres typically include:

- Country
- Rock
- Pop
- Christian
- Classic hits
- R&B

- Family entertainment

Besides headline concerts, visitors will also find:

- Local musicians
 - Community performances
 - Dance groups
 - Cultural showcases
 - School bands
 - Interactive stage shows
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Midway Rides & Family Attractions

The Midway remains one of the busiest parts of the Indiana State Fair, attracting visitors from morning until late evening.

Thrill seekers can enjoy:

- Giant Ferris Wheel
- Drop Towers
- Spinning rides
- Roller coasters
- Pendulum rides

Families will also find:

- Merry-Go-Rounds
 - Mini trains
 - Family coasters
 - Fun houses
 - Water attractions
 - Kiddie rides
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Livestock Shows, Agriculture & 4-H Exhibits

Unlike many festivals, the Indiana State Fair continues to place agriculture at the center of the event. Thousands of young participants from across Indiana showcase months of hard work through 4-H competitions and agricultural exhibits.

Visitors can learn about:

- Modern farming
- Crop production
- Livestock care
- Sustainable agriculture
- Indiana agriculture
- Gardening
- Beekeeping
- Conservation

Popular competitions include:

- Cattle judging
- Horse competitions
- Dairy cattle
- Swine shows
- Sheep judging
- Goat competitions
- Poultry judging

Best Indiana State Fair Food to Try

For many visitors, the food is just as exciting as the rides. The Indiana State Fair is known for introducing creative new dishes each year while continuing to serve classic fair favorites. Don't miss these popular treats:

- **Giant Tenderloin Sandwich:** One of Indiana's signature foods, featuring a breaded pork tenderloin that's often much larger than the bun.

- **Fresh Lemon Shake-Up:** A refreshing drink made with freshly squeezed lemons, sugar, and ice. Perfect on a warm August afternoon.
 - **Sweet Corn:** Indiana's locally grown sweet corn is one of the fair's most popular seasonal foods.
 - **Corn Dogs:** A timeless fair favorite that remains popular with visitors of all ages.
 - **Funnel Cakes:** Served hot with powdered sugar and optional toppings like strawberries, chocolate, whipped cream, or ice cream.
 - **Deep-Fried Oreos:** A classic indulgence that's become a staple at American state fairs.
 - **BBQ Ribs:** Several vendors serve slow-smoked ribs, pulled pork, brisket, and other barbecue specialties.
 - **Fresh Ice Cream:** Indiana's dairy tradition shines through locally made ice cream, milkshakes, and frozen treats available throughout the fairgrounds.
 - **Gourmet Burgers:** Many vendors create specialty burgers featuring locally sourced ingredients and creative toppings.
 - **New Fair Food Creations:** Each year, vendors compete to introduce unique menu items ranging from sweet desserts to savory innovations, making it worth trying something new during every visit.
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Things to Do in Indianapolis During the Indiana State Fair

While the Indiana State Fair is the main attraction, Indianapolis offers plenty of experiences that can turn your fair visit into a memorable weekend getaway. From museums and sporting venues to parks and local restaurants, there's something for every traveler.

Visit the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum

No trip to Indianapolis is complete without visiting the legendary Indianapolis Motor Speedway, home of the Indianapolis 500. Explore historic race cars, interactive exhibits, and learn about one of the world's most famous motorsports venues.

Distance from Fairgrounds: Approximately 7 miles

Explore White River State Park

Located in downtown Indianapolis, White River State Park features walking trails, beautiful green spaces, paddleboat rentals, and several major attractions within one area.

It's a great place to relax after spending the day at the fair.

Visit The Children's Museum of Indianapolis

The world's largest children's museum is one of Indianapolis' top attractions. Families can spend hours exploring dinosaur exhibits, space exploration displays, science experiments, sports experiences, and interactive learning activities.

Perfect for: Families with children.

Walk Along the Canal Walk

The Downtown Canal Walk is one of the city's most scenic areas. Visitors can rent pedal boats, walk the waterfront, enjoy local cafés, and admire public art installations.

It's especially beautiful during the evening.

Tour the Indianapolis Zoo

Located inside White River State Park, the Indianapolis Zoo features thousands of animals, an impressive dolphin exhibit, botanical gardens, and one of the nation's top orangutan habitats.

Visit Monument Circle

The Soldiers and Sailors Monument sits at the heart of downtown Indianapolis and offers excellent views from the observation deck. The surrounding area is filled with restaurants, cafés, and local shops.

Explore Mass Ave Arts District

Massachusetts Avenue, commonly known as **Mass Ave**, is one of the city's most vibrant neighborhoods. Visitors will find boutique shopping, live theaters, craft breweries, coffee shops, and locally owned restaurants.

Discover Newfields

Formerly known as the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Newfields combines world-class art galleries with beautiful gardens, walking trails, and seasonal outdoor exhibits.

Catch an Indiana Fever or Indianapolis Indians Game

Depending on the schedule, sports fans can enjoy professional basketball or baseball while visiting the city.

Enjoy Indiana's Local Food Scene

Indianapolis has become one of the Midwest's best food destinations. Beyond fair food, visitors should try:

- Breaded Pork Tenderloin Sandwiches
 - St. Elmo Shrimp Cocktail
 - Farm-to-table restaurants
 - Craft breweries
 - Local bakeries
 - Handmade ice cream
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Travel Tips for Visiting the Indiana State Fair

Planning ahead can make your visit smoother, especially during weekends when attendance is highest.

Buy Tickets Online

Purchasing admission and parking online before arriving saves time and may provide discounted pricing.

Visit on Weekdays

Tuesday through Thursday typically offer lighter crowds, shorter ride lines, and easier parking than weekends.

Arrive Early

Gates open in the morning, making it the best time to explore popular exhibits before crowds increase.

Wear Comfortable Shoes

The Indiana State Fairgrounds cover more than 250 acres. Expect to walk several miles throughout the day.

Stay Hydrated

August temperatures in Indianapolis can be hot and humid. Carry a refillable water bottle and take breaks in shaded areas.

Bring Sunscreen

Many attractions are outdoors with limited shade during the afternoon.

Download the Fair Map

Knowing the locations of food vendors, restrooms, entertainment stages, and exhibit halls will help you maximize your visit.

Check the Daily Schedule

Concerts, animal shows, cooking demonstrations, and special events take place throughout the day. Reviewing the schedule ensures you won't miss your favorite activities.

Carry a Portable Phone Charger

Between taking photos, using maps, and accessing digital tickets, your phone battery may drain quickly.

Where to Stay Near the Indiana State Fairgrounds

Whether you are visiting for one day or the entire weekend, Indianapolis offers accommodations for every budget.

Bottleworks Hotel

Located in the trendy Mass Ave district, this luxury boutique hotel provides upscale accommodations, excellent restaurants, and easy access to downtown attractions.

Best for: Luxury travelers and couples.

Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel

A centrally located hotel offering comfortable rooms, rooftop views, and convenient access to both downtown and the fairgrounds.

Best for: Families and first-time visitors.

Hampton Inn & Suites Indianapolis Downtown

Known for spacious rooms, complimentary breakfast, and excellent value.

Best for: Families.

Homewood Suites by Hilton Indianapolis Downtown

Perfect for longer stays thanks to its apartment-style suites with kitchenettes.

Best for: Extended vacations.

Ironworks Hotel Indy

A modern luxury hotel surrounded by excellent restaurants and shopping on Indianapolis' north side.

Best for: Couples and premium stays.

Drury Plaza Hotel Indianapolis Carmel

Located north of downtown, this hotel offers easy highway access, free breakfast, and family-friendly amenities.

Best for: Road trips and families.

Sample One-Day Indiana State Fair Itinerary

9:00 AM

Arrive when the gates open and explore the livestock barns before crowds build.

10:30 AM

Visit the Glass Barn and agricultural exhibits.

11:30 AM

Explore Pioneer Village and watch live craft demonstrations.

12:30 PM

Enjoy lunch featuring Indiana's famous breaded pork tenderloin sandwich and fresh sweet corn.

2:00 PM

Spend the afternoon riding attractions on the Midway.

4:00 PM

Browse the Arts Building, shopping vendors, and 4-H exhibits.

5:30 PM

Sample classic fair desserts like funnel cakes or deep-fried Oreos.

7:00 PM

Attend an evening concert or grandstand entertainment.

9:00 PM

Finish the day with a ride on the Ferris wheel while enjoying panoramic nighttime views of the illuminated fairgrounds.

Conclusion

The **Indiana State Fair 2026** offers far more than carnival rides and fair food. It's a celebration of Indiana's agricultural heritage, local communities, family traditions, and summer entertainment. Whether you're watching championship livestock competitions, enjoying nationally recognized concerts, tasting creative fair foods, or spending the day with family on the Midway, there is something for every visitor.

Its convenient location in Indianapolis also makes it easy to extend your trip and discover the city's museums, sporting attractions, restaurants, and vibrant neighborhoods.

Download our FREE Indiana State Fair 2026 Travel Guide PDF to access the latest schedules, ticket information, fair maps, parking details, hotel recommendations, and insider travel tips, all in one convenient guide.

Frequently Asked Questions

When is the Indiana State Fair 2026?

The Indiana State Fair 2026 runs from August 7 through August 23, 2026, and is closed on Mondays.

Where is the Indiana State Fair held?

The fair takes place at the Indiana State Fairgrounds & Event Center in Indianapolis, Indiana.

What is the theme of the Indiana State Fair 2026?

The official theme for the 2026 Indiana State Fair is “Always a Hit.”

How much are Indiana State Fair tickets?

Ticket prices vary by age, admission type, and special promotions. Purchasing tickets online in advance often provides the best value.

Are concerts included with fair admission?

Some concerts are included with general admission, while premium seating or headline performances may require an additional ticket.

What food is the Indiana State Fair known for?

Popular foods include breaded pork tenderloin sandwiches, fresh sweet corn, lemon shake-ups, funnel cakes, deep-fried Oreos, barbecue, corn dogs, and new specialty fair foods introduced each year.

Is the Indiana State Fair family friendly?

Yes. Families can enjoy kid-friendly rides, petting areas, interactive agricultural exhibits, educational demonstrations, live entertainment, and numerous activities designed for children of all ages.

How long should I spend at the Indiana State Fair?

Most visitors spend 6 to 10 hours exploring the fairgrounds, though many return for multiple days to experience concerts, competitions, and special events.