

New York State Fair 2026: Dates, Tickets & Travel Guide



The **New York State Fair 2026**, officially known as **The Great New York State Fair**, returns to Syracuse from **August 26 through September 7, 2026**.

For 13 days, the New York State Fairgrounds will be filled with live music, carnival rides, farm animals, food, competitions, cultural exhibits, and family entertainment. It is one of the largest and most popular state fairs in the United States, attracting visitors from across New York and beyond.

The fair combines traditional agriculture with big-name concerts, hundreds of food vendors, educational exhibits, and attractions that make it possible to spend an entire day exploring the grounds.

Whether you are visiting for the famous food, the midway, the concerts, or New York's agricultural traditions, the **New York State Fair 2026** offers something for almost every type of traveler.

What Is the New York State Fair?

The **New York State Fair** is an annual celebration of New York's agriculture, food, culture, entertainment, and communities.

It has a long history and remains one of the country's best-known state fairs. Agriculture is still at the heart of the event, with livestock competitions, dairy exhibits, horse shows, 4-H programs, farming demonstrations, and displays highlighting New York-made products.

At the same time, the fair has become a major entertainment destination.

Visitors can enjoy national recording artists, carnival rides, family attractions, cultural villages, shopping, competitions, museums, and hundreds of food options.

This combination of agriculture and entertainment is what makes the Great New York State Fair different from a typical festival or carnival.

New York State Fair 2026 Dates & Location

Here are the essential details for planning your visit.

Dates: August 26 - September 7, 2026

Venue: New York State Fairgrounds

Location: Syracuse, New York

Tickets: [Check Tickets](#)

The 2026 fair runs for **13 days**, beginning on Wednesday, August 26, and ending on Labor Day, Monday, September 7.

The New York State Fairgrounds are located just west of downtown Syracuse, making the fair easy to combine with other attractions in Central New York.

What to Expect at the New York State Fair 2026

The fairgrounds cover a large area, so it is worth planning your visit before you arrive.

Live Concerts and Entertainment

Live music is one of the biggest attractions at the New York State Fair.

The 2026 Chevrolet Music Series includes nearly 40 national recording acts, with performances at Chevy Court and Suburban Park. The official schedule includes artists such as The All-American Rejects, Sean Paul, Melissa Etheridge, Third Eye Blind, Flo Rida, Ashanti, Scotty McCreery, Tori Kelly, ZZ Top, Trace Adkins, Robin Thicke, Wyclef Jean, The Commodores, Air Supply, Jesse McCartney, Wilson Phillips, and more.

Concerts at both venues are included with fair admission, with seating generally available on a first-come, first-seated basis.

Because the concert lineup is spread across all 13 days, music fans can plan their visit around a specific artist or enjoy multiple performances during a longer trip.

Agriculture and Livestock

Agriculture remains one of the most important parts of the New York State Fair.

Visitors can see cattle, horses, goats, sheep, llamas, swine, rabbits, and other animals throughout the fair. Agricultural competitions and youth programs also give visitors an opportunity to learn about the people and work behind New York's farming industry.

The 2026 fair includes a major **Holstein Dairy Cattle Show**, along with horse events, goat competitions, sheep exhibits, 4-H programs, and other livestock activities.

Families can also enjoy interactive experiences, including opportunities to learn more about farm animals and agricultural production.

The Dairy Products Building and Butter Sculpture

One of the most famous New York State Fair traditions is the **Butter Sculpture**.

Created from hundreds of pounds of New York butter, the sculpture is displayed in the Dairy Products Building and has become one of the fair's most recognizable attractions.

The building also celebrates New York's dairy industry with milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, and other products.

For many visitors, stopping at the **New York State Milk Bar** for a cold glass of milk is another classic fair tradition.

Dairy Day and New York Food Traditions

New York's dairy industry plays a major role in the fair, and **Dairy Day** is one of the special events celebrating the state's farmers and food producers.

The 2026 program includes dairy competitions, educational activities, the Butter Sculpture, and special events highlighting New York milk and dairy products.

Food is also a major reason to visit the fair.

From local agricultural products and New York-grown ingredients to classic fair food and creative fried dishes, there is plenty to try during a visit.

Fair Food

The New York State Fair is known for having an enormous variety of food.

With hundreds of vendors across the fairgrounds, visitors can find everything from traditional favorites to unusual and creative dishes.

Popular options can include:

- New York State potatoes and potato dishes
- Fried foods and carnival favorites
- Pizza and Italian specialties
- Sausages and sandwiches
- Cheese and dairy products
- Maple products
- Ice cream and milkshakes

- Funnel cakes and desserts
- Kettle corn
- Regional New York food specialties

The fair's **Fair Finder** can help visitors locate food vendors and explore available menus.

If food is one of your main reasons for attending, plan extra time to walk around before choosing what to eat.

The Midway and Carnival Rides

The New York State Fair midway offers classic carnival entertainment with rides and games for visitors of different ages.

Younger children can find family-friendly attractions, while thrill-seekers can enjoy larger rides and more exciting experiences.

The midway becomes especially lively in the evening when the lights come on and the fairgrounds take on a completely different atmosphere.

If rides are a priority, consider setting aside a specific part of your day for the midway instead of trying to fit everything into a single visit.

Cultural Villages and Community Experiences

The Great New York State Fair also celebrates the diverse communities and cultures of New York.

The fair includes cultural spaces and programming such as:

- Asian Village
- Haudenosaunee Cultural Village
- Latino Village
- Pan-African Village

Visitors can experience cultural performances, music, food, crafts, demonstrations, and educational programs.

These areas add significant depth to the fair experience and are worth exploring, especially for travelers interested in learning more about New York's diverse communities.

Museums, History, and Educational Exhibits

The fairgrounds include much more than rides and food.

Visitors can explore agricultural museums, carriage exhibits, historic displays, antique tractors, educational programs, science exhibits, and demonstrations.

The 2026 schedule includes activities such as blacksmith demonstrations, weaving, quilting, basket making, woodworking, historic exhibits, and agricultural demonstrations.

These attractions provide a quieter experience and are a good choice when you want a break from the busiest parts of the fair.

Family Entertainment

The New York State Fair offers entertainment for visitors of different ages.

The 2026 lineup includes family-friendly performances and attractions ranging from acrobatics and specialty shows to educational exhibits and interactive experiences.

There are also special activities designed for children, making the fair a good destination for families spending a day in Syracuse.

Check the official daily schedule before your visit because family entertainment can vary by date and location.

Special Days

The New York State Fair features special days throughout its 13-day run.

These themed days recognize agriculture, communities, industries, and cultural traditions from across New York.

The 2026 schedule includes events connected with New York's dairy and agricultural heritage, as well as cultural celebrations such as **Native Americans Day**.

Special programming can provide a good reason to choose one fair day over another, especially if you are interested in a particular topic or community event.

New York State Fair 2026 Hours

The fair generally operates from **9 AM to 11 PM daily**.

On **Labor Day**, the fair has shorter hours and operates from **9 AM to 9 PM**.

Individual buildings, attractions, and exhibits may have different schedules, and some close earlier than the fairgrounds.

If you want to visit a specific exhibit or attend a scheduled event, check the official daily program before arriving.

Best Time to Visit the New York State Fair

The best time to visit depends on what you want from your fair experience.

For a More Relaxed Experience

Weekday mornings are generally a good choice for visitors who want more time to explore exhibits and agricultural areas before the largest crowds arrive.

This can be particularly useful if you are visiting with young children or want to spend time at the museums and educational exhibits.

For Families

Morning and early afternoon give families plenty of time to see animals, enjoy the rides, explore exhibits, and take breaks for food.

Starting early can also help you avoid trying to fit everything into the busiest evening hours.

For Concerts

Plan your visit around the official concert schedule if live music is one of your priorities.

The 2026 lineup is spread throughout the entire fair, giving visitors plenty of options across different genres.

Popular evening concerts can attract large crowds, so arrive early if you want a better chance of finding a good viewing location.

For the Full Fair Atmosphere

Evenings and weekends offer the most energetic atmosphere.

The midway is illuminated, concerts are underway, and the fairgrounds are at their liveliest.

Labor Day weekend is especially popular, so expect larger crowds.

Travel Tips for Attending the New York State Fair

A little planning can make a big difference at a fair this large.

- **Check the daily schedule:** There are hundreds of activities, and events change throughout the 13 days.
- **Wear comfortable shoes:** You will likely walk several miles exploring the fairgrounds.
- **Arrive early:** This is especially useful on weekends and major concert days.
- **Plan your food stops:** With hundreds of vendors, it helps to know what you want to try.
- **Use the Fair Finder:** The official tool can help you locate food and vendors.
- **Plan around concerts:** Popular acts can bring larger crowds to the concert areas.
- **Explore the agricultural exhibits:** Do not spend your entire visit on rides and food.
- **Check the weather:** Much of the fair experience takes place outdoors.
- **Stay hydrated:** August and early September days can still be warm.

- **Bring a light layer:** Syracuse evenings can become cooler after sunset.
- **Use the official map and schedule:** The fairgrounds are large, and planning your route can save time.

Getting to the New York State Fair

The New York State Fairgrounds are located in **Syracuse, New York**, in Central New York.

The fairgrounds are accessible by major roads and are a convenient drive from communities across Upstate New York.

Syracuse is also well connected by air, rail, and bus services, making the fair accessible to visitors traveling from other parts of the country.

If you are flying, **Syracuse Hancock International Airport** is the closest major airport.

Visitors attending during weekends or popular concert dates should allow extra time for traffic.

Parking and Transportation

Parking is available at the New York State Fairgrounds, and visitors can purchase official parking vouchers.

Because the fair can attract large crowds, especially during weekends and major concerts, arriving early is a smart strategy.

The fairgrounds are also accessible through transportation options serving the Syracuse area.

Check the official New York State Fair transportation and parking information before your trip because traffic patterns and services can change.

Things to Do Near the New York State Fair

The fair's location makes it easy to turn your visit into a longer Syracuse or Central New York trip.

Explore Downtown Syracuse

Downtown Syracuse offers restaurants, historic buildings, museums, entertainment venues, and local businesses.

The **Armory Square** area is a popular place to find restaurants and explore the city's historic character.

Visit Destiny USA

Destiny USA is one of the largest shopping and entertainment destinations in the region.

Visitors can find shopping, restaurants, entertainment, and indoor attractions, making it a good option for rainy days or families extending their trip.

Visit the Erie Canal Museum

The **Erie Canal Museum** offers an opportunity to learn about one of the most important transportation projects in American history.

It is a good choice for travelers interested in New York history and works well as a quieter activity after a busy day at the fair.

Explore Onondaga Lake Park

Visitors looking for outdoor space can spend time around **Onondaga Lake Park**.

The area offers walking, biking, and scenic views, providing a relaxing contrast to the busy fairgrounds.

Visit the Finger Lakes Region

If you have extra time, Syracuse can serve as a starting point for exploring parts of the Finger Lakes region.

Visitors can discover scenic drives, small towns, wineries, parks, lakes, and other attractions across Central New York.

Where to Stay for the New York State Fair

Syracuse offers a wide range of accommodation options.

For convenient access to the fairgrounds, consider staying near **downtown Syracuse, the Inner Harbor, or the western side of the city.**

Downtown can be a good choice for travelers who also want easy access to restaurants and other city attractions.

Visitors attending during Labor Day weekend or planning to see popular concerts should book accommodation early.

Is the New York State Fair Worth Visiting?

The **New York State Fair 2026** is absolutely worth visiting for travelers who want one of the country's largest and most complete state fair experiences.

The event combines agriculture, animals, food, concerts, carnival rides, museums, cultural programming, competitions, and family attractions across 13 days.

What makes the fair particularly appealing is the range of experiences available. You can watch livestock competitions in the morning, eat your way through the food vendors in the afternoon, explore cultural exhibits, and finish the day with a major concert.

For families, food lovers, music fans, and travelers exploring Upstate New York, the Great New York State Fair is one of the region's biggest annual events.

Conclusion

The **New York State Fair 2026** takes place from **August 26 through September 7, 2026**, at the New York State Fairgrounds in Syracuse.

From farm animals and agricultural exhibits to the famous Butter Sculpture, carnival rides, hundreds of food vendors, cultural villages, museums, and nearly 40 national recording acts, the fair offers enough experiences to fill multiple days.

Before traveling, check the official New York State Fair website for the latest **tickets, daily schedules, concerts, attractions, food vendors, parking information, and visitor updates.**

Frequently Asked Questions

When is the New York State Fair 2026?

The **New York State Fair 2026** takes place from **August 26 through September 7, 2026**, ending on Labor Day.

Where is the New York State Fair held?

The fair is held at the **New York State Fairgrounds in Syracuse, New York.**

How long does the New York State Fair last?

The 2026 fair runs for **13 days**, making it one of the longest-running state fairs in the United States.

What is the New York State Fair known for?

The fair is known for **agriculture, livestock, major concerts, the Butter Sculpture, carnival rides, New York food, dairy products, cultural villages, competitions, and family entertainment.**

Are concerts included with New York State Fair admission?

Many concerts in the **2026 Chevrolet Music Series**, including performances at Chevy Court and Suburban Park, are included with fair admission. Seating is generally available on a first-come basis.

Is the New York State Fair family-friendly?

Yes. Families can enjoy farm animals, agricultural exhibits, carnival rides, family entertainment, museums, food vendors, cultural attractions, and activities for visitors of different ages.