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Top20 Nomination Information: SoutheastTourism.org/Meetings/Top-20

January - February 2015

January 1 - January 1, Polar Bear Dip, Perdido Key, FL, www.florabama.com Splash into the Gulf Mexico and celebrate January 1 with a New Year's Day southern tradition of eating black-eyed peas while listening to some great music as you warm up with your friends and family.

January 6 - February 17, Mardi Gras Southwest Louisiana, Southwest Louisiana, LA, www.visitlakecharles.org Celebrate in true fashion with southwest Louisiana's second largest Mardi Gras. Intricate costumes, a Royal Gala, elaborate parade floats and plenty of beads are just a few of the events you will enjoy.

January 9 - January 10, 57th Annual Louisiana Fur & Wildlife Festival, Cameron, LA, www.visitlakecharles.org Southwest Louisiana's "oldest and coldest" festival is comprised of a variety of hunter-related events, including trap setting, oyster shucking and skeet shooting. Families will also enjoy Cajun music, a parade, pageant, exhibits and carnival.

January 16 - January 19, Martin Luther King, Jr. Festival, Lake Charles, LA, www.visitlakecharles.org Trinity Baptist Church hosts a memorial breakfast, honoring outstanding individuals in the community. On Sunday, a Gospel Extravaganza brings performers from all over Louisiana and Monday is Family Day with local and national entertainers as well as art and craft vendors in addition to Creole and Cajun food.

January 17 - January 19, Louisiana Marathon, Baton Rouge, LA, www.thelouisianamarathon.com Racers, representing all 50 states and 8 countries, last year, ran through historic downtown and under LSU's century old oak trees. Going into its fourth year, Runners World Magazine named this marathon one of the Top 10 New Races. It includes a marathon, half-marathon, 5K and a kid's marathon.

January 18 - January 18, 16th Annual Clearwater Distance Classic, Clearwater, FL, www.ClearwaterDistanceClassic.com From bridges to beaches, participants will enjoy a scenic run on these USATF-certified courses. Post-race celebration is complete with hot pasta, pastries, cold beer and live entertainment. New This Year: A 50K Ultramarathon!

January 30 - February 1, Athens Wine Weekend, Athens, GA, www.AthensWineWeekend.com Sample delectable bites from local chefs and their wine pairings, in addition to Saturday's Grand Tasting featuring wines from all over the world and seminars hosted by national and international wine experts. These events, along with a six-course Gourmet Dinner and Sunday brunch, benefit The Classic Center Cultural Foundation.

January 30 - February 17, Bayou Lafourche Mardi Gras, Thibodaux to Golden Meadow (Lafourche Parish), LA, www.visitlafourche.com This two week event includes more than 15 parades, carnival balls, parties and picnics, including BBQ and seafood boils before the start of the parades. Join in on "The Greatest Free Show on the Bayou!"

January 31 - January 31, 14th Annual African American Cultural Celebration, Raleigh, NC, www.ncmuseumofhistory.org The North Carolina Museum of History highlights the history and culture of the state's African American community via visual artists, national authors, poets and spoken word. Additional events include historic presentations, dramatic performance and film screenings.

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February 5 - February 7, Southwest District Livestock Show and Rodeo, Lake Charles, LA, www.visitlakecharles.org Professional rodeo performances, livestock shows and Queen Pageant make this “The Greatest Show on Dirt”. Don’t miss Western Heritage Days which celebrates cowboys, the great outdoors and all things western.

February 5 - February 7, The North Carolina Jazz Festival, Wilmington, NC, www.ncjazzfestival.com One of the oldest traditional jazz festivals in the USA, this year’s event offers a tribute to the music of George Shearing. Friday and Saturday evenings include thirteen All-Star jazz musicians from around the world, presenting 7 sets of traditional jazz.

February 7 - February 7, Double Bridge Run, Pensacola, FL, www.doublebridgerun.com A 15K scenic course which includes two bridges that takes runners over the Pensacola Bay and Santa Rosa Sound. The race starts in downtown Pensacola and concludes on Pensacola Beach. A 5K course and Kids’ Fun Run are also offered.

February 14 - February 14, 21st Annual St. Marys Mardi Gras Festival, St. Marys, GA, www.VisitStMarys.com This year’s theme is “Love Stories” which will be incorporated throughout the festival’s parade floats as well as the pet parade costumes! A chili cook-off, live entertainment and Mardi Gras Ball complete the day’s events.

February 14 - February 14, Pensacola Grand Mardi Gras Parade, Pensacola, FL, www.pensacolamardigras.com Historical downtown Pensacola hosts this family-friendly Mardi Gras Parade, complete with beads, doubloons and moonpies!

February 14 - February 16, ArtiGras Fine Arts Festival, Jupiter, FL, www.artigras.org Celebrating its 30th year, this event benefits school art programs and local charities. The 3-day outdoor festival features more than 300 juried artists and also features ten Emerging Artists from the Palm Beach area.

February 15 - February 15, Krewe of Wrecks Mardi Gras Parade, Pensacola, FL, www.pensacolamardigras.com This parade not only has exciting floats but they also throw beads, candy and doubloons into the crowd! The boardwalk hosts the largest “after-parade” party while participants await to hear the results from the parade judges.

February 15 - March 4, Mardi Gras Season, Baton Rouge, LA, www.visitbatonrouge.com This event incorporates seven different parades all with different themes. Including the first and only all-female krewe and one for dogs participating on the floats and in costumes.

February 19 - February 21, Georgia National Rodeo & Junior Livestock Show, Perry, GA, www.gnfa.com This rodeo, sanctioned by the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association, features seven specialty acts, including: Saddle bronc riding, bareback riding, the down roping, steer wrestling, team roping, bull riding and barrel racing.

February 21 - February 22, 40th Annual Fireside Arts and Craft Show, Helen, GA, gastateparks.org/unicoi Marking its 40th year, this art show is located in the beautiful lodge with more than 50 artists to explore on two floors.

February 27 - March 9, Florida Strawberry Festival, Plant City, FL, www.flstrawberryfestival.com Founded in 1930, this longstanding tradition includes 22 headline entertainment acts, seven livestock shows, a midway of 90+ attractions, delicious concessionaires and more!

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March 2015

March 6 - March 7, Black Heritage Festival, Lake Charles, LA, www.visitlakecharles.org This festival brings together the cultures of Africa and Southwest Louisiana and highlights the best in the community. Celebrating diversity, culture and education, the festival is filled with legendary Zydeco, Jazz, R&B and Gospel performers.

March 6 - March 8, The Craftsmen's Spring Classic Art & Craft Festival, Columbia, SC, www.CraftShow.com Hundreds of the nation's finest artists and craftsmen gather at the South Carolina State Fairgrounds to present original works in pottery, fine art, jewelry, glass, furniture, clothing, photography, musical instruments and more. Attendees also enjoy shopping amidst the specialty foods and sampling the various items. **March 6 - March 8**, Kentucky Crafted: The Market, Lexington, KY, www.artscouncil.ky.gov This market features more than 200 artists offering shoppers jewelry, wearable art, home décor, furniture, paintings, books and cds with hourly performances by musicians. One day is dedicated to wholesale buyers and retail shoppers receive two days dedicated to purchasing outstanding Kentucky products.

March 6 - March 8, Ponchatoula Antique Trade Days, Ponchatoula, LA, www.tangitourism.com Children's activities include a petting zoo, butterfly garden, train, pony rides while attendees shop from more than 200 vendors featuring cuisine, antiques, collectibles, fine arts and crafts.

March 7 - March 8, Gulf Coast Renaissance Faire, Pensacola, FL, www.yesteadyhands.com/GulfCoastRenaissanceFaire Witness armored combat, jousters, and the swirl of dancers while shopping among the merchants at this Medieval Affair!

March 7 - January 8, Jerry Brown Arts Festival, Hamilton, AL, www.jbal.org A two-day, indoor, juried art festival with items including stained glass, gourd art, broom makers, photography and paintings. It provides top-quality artists an ability to demonstrate their talents and give others an opportunity to see the creation of these art forms, often for their first time in this rural area.

March 8 - March 9, Shamrock City, Lookout Mountain, GA, www.seerockcity.com/shamrockcity (Also March 15-16) Get your green on for Rock City's 7th Irish celebration and festival featuring music, food and other entertainment! See the waterfall turned green and enjoy listening to the live music! Irish food, specialty beer and Rock City's famous fudge, with a "green" twist, are sure to be enjoyed by all!

March 13 - March 14, Iowa Rabbit Festival, Iowa, LA, www.visitlakecharles.org Celebrating the economic and culinary impact rabbits have in Southwest Louisiana, the annual Iowa Rabbit Festival is a one-of-a-kind event, from the rabbit gumbo to crowning the new Miss Bunny. Live Music and Cook-Offs complete this event that supports the local community.

March 13 - March 15, Independence Sicilian Heritage Festival, Independence, LA, www.indysicilianfest.com Get the whole Sicilian experience by taking a tour at the Cultural Museum, spaghetti-eating contest, meatball toss, Italian flag throwers, Sicilian folk dance, parade, poker run, art & craft booths, games, carnival rides and continuous live entertainment.

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March 14 - March 15, Forsythia Festival, Forsyth, GA, www.forsythiafestival.com This spring festival is a free, family-fun event featuring a two-day arts and crafts show, children's fair, a 5K and one-mile fun run, sporting tournaments, fashion show, live entertainment and much more, including foods, fine arts and crafts. This year's event will also include the Classic Car Show and turning the 5K run into a nighttime Glow Run!

March 14 - March 14, Wearin' of the Green Parade, Baton Rouge, LA, www.paradegroup.com An old Baton Rouge tradition, the Wearin' of the Green Parade celebrates all things associated with St. Patrick's Day: Irish music, community fun, and of course, the color green. Thousands line the streets to catch beads, trinkets and even vegetables, such as cabbage, to cook in their Irish stews!

March 19 - April 4, International Cherry Blossom Festival, Macon, GA, www.CherryBlossom.com The setting for this 33 year old festival, includes 350,000 Yoshino cherry trees in bloom, and Central City Park serves as the hub of this 10-day Festival. Activities include: concerts, parades, shopping amidst arts and crafts vendors, amusement rides, exhibits, fair food and international cuisine.

March 20 - March 22, Amite Oyster Festival, Amite, LA, www.amiteoysterfestival.com Come on over for a "shuckin' good time" and enjoy some mouthwatering Louisiana oysters! Fun for the whole family, including carnival rides, games, arts & crafts and continuous live entertainment.

March 20 - March 22, Louisiana Swamp Stomp Festival, Thibodaux, LA, www.nicholls.edu/swamp-stomp This festival includes free Cajun dance lessons, a Gumbo Cook-Off, arts and crafts as well as music featuring Cajun, Zydeco and Swamp Pop music. Cuisine includes: gumbo, jambalaya, shrimp po-boys, etoufee, pralines and more!

March 20 - March 28, 2015 Chasco Fiesta, New Port Richey, FL, www.chascofiesta.com Held on the banks of the Pithlachascotee ("Cotee") River in New Port Richey, the festival allows visitors to witness a traditional Native American Powwow. Participants include folks from Peru, Ecuador, New Mexico and Oklahoma participating in educational activities and dance performances to showcase their culture and history.

March 22 - March 22, 6th Annual Florida Beach Halfathon & 5K Race, St. Petersburg, FL, www.FloridaBeachHalfathon.com At the mouth of the Tampa Bay is Ft. De Soto Park, which is home to one of America's favorite beaches and the site of this year's race. USATF-certified courses are run entirely on the barrier island and being it is extremely flat, with no bridges, hills or other discernible inclines. Post-race includes pasta, fruit, pastries, cold beer and live entertainment. All finishers earn the spring version of the custom running starfish medal.

March 26 - March 29, Festival of Flowers, Mobile, AL, www.FestivalofFlowers.com The Festival of Flowers is the perfect place to grow your garden knowledge. Festival organizers view the event as an experience offering inspiration and education, along with the sheer delight of viewing the glorious gardens and fabulous flowers. Strolling through the spectacular displays, visitors soak up countless ideas for their own indoor and outdoor rooms.

March 27 - March 29, Summerville Family YMCA 43rd Annual Flowertown Festival, Summerville, SC, www.flowertownfestival.org Held in Azalea Park, this free event includes, "The Taste" where attendees can sample delicious dishes from local restaurants, a farmer's market, arts and crafts for all ages, live bands and children's rides.

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March 28 - March 28, Springtime Tallahassee, Tallahassee, FL, www.springtimetallahassee.com This festival includes layers of entertainment. Kick-off the morning with one of the largest and most celebrated parades in the southeast. Following the parade, Jubilee in the Park winds its way through downtown Tallahassee offering music, food, hand-made arts and crafts, a children's park and community entertainment.

March 28 - April 18, 75th Annual Columbus Spring Pilgrimage, Columbus, MS, www.visitcolumbusms.org (Also April 6-18) Recognized as one of the best and most authentic home tours in the South, for 75 years this cultural heritage event has featured tours of resplendent antebellum mansions, gardens and churches. New and exciting programs include: Tales from the Crypt, a garden party, carriage rides, a catfish cook-off and a fay full of blues music.

April 2015

April 3 - April 24, Keeneland Race Course Spring Meet, Lexington, KY, keeneland.com One of the nation's leading Thoroughbred race tracks hosts a three-week meet attracting visitors from around the world. Keeneland will also host the 2015 Breeder's Cup at the end of October.

April 8 - April 12, North Carolina Azalea Festival at Wilmington, Inc., Wilmington, NC, ncazaleafestival.org Celebrating Spring and Southern Charm via its Street Fair, Parade and weekend Concert Series, in addition to a Southern Garden Party, Patron's Gala, Circus and many additional events. Attendees can also opt for a VIP experience at the concerts and gala.

April 10 - April 12, Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival, Ponchatoula, LA, lastrawberryfestival.com The largest "FREE" festival in Louisiana, attendees enjoy fresh strawberries, prepared in a variety of ways, as well as a parade, carnival rides, craft booths, and entertainment. Be sure to visit the unique boutiques and antique shops in the town known as "America's Antique City".

April 11 - April 11, NatureFEST!, Jackson, MS, msnaturalscience.org Travel back in time to explore the "Dinosaurs: Land of Fire and Ice" exhibit at the 15th Annual NatureFEST! Hosted by the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science Foundation, the event is a nature outing and museum exhibit all in one. Families will enjoy live demonstrations of intriguing Mississippi reptiles and SCUBA divers feeding fish in the giant 100,000 gallon aquarium system. The museum also has a new dinosaur bone exhibit donated by the hosts of the "American Pickers" television series.

April 11 - April 11, Chocolate Festival, Lewisburg, WV, lewsiburichocolatefestival.com This year's event includes celebrity chefs who will display their chocolate creativity amidst festival attendees. Downtown merchants offer chocolate samples as you shop within their stores and festival proceeds benefit the United Way. Events include a chocolate bake-off, pastry demonstrations, a hands-free mousse eating contest as well as live music and entertainment.

April 11 - April 12, Florida Blueberry Festival, Brooksville, FL, floridablueberryfestival.org Celebrating the blueberry season, this annual festival has more than 150 vendors, including 75 artisans, and great food including: pie, wine, ice cream, shortcake, pancakes, muffins, jams, honey and more! Additional festival elements include live entertainment as well as a car and bike show.

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April 11 - April 12, 27th Annual Dogwood Festival, Perry, GA, perrygachamber.com Enjoy browsing one-of-a-kind crafts, festival food, kid's activities and dog diving competition on Saturday and Sunday. A Hot Air Balloon Rally is held at the Georgia National Fairgrounds with a balloon glow at dusk amidst music and delicious food.

April 16 - April 25, Come-See-Me Festival, Rock Hill, SC, comeseeme.org A ten-day festival, with more than 100 events, showcasing the City of Rock Hill and its gardens. Events include: Beach Bash, Parade, Moonlight Jazz & Blues, Glencairn Garden Entertainment, Gourmet Gardens, BBQ Cook-Off, Skydiving Exhibition, and a Tailgate Party and Fireworks Extravaganza. Children events include the Mayor's Frog Jump, Teddy Bear Tea Party, Chalk on Main, Musical Mania, Sundaes with Glen (the festival mascot), Healthy Kids Zone and Everything Trucks. Visit their website for a complete listing of events and all that the city of Rock Hill has to offer.

April 16 - April 19, Crawfish Music Festival, Biloxi, MS, mscoastcoliseum.com/crawfish Additional weekend 4/23/2015-4/26/2015. Attendees enjoy fresh, local, seafood as they listen to top musical entertainment as well as rides and games from the largest traveling festival midway in the world.

April 16 - May 1, Kentucky Derby Festival, Louisville, KY, kdf.org The 2015 Festival kicks off on April 18 with the Opening Ceremonies – Thunder Over Louisville, one of the nation's largest annual fireworks extravaganzas. Basketball, golf, volleyball, concerts, hot-air balloons, bed and steamboat races as well as the Pegasus Parade on April 30. Visit their website for a full listing of events that help raise more than \$500,000 for area charities each year.

April 18 - April 18, Blue Ridge Marathon-America's Toughest Road Marathon, Roanoke, VA, blueridgemarathon.com Featured on The Weather Channel World's 15 Toughest Marathons, with 7,430 feet of elevation change over the course of three mountains and the Blue Ridge Parkway, this marathon has rightfully earned its title. A half-marathon and 10K are also offered.

April 18 - April 19, 31st Annual Bloomin' Festival Arts and Crafts Fair, Cullman, AL, bloominfestival.com A juried arts and crafts fair, where not only can one find unique, handmade, pieces of art, but also have the chance to see some created before their very eyes. Demonstrations include: Blacksmith, Glass Blower, Potter, Broom Maker, Portrait Artist and more. Delicious treats await, too, including Monk Break. The monks at Saint Bernard Abbey prepare their signature raisin bread each year and their candle maker also is onsite, making this a one-of-a-kind event!

April 18 - June 7, Georgia Renaissance Festival, Fairburn, GA, garenfest.com Celebrating 30 years in 2015! This 8-weekend annual Spring Festival takes its guests on a journey back to 16th Century England on its 32 acre Kingdom complete with knights, faire maidens as well as the Queen and her Royal Court. A marketplace has unique treasures for one to shop, delicious foods to taste (turkey legs, meat pies and frothy ales) and ten stages of entertainment as well as a Royal Jousting Tournament.

April 21 - April 25, AQS Quiltweek-Paducah, Paducah, KY, quiltweek.com/locations/paducah Attendees not only come to see prizewinning quilts and learn from quilt masters but also enjoy workshops that center around color, design, embroidery, embellishment, software and technology. Paducah is only one of seven cities in the WORLD to be recognized as a City of Crafts and Folk Art as designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

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April 22 - April 26, Beaufort Wine and Food Weekend, Beaufort, NC, beaufortwineandfood.com Wine and culinary talent from around the world come together in the historic seaside town of Beaufort for a five-day festival with 20-plus events which include: intimate wine dinners and Vin de Mer (where guests are immersed in a culinary tour de force offering 300 wine labels and cuisine from dozens of local and regional restaurants paired together in perfect harmony).

April 23 - April 26, Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event, Lexington, KY, rk2de.org A qualifier for the Olympic Games and World Championship, the Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event (RK3DE) delivers X-Game-Level thrills along with master horsemanship in a multiday competition of Olympic-level horses and riders.

April 23 - April 26, Virginia International Tattoo, Norfolk, VA, vafest.org/tattoo The term “tattoo” refers to a Scottish military last call, when pipes and drums called troops back to post for an evening ceremony. Featuring more than 800 military and civilian performers from eight nations, the Virginia International Tattoo has been long regarded as the most patriotic of the world’s tattoos.

April 24 - April 25, Double Decker Arts Festival 2015, Gardendale, AL, magnoliafestival.org Experience the best of southern culture in the heart of the deep-south. Celebrating its 20th Anniversary the two-day festival kicks off Friday night and Saturday includes 150 artists, southern food and music for all ages.

April 24 - April 25, Gardendale Magnolia Festival, Oxford, MS, doubledeckerfestival.com The event features free art classes, a talent search, pooch parade, 3 stages of live entertainment, carnival, car show, pageant, vendors, eating contests and more!

April 24 - April 25, Norfolk NATO Festival, Norfolk, VA, norfolknatofestival.org Recognizing the international influence of the NATO Command in Norfolk, Virginia, Friday night’s flag-raising ceremony honors each of the 28 NATO Member Nations. Saturday’s Parade of Nations, has more than 100 entries. Both are FREE to the public. The NATO village allows attendees a chance to greet a NATO representative and learn about that nation’s culture.

April 24 - April 26, Interstate Mullet Toss, Pensacola, FL, florabama.com Hosted by the Flora-Bama Lounge, on the Florida-Alabama state line, this wacky, fun-filled, tournament has participants compete in an actual mullet (fish) toss! Live music, food and drinks keep everyone entertained!

April 24 - April 27, 37th Annual Vidalia Onion Festival, Vidalia, GA, vidaliaonionfestival.com Recognized by MSNBC as one of the Five Don’t Miss Festivals Across the U.S., The Vidalia community celebrates Georgia’s Official State Vegetable with a four-day festival. In addition to a children’s parade, street dance, pageant, baseball tournament and other events, the local airport hosts a carnival, aviation activities, concert and fireworks show. Don’t miss the professional chef competition and Vidalia Onion Recipe Contest and Public Tasting.

May 2015

May 1 - May 2, Market Street Festival, Columbus, MS, marketstreetfestival.com Celebrating its 20th Anniversary, this year’s festival, set in historic downtown Columbus, will host more than 225 arts and crafts vendors and a variety of food vendors. This two-day festival includes four entertainment stages, a car show, tractor display and a children’s area with two stages exclusively for them!

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May 1 - May 2, Main Street JazzFest 2015, Murfreesboro, TN, mainstreetjazzfest.net This free festival features local, regional and internationally known jazz artists. Families can enjoy some contemporary tunes while the little ones enjoy the children's area and parents can shop and eat among the various vendors. The historic Rutherford County Courthouse is the perfect backdrop for this annual event.

May 1 - May 3, Pensacola Crawfish Festival, Pensacola, FL, fiestaoffiveflags.org The 2015 festival will feature 16,000 pounds of boiled crawfish. Cajun dishes such as red beans and rice, boudin balls, seafood gumbo, etouffee, jambalaya, and Cajun Pasta will also be available. Live entertainment and activities for all ages, will make it a day that all can enjoy! This year's event will also include a Sunday morning gospel performance.

May 1 - May 3, Annual Isle of Eight Flags Shrimp Festival, Fernandina Beach, FL, shrimpfestival.com Pirate Invasions, watercraft parade, Best Decorated Shrimp Boat contest, Blessing of the Fleet, Fireworks, Pageant, arts and crafts and more await you on Amelia Island. Come and enjoy all things...Shrimp! More than 25 local organizations offer up a variety of shrimp and other seafood delicacies in the food court.

May 2 - May 2, 8th Annual National Beaufort BoatBuilding Challenge, Beaufort, NC, beaufortchallenge.com The North Carolina Boatbuilding Heritage Foundation organizes this annual challenge in hopes of maintaining an interest in wooden boatbuilding. Contestants have four hours to craft their boat before testing it in the water. Some of the proceeds of this event also go towards college scholarships for young adults to be trained in both traditional and modern boat building techniques.

May 2 - May 2, 41st Annual Wooden Boat Show, Beaufort, NC, ncmaritimemuseums.com/woodenboatchow This free event features a variety of small wooden boats, historic vessels, nautical crafts, educational activities, boat models, traditional skills demonstrations and displays. Model Boats, which range from 25" to 40", are also a big draw with anywhere from 30-60 on display. The Beaufort waterfront serves as the perfect setting for this event with the North Carolina Maritime Museum and the Museum's Harvey W. Smith Watercraft Center located directly across the street.

May 2 - May 3, The Cotton Pickin' Fair, Gay, GA, cpfair.org Nestled in and around historic farm buildings and tree-lined grounds of the 185 year old Gay Family farmstead, are 350 juried artisans featuring pottery, weaving, basket making, blacksmithing, sculpture, woodcarving, folk art, and jewelry. Festival guests can also enjoy a complimentary shuttle ride to the Historic Red Oak Covered Bridge, built in 1840 by famous Master Builder, Horace King. It is his sole surviving bridge and has remained in continuous service for more than 175 years.

May 7 - May 7, Taste of Alpharetta, Alpharetta, GA, awesomealpharetta.com Set in historic downtown Alpharetta, the event features more than 60 local restaurants. Attendees enjoy samples of appetizers, entrees and decadent desserts while enjoying live music, culinary competitions and family fun zones. Chefs from Alpharetta will also compete in six different categories some of which include "Best Dessert", "Best Presentation" and "Best Booth".

May 8 - May 9, Virginia International Pan Fest, Virginia Beach, VA, vafest.org/pan Set to the captivating sounds of steel pan music, PAN Fest takes one on a musical adventure with its unique songs and styles of the Caribbean. All performances are free to the public.

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May 8 - May 9, International Bar-B-Q Festival, Owensboro, KY, bbqfest.com Barbeque Heaven awaits you along the riverfront with hickory smoked beef, pork, mutton, chicken and 1,500 gallons of burgoo (a spicy stew).

May 8 - May 10, Artisphere, Greenville, SC, artisphere.us Celebrating the visual and performing arts, Artisphere is comprised of 120 visual artists selling their works, an art demonstration stage that will include bookmaking, pottery, weaving and more, as well as local and regional singer/songwriters and craft activities for the kids. A full listing is available online.

May 9 - May 31, Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival, Fernandina Beach, FL, aicmf.com World-class artists perform their classical music in intimate and historic settings on Amelia Island. This year's finale will feature a Chamber Pops with everything from Bach to The Beatles.

May 14 - May 17, Chesapeake Jubilee, Chesapeake, VA, chesapeakejubilee.org This four-day event includes local and national music artists performing on one of the three stages, fireworks, an arts and crafts show, one of the largest 4-H Livestock Show and Auctions on the East Coast as well as carnival rides, cloggers, free arts and crafts for children and the world famous Chesapeake Jubilee-Kansas City Barbeque Society BBQ Cook-off. New this year is a Silent Disco (where guests dance to the same concert quality music via their own personal headphones).

May 15 - May 16, SoulStock, Decatur, AL, soulstock.com A free Christian Music Festival which also includes guest speakers. All ages enjoy a wonderful evening of contemporary Christian music making it a positive, family-friendly event for everyone.

May 15 - May 16, 33rd Annual Limestone Sheriff's Rodeo, Athens, AL, limestonesheriffrodeo.com "The Biggest Outdoor Rodeo East of the Mississippi River", this annual event includes more than 400 competitors from across the nation and helps raise funds for local law enforcement to purchase much needed equipment, including patrol cars, vests, training and more. The "Special Needs Rodeo" is held on Friday morning with over 450 participants with each receiving a t-shirt, sheriff's star, meal and drinks. This outdoor rodeo also includes a parade, pageant and street dance for folks to enjoy all the while supporting the local community.

May 15 - May 16, Cotton Pickin' BBQ Cook-off, Hartselle, AL, <http://bit.ly/cotton-pickin-bbq-cook-off> A BBQ Cook-Off for Professional and Backyard teams it is also a Kansas City Barbeque Society (KCBS) event. Awards are also given for best dessert, sauce as well as the People Choice Award thus giving attendees an opportunity to sample!

May 15 - May 17, MainStrasse Village Maifest, Covington, KY, mainstrasse.org Maifest brings the excitement of a street festival and mixes it with the historic neighborhood shops and restaurants in the village. Saturday has an exhilarating sidewalk chalk art contest. Additional elements include live music, arts and crafts, delicious food and dancing!

May 16 - May 16, Catfish Festival, Scottsboro, AL, Catfish Plates for all and fishing for children up to age 12. Live entertainment as well as Car, Truck, Motorcycle and Tractor Show. Additional food includes: Homemade ice cream, Snow Cones, Funnel Cakes, Hamburgers and Hot Dogs.

May 16 - May 17, Trail of Honor, Jackson, MS, trailofhonor.org A living history tribute to America's Veterans, visitors enjoy historically accurate demonstrations of military life as well as reenactments beginning from the French and Indian War to today. Living historians also display uniforms, weapons, ammunition, rations and equipment from the era they represent. The event is free to attend.

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May 16 - May 17, Poke Salat Festival, Arab, AL, downtownarab.com/pokesalat This FREE annual event has been held in historic Arab for more than 30 years. Live music, artists and a variety of food, including, Poke Salat, are available for all to enjoy!

May 21 - May 24, Sumter Iris Festival, Sumter, SC, irisfestival.org Celebrating its 75th Anniversary, the Sumpter Iris Festival is held at the Swan Lake Iris Gardens, featuring the famous Japanese Iris and all eight, known, species of swan in the world. The gardens also feature a variety of birds, waterfowl, and species of flowers and trees. New this year, the event's parade will take place at night.

May 22 - May 24, Florida Folk Festival, White Springs, FL, floridafolkfestival.com Pay tribute to Florida's land, people and diverse cultural heritage on the banks of the historic Suwannee River. One of the oldest state folk festivals in America, this event features more than 300 performances by Florida's greatest folk and roots artists including musicians of: swing, folk, blues, gospel, country, Latin, jazz, bluegrass, Caribbean and zydeco music.

May 23 - May 24, Alabama Jubilee Hot Air Balloon Classic, Decatur, AL, alabamajubilee.net FREE to the public, this annual event features more than 55 hot air balloons from across the country. Together they compete in four races over a two day period. In between races an arts and crafts show, antique and classic car show, tractor show and live music, keep attendees entertained.

June 2015

June 4 - June 7, Great American Brass Band Festival, Danville, KY, gabbf.org In its 25th year, brass bands from around the world take over the town of Danville for a weekend of continuous concerts. Visitors enjoy a Chautauqua Tea, brass symposium, downtown gallery hop, Bayou & Brass Street party, hot air balloon race as well as a Main Street Parade. This year's theme is "Horns Aplenty: Brass Greats of American Jazz".

June 4 - June 14, Coliseum Summer Fair, Biloxi, MS, mscoastcoliseum.com/summerfair A family-friendly event that offers rides, live music, shows, contests and headline entertainment. Latin Fest is also held in conjunction with the Fair, honoring the Hispanic heritage of the Mississippi Coast.

June 4 - July 23, Sounds of Summer, Columbus, MS, columbusmainstreet.com This is a free concert series held on the banks of the Tennessee Tombigbee River at the Columbus Riverwalk Park. It is held on Thursdays during the months of June and July.

June 5 - June 7, 22nd "McDonald's North American Sand Soccer Championships", Virginia Beach, VA, sandsoccer.com Sun, surf and sand provide all that is needed for "beach soccer". Competitions are available for youth ages 9-19, adult amateur, and professional players with approximately 950 teams participating. Additional events include a pro/am U.S. Open, Beach Wrestling, Beach Field Hockey, Beach Tennis, Beach Lacrosse and Coed Beach Football.

June 11 - June 13, Genealogy Jamboree and Pioneer Day, Cumberland Gap, TN, genealogyjamboree.us This event combines genealogy/history lectures with period reenactors, storytelling, authors and traditional crafters. Attendees can help make apple butter and see live demonstrations on pioneer crafts.

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June 12 - June 14, Capitol City Biker Bash, Charleston, WV, capitolcitybikerbash.com Showcasing the winding roads of West Virginia as well as the Kanawha River, this all-bike rally attracts more than 10,000 people to the state capitol. A family-friendly event, there is a bike show, bike games, poker runs and vendors. This year's event will host two national acts for each night there is a concert.

June 12 - June 14, Blairsville Scottish Festival and Highland Games, Blairsville, GA, blairsvillescottishfestival.com This three day event includes the Kilted Golf Classic and Ceilidh Block Party on Friday and a Kilted Mile Race on Saturday morning. Opening Ceremonies include 30 Scottish Clans, 5 Societies, Pipe and Drum Bands and the Parade of Tartans. Additional elements include Scottish animals, athletic competitions, a music tent and bag pipe lessons. Activities for children are also available.

June 13 - June 13, Beer Cheese Festival, Winchester, KY, beercheesefestival.com Winchester's historic, downtown, main street becomes Beer Cheese Boulevard during the second weekend in June as attendees sample Beer Cheese, listen to live music and shop from more than 70 arts and crafts vendors. Awards are also given for best Beer Cheese including a people's choice award.

June 13 - June 20, W.C. Handy Blues & Barbecue Festival, Henderson, KY, handyblues.org This festival celebrates "Father of the Blues", William Christopher Handy, by bringing some of the best national and local blues talent each year. Other events during the week include a Mardi Gras-style Street Strut, lectures, dance classes and more. New this year will be "Handy Happy Hours" and the "Handy After Party".

June 19 - June 27, Dazzling Daylilies Festival & Balloons over the Garden, Owensboro, KY, wkbq.org Have a bloomin' good time at the Western Kentucky Botanical Garden, enjoying flower sculptures, a nighttime Lantern Launch, Hot Air Balloon Glow and Balloon Rides during "Balloons Over the Garden". Daylilies are also on sale.

June 20 - June 21, PlottFest, Maggie Valley, NC, plottfest.org PlottFest celebrates the Plott Hound, the official North Carolina State Dog, via its two-day music and heritage event. Amidst the bluegrass music, some of the finest Plott Hounds will compete in sanctioned dog shows. Also onsite is a Plott Hound rescue group should anyone want to make a Plott Hound part of their family.

June 20 - June 29, FestivALL, Charleston, WV, festivallcharleston.com The city of Charleston is transformed into a work of art during this ten-day "FestivaALL". Throughout the city and various venues, 130 events center around 360 musical, visual and performing arts groups. Main events include productions by the Charleston Light Opera Guild, Mountain Stage (as heard on NPR), Smoke on the Water Chili Cookoff, riverboat rides, dance gala, Mayor's Concert, major theatre productions and more!

June 24 - June 27, ROMP: Bluegrass Roots & Branches Festival, Owensboro, KY, rompfest.com Music lovers from around the world come to hear headliner acts at outdoor concerts, jam sessions and nightly after parties. New this year, the International Bluegrass Music Museum will promote an international flavor by offering a showcase of bluegrass bands via music major programs from universities around the world.

June 26 - June 27, White Lightning Trail Festival, Cumberland Gap, TN, claibornecounty.com This festival celebrates the White Lightning Trail which passes through nine East Tennessee Counties. The event is comprised of Appalachian culture demonstrations, historic displays and reenactments, arts and crafts, car show, bike run and more! New this year is the Appalachian Quilt Show.

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June 26 - June 28, 55th Annual Beaufort Old Homes & Gardens Tour & Antiques Show & Sale, Beaufort, NC, beauforthistoricsite.org This colonial seaport town hosts one of the state's longest running tours of private historic homes, gardens, local churches, inns, art studios and meeting halls. In honor of its 55th Anniversary there will also be a Summer Party held on July 11.

July 2015

July 2 - July 5, 54th Annual Alderson 4th of July Celebration, Alderson, WV, www.alderson4th.com This four-day event in the historic town of Alderson, West Virginia, hosts a multitude of races, including: canoe, track and field, 5K, bike and even one for rubber duckies! For the children there is an art contest and fishing derby as well as rides. Live music and square dancing in addition to an ice cream social, Grand Parade and one of the best firework displays in West Virginia, make for this to be a can't-miss-event for families.

July 2 - July 5, MS Gulf Coast Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo, Gulfport, MS, www.mississippideepseafishingrodeo.com Over 30 categories, including saltwater and freshwater, make this the largest family-friendly fishing rodeo in the world! Fireworks, fishing, fellowship and FUN! Recordbreaking shark, tuna and flounder have been discovered during this event off the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

July 3 - August 1, An Appalachian Summer Festival, Boone, NC, www.appsummer.org Opera, dance, theatre, independent film, contemporary visual art, symphonic music and more come to life in Western North Carolina. Recent performers include Sheryl Crow, Idina Menzel, Little Big Town, Kenny Loggins and Lyle Lovett. The festival has been included in the New York Times' annual listing of the nation's most interesting and unique summer arts festivals. This year's event will include the Rosen Outdoor Sculpture Competition, a national, juried visual arts competition, bringing contemporary sculptors to campus, in order to install their work and conduct public lectures and tours.

July 4 - July 4, Red, White, Blue and You!, Lake Charles, LA, www.visitlakecharles.org Celebrate the 4th of July with the star-spangled street parade through downtown Lake Charles. It is as American as Apple Pie. The Apple Pie Baking Contest that is! It is also takes place this day followed by a concert with stunning fireworks over magnificent Lake Charles.

July 4 - July 4, Sertoma's 4th of July Celebration, Pensacola, FL, www.visitpensacola.com The Largest 4th of July Celebration on the Gulf Coast! This Family-Friendly event features a children's area, patriotic parade, arts & crafts, live entertainment and delicious food! The evening concludes with fantastic fireworks over the Pensacola Bay!

July 4 - July 4, Wells Fargo Red, White and Blue, Greenville, SC, events.greenvillesc.gov Featuring one of the largest fireworks displays in South Carolina, downtown Greenville continues to host one of the premiere 4th of July events with a full evening of live musical entertainment on two stages, a children's area and a tantalizing array of food and beverage. Each year the fireworks are synchronized to patriotic music and simulcast live on the radio station.

July 4 - July 4, St. Marys Independence Day Festival, St. Marys, GA, www.VisitStMarys.com This Annual 4th of July Celebration offers hometown charm alongside a parade and fireworks illuminating the riverbank. Additional activities include a fun run, arts & crafts vendors, live entertainment and a river cruise!

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July 5 - July 12, Jets Over Kentucky, Lebanon, KY, www.visitlebanonky.com Rolling, looping, spinning, diving and racing is all part of what makes Jets Over Kentucky the thoroughbred of radio-controlled jet shows. This event draws as many as 200 pilots from across the world due to Lebanon-Springfield Airport's 5,000 foot runway and one of the largest concentrations of radio control jet pilots in the country. These radio-controlled planes range from \$20,000-\$200,000! Additional show components include a parade of lights, skydivers and fireworks display.

July 7 - July 12, Blue Marlin Grand Championship, Orange Beach, AL, Known as "The Greatest Show in Sportfishing", the Blue Marlin Grand Championship brings the best, invitation only, anglers to Orange Beach as they compete for over a million dollars in prizes. Proceeds from the event also benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

July 10 - July 18, Kingsport Fun Fest, Kingsport, TN, www.funfest.net This year the city unveils its new carousel which originates from the 1950's and has been restored to highlight handcarved and painted figures created by the community. Don't miss the hot air balloons, big-name concerts, and additional events throughout the city.

July 10 - July 12, 38th Annual Uncle Dave Macon Days, Murfreesboro, TN, www.UncleDaveMaconDays.com Held on the historic grounds of the Cannonsborough Village, this event is both a contest and a celebration of dance, culture and old-time music. One can also stop and listen to one of the spontaneous "shade tree pickings" that often takes place and is considered a highlight of the event. Arts and crafts demonstrations are also onsite.

July 11 - July 11, Blue Angels Airshow, Pensacola Beach, FL, <http://www.blueangels.navy.mil> Home to the world-famous, Blue Angels, Pensacola Beach attendees enjoy Free Admission and a spectacular airshow.

July 17 - July 18, Cajun French Music & Food Festival, Lake Charles, LA, www.visitlakecharles.org Love Cajun Music? Can't get enough gumbo, jambalaya or etouffee? Burton Coliseum hosts this annual event, touted as a "true celebration of the Cajun heritage and culture". Additional components include a Sunday morning Cajun French Catholic Mass with a Cajun choir and more!

July 17 - July 18, Forum 35's Art Melt, Baton Rouge, LA, www.forum35.org/?page=artmelt Step inside the Louisiana State Museum in downtown Baton Rouge and discover one of the largest multi-media, juried, art exhibits in Louisiana. Artists display their work within music, performing arts, painting, sculpting and culinary creations. Imagine. Inspire. Discover.

July 16 - July 18, Virginia Lake Festival, Clarksville, VA, www.clarksvilleva.com "LAKEFEST" includes tethered hot air balloon rides for children 12yrs and younger, a jaw-dropping sand sculpture creation (watch as the artist creates it!) live music, arts & crafts, as well as the hot air balloons flying over the festival and dipping their baskets into the lake! In the evening, fireworks illuminate the sky and water as folks enjoy the view from the shore and their boats.

July 16 - July 25, Folkmoot USA, Waynesville, NC, www.folkmootusa.org Set within the majestic Smoky Mountains, hosting more than 75,000 attendees, North Carolina's International Festival returns for its 32nd year. Folkmoot USA invites more than 200 performers, from 8 countries, creating more than 55 costumed, live musical performances.

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July 16 - July 19, Keeneland Concours d'Elegance, Lexington, KY, www.keenelandconcours.com Keeneland rolls out the red carpet for hundreds of rare and exotic automobiles, motorcycles and trucks for the Keeneland Concours d'Elegance. Festivities also include a distillery tour, Bluegrass driving tour and a Hanger Bash at the Blue Grass Airport. Proceeds from this event do towards an endowment for neonatal research at the Kentucky Children's Hospital.

July 17 - July 26, 60th Annual Beaufort Water Festival, Beaufort, SC, www.bftwaterfestival.com Celebrating 60 years in 2015! Opening weekend includes an air show, raft races, children's road fishing, a Saturday evening concert, Children's Day and teen dance on Sunday. The final weekend includes the Grand Parade, Dragon Boat race, musical concert, teh Commodore's Ball, Blessing of the Fleet and Parade of Boats. An Arts & Crafts Market is open daily during the festival. Tickets go on sale in March 2015.

July 18 - July 19, 17th Annual Butternut Creek Festival, Blairsville, GA, www.butternutcreekfestival.com Free admission and parking makes it all the more reason to visit this family-friendly event located within Meeks Park and nestled along the shady banks of Butternut Creek. With 65-70 juried artists, there is something for everyone including live demonstrations and music!

July 24 - July 25, Marshland Festival, Lake Charles, LA, www.visitlakecharles.org The Unique landscape in Southwest Louisiana, especially its marshes, is celebrated via this annual event. The festival helps raise funds for 14 local schools and church organizations. The event features exhibits, games, arts and crafts booths and regional cuisine and music.

July 29 - August 1, Sandy Lee Songwriters Festival, Henderson, KY, www.hendersonky.org/event Featuring intimate, acoustic performances by more than 30 of Nashville's award winning singer/songwriters. Attendees can hear their favorite songs by the men and women who wrote them. New events this year include "Riders and Writers" workshop at Ellis Park Race Track and the "Singing and Swinging" golf scramble.

July 31 - August 2, The Craftsmen's Summer Classic Art & Craft Festival, Myrtle Beach, SC, www.CraftShow.com Shop one-of-a-kind specialties ranging from traditional, functional, whimsical, decorative or funky to fun! With artists and craftsmen displaying their original works, there is something for every sense of style and budget. Gifts, home décor, functional items, clothing and accessories provide an array within which to shop. This year's admission will allow for a free return pass - thus one can shop for all 3 days!

August 2015

August 1 - August 2, 36th Annual Revolutionary War Battle Reenactment, Sanford, NC, www.nchistoricsites.org/horsesho In addition to the reenactment, period crafts such as blacksmithing, gun engraving, weaving, children's games and pottery will be on display. Competitions among the reenactors include, tomahawk throwing, skillet toss and skewering an apple with a bayonet. Militia demonstrations, including firing of a replica 18th century canon also take place during the event

August 6 - August 8, Bluegrass in the Park Folklife Festival, Henderson, KY, www.bluegrassinthepark.org One of the largest, free admission, bluegrass festivals in the nation, the event features not only live bluegrass music but also activities for children and sporting events that include: disc golf tournament, 5K, outdoor street pole vault tournament and tennis event. While bluegrass music is now embraced by the world, this event strives to educate and remind folks of the music's humble beginnings in Western Kentucky.

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August 7 - August 8, Lewisburg Literary Festival, Lewisburg, WV, www.lewisburgliteraryfestival.com A vibrant, two-day event that features visiting authors, outdoor art, musical events and performance art, all inspired by literature. The town is transformed into a scene, out of a play, with literature and art installations that attendees meander through as they walk from event to event. Additional components include book signings, writing workshops, a children's book breakfast and readings by their favorite children's characters.

August 14 - August 15, Classic City BBQ Festival, Athens, GA, www.ClassicCityBBQFest.com Deliciousness. One cannot leave this event hungry. With three barbecue contests and local barbecue restaurant vendors, there are plenty of options for one's tastebuds. New this year, beer sampling! Additional event elements include the Classic Car Show, Tailgate Tradeshow and an outdoor music stage. Proceeds benefit the Northeast Georgia Food Bank which, due to the event's success, was able to provide 51,000 meals to those in need.

August 14 - August 22, Wilson County Fair, Lebanon, TN, www.wilsoncountyfair.net New this year: "The Year of the Tree" is the featured agricultural commodity which will be used throughout the 2015 fair in exhibits, events and demonstrations. A new concert series will feature country, gospel and other music genres. What County Fair is complete without its Midway Ride and Games, in addition to tractor pulls, demolition derbies and a mule pull. Fiddlers Grove Historical Village, hosts costumed demonstrators and artisans showing techniques used by early settlers.

August 14 - August 23, State Fair of WV, Fairlea, WV, www.statefairfw.com The iconic country band, Alabama, headlines this year's fair, which is the largest multi-day celebration in the state. This family-friendly event include carnival rides, magic shows, circus-like performances, livestock shows, harness racing and live petting zoo.

August 14 - August 23, Staunton Music Festival, Staunton, VA, www.stauntonmusicfestival.com Travel and Leisure magazine described this event as "Virginia's world-class music festival". Attracting more than 60 of the world's finest chamber music performers for 10 days of concerts each August for a total of 20 concerts. All events take place in venues of first-rate acoustics and historical significance. The Festival opens with a black-tie Midsummer Ball and ten days later, the festival concludes with a performance of Bach's St. John Passion.

August 14 - August 15, Dirty Dancing Festival, Lake Lure, NC, www.DirtyDancingFestival.com Celebrating the classic American film, the weekend begins with the FREE "Lakeside Film Screening" at Morse Park Meadows. On Saturday, the "Family Dance Festival" includes live music, watermelon games and the crowd-favorite, "Lake Lift Competition". At the close of the festival, dancers perform "I've Had the Time of My Life" and audience members are encouraged to participate.

August 15 - August 15, Arts & Crabs Festival, Lake Charles, LA, www.visitlakecharles.org Crab and Beer Tastings! Need we say more? The annual event showcases the relationship between Louisiana seafood and culture via food, music and art. Some tasting elements include: Crab cakes, crab au gratin, ceviche and gazpacho.

August 15 - August 15, Bright Lights, Belhaven Lights, Jackson, MS, www.greaterbelhaven.com A 2014 designee of America's 10 Great Neighborhoods by the American Planning Association, this festival provides an outlet to showcase the visual arts and live music by Greater Belhaven residents. Five stages include blues, jazz, bluegrass, Celtic, folk and indie rock music. Additional items include, artisan booths, dancers and a children's area.

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August 20 - August 30, Kentucky State Fair, Louisville, KY, www.kystatefair.org America's largest indoor fair, held within 1.2 million square feet of exhibit space, celebrates all things Kentucky including The World's Championship Horse Show; the richest and most prestigious Saddlebred show. The Kentucky Proud Experience Tent gives visitors an opportunity to purchase farm fresh products and local beverages. While its roots are in agriculture, the Kentucky State Fair has grown into a trade and public education exposition as well as a major entertainment venue with free concerts on each day of the Fair.

August 21 - August 22, Great Southern Tailgate Classic, Amelia Island, FL, www.greatsoutherntailgateclassic.com "The Art of Tailgating" spotlights delicious food, lively music, arts, crafts and a children's area. Attendees will also enjoy the tailgating games, food demonstrations, watermelon eating contest and more!

August 21 - August 24, Asheville Wine & Food Festival, Asheville, NC, www.ashevillewineandfood.com The New York Post named it as one of the best festival of its kind in the country, featuring a dazzling array of more than 300 wines and creations prepared by Asheville's celebrated and internationally recognized chefs. Sample local artisan food products, craft beers and spirits. Additional events include SWEET, which is a time of desserts, music, drink and fun and the GRAND TASTING presents the best in wine, food, spirits, beer and competitive entertainment. The year's festival will be a veritable Culinary Circus of adventure and fun!

August 28 - August 28, Fete Rouge - Food and Wine Fete, Baton Rouge, LA, www.feterougebr.com Fete Rouge has blossomed into an event that honors and celebrates the essence of Baton Rouge's lifestyle: food, fun and creativity. Exquisite cuisine sampling, wine tastings, live music and more create this annual tradition.

August 28 - September 16, Perspectives: Georgia Pottery Invitational, Watkinsville, GA, www.ocaf.com One of the largest pottery events in the southeast region, this nineteen-day invitational showcases the works of 50 select Georgia potters. There are three exhibitions as well as a sales venue offering more than 5,000 pieces of original, handmade pottery. Additional components include a pottery workshop instructed by a nationally known visiting artist, free pottery demonstrations, gallery talks and tours of local potters' studios.

September 2015

September 1 - October 4, Virginia Beach Neptune Festival, Virginia Beach, VA, www.neptunefestival.com King Neptune and his royal court are part of Grand Parade, which features over 100 entries! The "signature event" is an International Sandsculpting Championship featuring 32 sculptors from around the globe. Sandtastic! Additional elements include: Fireworks over the Atlantic Ocean, Surfing Competition, 4 stages of local, regional, national music acts and More!

September 4 - September 7, Matthews Alive! Festival, Matthews, NC, www.matthewsalive.org One of the Largest Labor Day Weekend Parades in the Southeast can be found in Matthews, North Carolina and it's all part of the Matthews Alive Festival! Shop from more than 170 artists and grab a bite to eat (or two!) with selections from more than 30 food vendors. Additional festival elements include: a Midway (complete with games and rides for all ages) Three Stages of live entertainment, a children's area, quilt show and more!

September 4 - October 23, Live After Five, Baton Rouge, LA, <http://liveafterfive.downtownbr.org> "Clock Out and Rock Out" every Friday after 5pm from September 4-October 23. Families and friends are entertained by lively music, at this free concert, while relaxing on their blankets or enjoying a picnic. After the show the party moves along to local restaurants and watering holes.

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September 5 - September 7, Marietta Art in the Park, Marietta, GA, www.artparkmarietta.com Situated amidst downtown Marietta's picturesque historic square and shopping the gorgeous work of 170 fine artists, one cannot help but think that they are in a scene from a movie. Only fitting that Hollywood has, actually, used this same location. In addition to the artists, downtown also features museums, theatres, art galleries and unique boutiques. Children attending the Art in the Park event will also enjoy the FREE "make and take" art station in the Children's Interactive Art Gallery.

September 7 - September 7, BooZoo's Labor Day Festival, Lake Charles, LA, www.visitlakecharles.org Named for Zydeco legend Wilson "BooZoo" Chavis, the festival celebrates Southwest Louisiana's rich musical heritage and the Creole culture. Your tastebuds come alive as they savor the flavors of red beans and rice, crawfish étouffé and BBQ sandwiches. Cajun and Zydeco Music Masters keep everyone's foot tapping as they celebrate the festival's 31st year.

September 10 - September 13, Yellow Daisy Festival, Stone Mountain, GA, www.stonemountainpark.com Meander the wooded trails and shop amid more than 400 artisans tucked between the trees. This award-winning event is an annual tradition for legions of women comprised of girlfriends or multi-generational families.

September 11 - September 13, KY State BBQ Festival, Danville, KY, www.kybbqfestival.com Three Days of Barbeque!!! Purchase your eats directly from the Celebrity Pit Masters, themselves. Live music, demonstrations and door prizes keep you entertained throughout the day thus allowing for a second round of BBQ in the belly!

September 11 - September 13, MainStrasse Village Oktoberfest, Covington, KY, www.mainstrasse.org The German Village of MainStrasse hosts this annual event within its tree-lined streets and cobblestone pathways. A variety of mouth-watering foods and thirst-quenching beverages are available for sampling in addition to a variety of arts & crafts vendor to shop. Kinderplatz has rides for children and there is a Amusement Midway for those that are children at heart. The Bier Garten is host to German music, dancing and beer that reminds one of Munich though you are really adjacent to the Ohio River in Kentucky (near Cincinnati). Perfekt!

September 11 - September 20, Tennessee Valley Fair, Knoxville, TN, www.tnvalleyfair.org "Rooted in Tradition" this year's Fair will highlight the event's unique history and heritage. Guests will be invited to #RememberWhen as they explore historical exhibits and assist in creating a time capsule while enjoying "old time" crafts, food and storytelling. This annual event will also have its can't-miss, concert series, innovative exhibits, livestock shows, action sports, and exciting Midway.

September 11 - September 13, Roots and Heritage Festival, Lexington, KY, www.rootsfestky.com Historic Elm Tree Lane hosts this three-day street fair, honoring the powerful spirit of African-American culture and history via music, art exhibits, film presentations, food and a parade. There are also activities for children. This event also features two stages with internationally renowned artists performing live.

September 12 - September 13, Biloxi Seafood Festival, Biloxi, MS, biloxi.org/events/Biloxi_seafood_festival.html This year's festival returns to Point Cadet, its original location, that was damaged during Hurricane Katrina. Celebrating Biloxi's seafood heritage, via the Mississippi Gulf Coast, this two-day festival features a Gumbo Championship, live entertainment, arts, crafts and most importantly, SEAFOOD!

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September 15 - September 20, Kentucky Bourbon Festival, Bardstown, KY, www.kybourbonfestival.com
Celebrating all things Bourbon: Tastings, Cooking, Mixology, Talks, Cigars and Jazz. Additional events include a gala, balloon glow, golf tournament, auction and more! More than 50,000 visitors come to the Bourbon Capitol of the World® for this festival.

September 18 - September 21, euphoria - Food, Wine & Music Festival, Greenville, SC, www.euphoriagreenville.com Situated at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, this four-day festival includes exclusive tasting events, cooking demonstrations, wine seminars, as well as multi-course dinners and live musical performances. Domestic and International wines, celebrity chefs, master sommeliers and national recording artists make this a can't-miss-event in award-winning downtown Greenville, SC.

September 18 - September 20, Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion, Bristol, VA/TN, www.BristolRhythm.com
Celebrating its 15th year and held in Historic Downtown Bristol, Virginia/Tennessee, this three-day music festival spotlights over 150 roots music acts on more than twenty stages. The new Birthplace of Country Music Museum is partnering with the Music Maker Relief Foundation to create a special music exhibit during the festival, too.

September 19 - September 19, Boom Days Heritage Celebration, Fort Payne, AL, www.boomdays.org Roving minstrels, clowns and other entertainers take to the streets, performing amidst vintage cars while others shop among the artists in City Park. Local museums are open and entertainment is provided on several outdoor stages. Additional components include: pancake breakfast, pet parade, fire and police equipment demonstrations, children's area, Star Wars reinactors.

September 19 - September 20, Ocmulgee Indian Celebration, Macon, GA, www.nps.gov/ocmu A 702-acre monument, the Ocmulgee Mounds welcome guests to discover music, dance, storytelling crafts and demonstrations by Native Americans at the Ocmulgee Indian Celebration. This year brings new Native Dance Groups, Children's activities and Native Language Workshops.

September 25 - September 27, Pensacola Seafood Festival, Pensacola, FL, www.fiestaoffiveflags.org Are you hungry? Crab Cakes, Coconut Shrimp, Seafood Gumbo, Fish Tacos...how about now? This FREE three-day festival has more than 30 personally selected food vendors in addition to more than 150 artists displaying their gorgeous work for sale. New This Year: The Children's area will include an interactive area, complete with living sea creatures, in which educators will be on-hand for families to learn about sea-life.

September 25 - November 2, Rock City's Enchanted MAiZE featuring Blowing Springs Farm, Flintstone, GA, www.blowingspringsfarm.com An everchanging maze, that features a new design and thus a new challenge each year. This year's will be in the form of a crop circle. If you find your way, celebrate by enjoying a hayride, homemade funnel cake or fried Oreos! Young and young-at-heart will enjoy the Critter Corral, that gives guests a chance to interact with the animals at no additional charge.

September 26 - November 1, Ruby Falls Haunted Cavern, Chattanooga, TN, www.hauntedcavern.com Descend 26 stories underground...where no one can hear you scream! The Haunted Cavern was described by one attendee as going "beyond the typical 'Boo!' tricks. It excels as a haunt that's equal parts creepy, gory and terrifying: achieved with professional makeup, sets and actors." Only fitting that this event was listed as #4 on BuzzFeed's list of 19 Haunted Houses to Visit Before You Die! Have you?

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September 26 - September 26, WellsFest 2015, Jackson, MS, www.wellsfest.org Free admission and parking guarantees plenty of people will enjoy annual event, celebrating its 32nd year in 2015. Known as Jackson's original music festival, WellsFest features non-stop music, pet parade, plant sale, arts and crafts, food vendors, children's activities, a 5K run/walk and More!

September 26 - September 26, A taste of Clarkesville, Clarkesville, GA, www.tasteofclarkesville.com Nestled in Clarkesville's historic downtown district, the beautiful colors of autumn provide the backdrop to this feast of the senses, where the spotlight shines on all things local. This premier food, wine and beer festival showcases the diversity of downtown Clarkesville's food scene. The main stage has also served as a local springboard for budding musicians.

September 27 - September 27, Calca-Chew Food Festival, Lake Charles, LA, www.visitlakecharles.org For a true home-cooked meal, head no further than to the parishoners of the St. Margaret Catholic Church. A French Mass kicks off the festival. Children will enjoy the games, petting zoo, train rides and raffles. Cajun music compliments the shrimp étouffée, boudin, fried fish, gumbo and barbecue. Bring your appetite!

September 27 - September 27, Chefs of the Coast, Biloxi, MS, chefsofthecoast.org Chefs of the Coast has become the premier food and wine event on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, generating tremendous energy and enthusiasm while promoting the restaurant and hospitality industry. Proceeds benefit the community by providing scholarships and aiding local charities.

October 2015

October 1 - October 5, Charleston Boulevard Rod Run and Doo Wop, Charleston, WV, www.charlestonwcarshow.com This four-day event includes nearly 1,000 custom hotrods, classic, antique and drag cars to the Kanawha Boulevard each October. There is also a cruise that takes participants to the New River Bridge, the longest steel span bridge in the western hemisphere and highest in the United States, a monster truck that crushes old cars, drag racing, an automotive swap meet, machine shop tours, poker run, a parade, fireworks and more!

October 3 - October 4, The Cotton Pickin' Fair, Gay, GA, www.cpfair.org The Cotton Pickin' Fair, Georgia's original AgriTourism Event, began in September 1972 on a 180 year old family farm as a single family's community economic development project. A declining farm economy, a very poor cattle market and the opening of I-185 from LaGrange to Columbus, gave birth to an idea that would supplement farm income and keep the Town of Gay in the public eye as an upscale antique center. Today, over two million visitors have enjoyed the work of the best artisans, antique specialists and craftsmen from across the US and Canada.

October 3 - October 5, North Carolina Seafood Festival, Morehead City, NC, www.ncseafoodfestival.org Where do Seafood and Sea-Fun meet? At the North Carolina Seafood Festival! Held the first weekend of October each year, the Morehead City Waterfront is filled with over 200,000 people looking for fresh, local seafood, nationally recognized entertainment, thrilling rides, and vendors selling unique, handmade items. With three stages, 51 food vendors, and an interactive "Cooking With The Chefs" tent, there are plenty of options to keep you fed and entertained throughout the weekend!

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October 4 - October 11, Cruisin' the Coast, Mississippi Gulf Coast, MS, www.cruisinthecoast.com Cruisin' the Coast is a driving event where car enthusiasts decide which events they would like to attend and plan their own route and schedule thus making the Mississippi Gulf Coast a huge, one week, block party. The 26 mile stretch includes cruise-ins, a Salute to Veterans event, car auction, swap meets and parade.

October 8 - October 11, 44th Annual National Shrimp Festival, Gulf Shores, AL, www.MyShrimpFest.com This FREE event is held on the beautiful beaches of Gulf Shores, Alabama. Plenty of shrimp is served up among more than 300 vendors that offer fine art, arts and crafts, as well as retail in the marketplace. Two stages offer continuous local, regional and national entertainment acts. The Children's Activity Village gives them a chance to create their own "art". Additional components include a Seafood Cooking Demonstration, Singing for Scholarships Contest, Sand Castle Contest and the Shrimp Fest 10K/5K.

October 8 - October 18, Georgia National Fair, Perry, GA, www.georgianationalfair.com Promoting the state's heritage, people and agriculture, this family-friendly event is well-known for its comprehensive youth, home and fine arts competitions as well as its exhibits. There is something for everyone with livestock and horse shows, midway rides, delicious treats, games, major concerts, a circus and nightly fireworks. Parking is free and this year will include a fourth FREE concert!

October 9 - October 11, Dayton Blues Festival, Daytona Beach, FL, <http://daytonabluesfestival.com> This high-energy festival is held annually at the historic Jackie Robinson Ballpark in scenic downtown Daytona Beach. It features nationally known and emerging blues artists. This year's line-up includes: The Vaudevillian, Noah Wotherspoon, Watermelon Slim, Kenny Neal, Janiva Magness, Randy McQuay, Balkun Brothers, Eddie Cotton, Jr., Jarekus Singleton, Nikki Hill Band, Robert Randolph and the Family Band, Brian Keith Wallen, Moreland and Arbuckle, Alexis P. Suter, Paul Thorn, and local favorite, Victor Wainwright & The WildRoots.

October 9 - October 11, Autumn Leaves Festival, Mount Airy, NC, www.autumnleavesfestival.com Celebrating the region's music and craft heritage, the Autumn Leaves Festival takes place in downtown Mount Airy with the local radio station, known as the "Granddaddy of Old Time Music" hosting the bandstand throughout the weekend. Have your taste buds ready as ham biscuits, collar green sandwiches, barbeque, Amish doughnuts and pretzels, ground steak sandwiches and more are served up by local community and civic organizations. Walk off those tasty treats by shopping among more than 200 artisans featuring handmade crafts, jewelry, decorative items and seasonal holiday crafts. All the components for a perfect autumn weekend.

October 9 - October 11, Fall for Greenville, Greenville, SC, www.fallforgreenville.net This three-day event features more than 40 of Greenville's finest restaurants and almost 200 menu items. It is the largest free admission food street festival in South Carolina that also provides free musical entertainment on five stages, children's activities, culinary demonstrations, wine tasting, a beer garden featuring 14 craft breweries and a variety of food and drink related competitions. Last year included a Milkshake Challenge where local media talent competed to create their version of the best milkshake. Yum!

October 10 - October 10, T.O.O.T. (Taste of Our Towns), Lewisburg, WV, www.carnegiehallwv.com Amid fall's peak colors in downtown Lewisburg, with more than 50 food vendors, visitors sample delicacies from local restaurants, civic clubs and organizations. Yearly favorites include The General Lewis Inn's pecan pie and Wolf Creek Gallery's crab cakes. Artists and musicians are also featured among the local restaurants.

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October 11 - October 11, Clearwater Hispanic Heritage Concert/Concierto Herencia Hispana, Clearwater, FL, <http://1925maxima.com/> Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, this family-friendly one-day concert has featured internationally known performers from Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Columbia and Mexico with an array of musical styles, including salsa, meringue, bachata and reggaeton. The concert takes place at sunny Coachman Park, nestled between downtown Clearwater and the Intercoastal Waterway.

October 15 - October 18, Hogansville Hummingbird Festival, Hogansville, GA, www.hummingbirdfestival.com An Arts & Crafts Festival with more than 200 vendors as well as a golf tournament, 5K and 10K run, Miss Hummingbird Pageant and more. Via visual displays and film, this event also provides information on hummingbird habits and their migration pattern in the southeast.

October 16 - October 18, Carolina BalloonFest, Statesville, NC, www.carolinaballoonfest.com One of the longest running Hot Air Balloon Festivals in the Country, the Carolina BalloonFest it attracts more than 25,000 attendees with its majestic and colorful balloons amid the backdrop of the North Carolina mountains and its fall foliage. The event also includes eclectic music on two stages, food, wine and craft beer tasting area, and artisans selling regional crafts.

October 17 - October 17, Blacksburg Brew Do, Blacksburg, VA, www.blacksburgbrewdo.com The largest craft beer festival in the New River Valley has a new, larger location this year at the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center. Featuring more than 40 breweries, live music, local eats. There is also a homebrew competition judged by local beer aficionados.

October 17 - October 17, New River Gorge Bridge Day, Fayetteville, WV, www.officialbridgeday.com West Virginia's largest one-day extreme festival. This event features, BASE jumping, rappelling and skydiving by the All Veteran Parachute Team. More than 180 craft and food vendors plus three special shows by the Xpogo Stunt Team. New this year, Whiskey 7, one of the lead planes that flew into Normandy, on D-Day, during World War II will also be on-site.

October 17 - October 17, Wire and Wood Songwriters Festival, Alpharetta, GA, <http://awesomealpharetta.com/what-to-do/wire-wood-alpharetta-songwriters-festival/> Music flows through the streets of Historic Downtown Alpharetta as talented artists perform their own songs with soulful melodies, magnificent vocals and expressive lyrics all while interacting with their audience. Listeners have the opportunity to hear the intimate stories behind the lyrics and many will be surprised to hear the songwriters' harmonies made famous by past and present headlining musicians.

October 17 - October 18, 26th Annual Georgetown Wooden Boat Show, Georgetown, SC, www.woodenboatshow.com This year's event features more than 140 classic wooden boats displayed on land and water, a wooden boatbuilding competition, children's model boatbuilding, knot tying, maritime art and crafts, food and music. Another exciting component is the Wooden Boat Challenge when teams of two race to build a rowing skiff within a 4 hour time limit and then test their boats for seaworthiness in a rowing relay on the Sampit River!

October 17 - October 18, 28th Annual Fall Town Point Virginia Wine Festival, Norfolk, VA, <http://festevents.org/events/2015-season-events/fall-wine-fest/> This year's fall favorite will showcase more than 30 wineries with over 200 of the Commonwealth's finest wine varieties. Festival guests can enjoy the company of friends and family along the Elizabeth River for a weekend-long harvest of Virginia wineries in Town Point Park. Budding sommeliers and everyday enthusiasts can sample and purchase premier wine vintages and enjoy live musical performances along with gourmet foods and specialty wares.

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October 24 - October 25, Rougarou Fest, Houma, LA, www.rougaroufest.org The Rougarou, a mythical swamp werewolf, visits downtown Houma each year at Rougarou Fest, the only family-friendly festival with a spooky flair celebrating the rich folklore that exists along the bayous of the Southeast Louisiana. The festival features live music, cultural children's activities and Cajun food options. Don't miss the Rougarou Run, a challenge course plagued by zombies and swamp monsters. This, in addition to the Krewe Ga Rou Halloween Parade is why USA Today recently named the event of the top ten costume parties in the country. New this year, Rougarou becomes a two-day festival and the south Louisiana-themed haunted house, Hurricane Z, returns.

October 24 - October 24, The Barbecue Festival, Lexington, NC, www.barbecuefestival.com Featuring North Carolina's Best Pork BBQ, festival visitors are also "treated" to exciting local, regional and national entertainment on seven different stages, located throughout a 14 square block area. Featuring more than 350 artisans and craftsman, children's attractions, car shows, rides and games and many other "pig" themed activities to celebrate Lexington's famous heritage.

October 30 - November 8, West Virginia University Mountaineer Week, Morgantown, WV, <http://mountaineerweek.wvu.edu> One of the premier events in West Virginia, Mountaineer Week encompasses the unique aspects of Appalachian life, music, food, crafts and programs. The centerpiece of the event is the Craft Fair which features traditional and contemporary crafts of Appalachia. This year's event focuses on Appalachian Dance. There will also be Mr. and Ms. Mountaineer Reunion, which will bring together all of the Mr. and Ms. winners from previous years.

November 2015

November 5 - November 15, The Frank Brown International Songwriters' Festival, Florida/Alabama Gulf Coast, AL/FL, www.FBISF.com This festival is the largest and oldest of its kind. Every year over 200 Singer/Songwriters gather along the Florida/Alabama Gulf Coast to share the stories behind the songs that make up the soundtrack of our lives. From Grammy Award Winners to the aspiring stars of tomorrow, artists of all ages and genres of music come together to spend 11 days performing original songs in over two dozen intimate venues. Audiences can enjoy the experience in venues of all types from cathedral quiet listening rooms, to romantic dinner venues, to family friendly eating establishments or even a gritty roadhouse. If you like music, FBISF has a location for you and there is no better place to enjoy it than the white sand beaches of the Gulf Coast.

November 6 - November 8, Holiday Market - Greensboro, Greensboro, NC, www.HolidayMarket.com Something for every style, taste and budget, to fulfill every wish list and gift list. The event continues to be the largest and most attended event in the Greensboro Coliseum Special Events Center. All of the sights and sounds, aromas and tastes of the most special time of year are found here!

November 6 - November 8, Ponchatoula Antique Trade Days & Arts & Craft Fair, Ponchatoula, LA, www.ponchatoulachamber.com This free outdoor event is comprised of more than 200 vendors with antiques, collectibles, fine arts and crafts as well as children's activities, delicious cuisine, live music and more!

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November 6 - November 8, The Craftsmen's Christmas Classic Art & Craft Festival - Columbia, Columbia, SC, www.CraftShow.com The Complete Holiday Experience! Hundreds of the nation's finest artists and craftsmen gather at the South Carolina State Fairgrounds to present thousands of their original works for holiday gifts, decorations, celebrations, entertaining, dressing and accessorizing. Specialty food gifts are also available and sampling is encouraged! One-of-a-kind gift items include contemporary to traditional, functional to whimsical, decorative to funky thus there is something for every style, taste and budget.

November 7 - November 8, 37th Annual Peter Anderson Arts & Crafts Festival, Ocean Springs, MS, www.peterandersonfestival.com This annual event hosts more than 400 artists, craftsmen and food vendors during this two-day event. Created to enhance and showcase the arts as well as provide a "continual" economic driver to the Coast shops, restaurants, galleries and hotels, the festival is a significant contributor to developing the Gulf Coast as a regional arts destination.

November 7 - November 7, National Pumpkin Destruction Day, The Rock, GA, <http://therockranch.com/fall-family-fun-days/> "Smash It - Don't Trash It". Guests can bring their own Halloween jack-o-lantern or use one provided by The Rock Ranch pumpkin patch and choose from a variety of ways to "Smash" it, including: Hammer Smash, Pumpkin Bombing Airplanes, Monster Truck Crushing, dropping it from a 40 foot lift-crane and more! Last year, 6,000 pumpkins took part in National Pumpkin Destruction Day at The Rock Ranch.

November 11 - November 11, Avenue of the Flags, Lake Charles, LA, www.visitlakecharles.org/ Fallen veterans are honored annually on Veteran's Day in a stunning display of patriotism known as the Avenue of Flags. Organized by the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) this event began in 1983 with 50 flags and today more than 600 American casket flags flutter in the breeze at Orange Grove-Graceland Cemetery in honor of those who gave their lives for our nation. Each flag represents an individual veteran and is the official "casket flag" that was presented to the family at the funeral. All flags are either on loan or were donated for the event. In its 31st year, this event has become one of the largest displays of memorial flags in the country.

November 11 - November 14, Christmas Jubilee 2015, Mobile, AL, www.juniorleagueofmobile.org This year's Christmas Jubilee is moving to the Mobile Convention Center in downtown Mobile, Alabama to kickoff the holiday shopping season and allow for more merchants across the country to showcase their gifts for all ages and interests. The event continues to host a Preview Gala, VIP Shopping, Girls' Night Out and Santa Breakfast and Lunch. Crowd favorites include the Jubilee Art Walk, Hall of Wreaths and Author's Corner. For the past 30 years this event has generated more than five million dollars for the Mobile and Baldwin County communities.

November 11 - November 15, Cucalorus Film Festival, Wilmington, NC, www.cucalorus.org The 21st annual Cucalorus Film Festival showcases over 250 films and attracts thousands of cultural travelers, cinema lovers and artists from around the world to celebrate and discover independent film. The festival's relaxed, retreat-like atmosphere creates an ideal environment for new ideas, friendships and collaborations that extend far beyond the festival's five-day celebration. Festival programs focus on dance, music videos, emerging artists, social justice

November 12 - November 15, 34th Annual Dickens Christmas Show & Festivals, Myrtle Beach, SC, www.DickensChristmasShow.com Taking its inspiration from the Charles Dickens, "A Christmas Carol", this unique event combines arts, crafts and gift show with Victorian Holiday Tours and Teas. This event brings the holiday season to Myrtle Beach.

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November 13 - November 15, Holiday Market - Charleston, Charleston, SC, www.HolidayMarket.com Visitors walk in the door and immediately feel immersed in the holiday season and spirit! From the decorations to the music, the smells of the food and drink to the excitement of children (and adults!) lining up for a leap onto Santa's lap - Holiday Market attracts people of all ages, families and friends, and anyone wishing to relive special memories while making new ones. Offering unique items for holiday gifts, decorations, celebrations, entertaining, feasting and accessorizing. Santa is a very special guest at this show and experts share tips on every facet of seasonal dressing, accessorizing, shopping, gift-wrapping, decorating and de-stressing!

November 13 - November 15, Ron Meyers Christmas City Gift Show, Biloxi, MS, www.ChristmasCityGiftShow.com This year's event will debut a third day of shopping as it is one of the largest Christmas Gift Shows in the southeast region. Booths feature handmade crafts, one-of-a-kind items, food and gifts for everyone. Santa's Village features photos with Santa, free crafts, face painting and live music. Enjoy a day of shopping on the Gulf Coast!

November 14 - November 14, 22nd Annual Sugar Day Festival, Alexandria, LA, www.kenthouse.org At Kent Plantation House there is the aroma of syrup cooking and live music playing as visitors enjoy craft demonstrations including: basket making, woodworking, duck carving, blacksmithing, spinning, weaving, quilting, corn husk crafts and flint napping. Costumed docents churn butter, make soap and candles as well as cook in the open-hearth kitchen. Tours of the home are free and delicious food options await. To condense the long open-kettle sugar making process, the demonstration at Kent House begins with cane juice already reduced to syrup. Volunteers spend the day minding the fire and stirring the syrup. The oldest standing structure in Central Louisiana, Kent Plantation House, dates back almost as far as commercial sugar production in Louisiana. Its mission as a historic site and museum is to interpret the history of Central Louisiana between 1795 and 1855.

November 14 - November 15, Scottish Games & Celtic Festival, Biloxi, MS, www.mshighlandsandislands.org The thrill of jousting hits the Mississippi Gulf Coast every fall on the grounds of Biloxi's Beauvoir. Traditional foods and merchandise along with Celtic and Irish musicians and dancers, border collies, pipe bands, jousting, Scottish athletics, artisans, living history, and Ceilidh Saturday night, make for a magisterial event. (Ceilidh, of Scottish and Irish origin, is a party complete with dance, music and often storytelling)

November 16 - November 24, Annual Tourism Festival of Trees, Greeneville, TN, www.VisitGreenevilleTN.com This week-long event begins with an open house featuring live music, Santa Claus and the opportunity to be among the first to bid on Christmas trees, wreaths and centerpieces decorated and donated by local businesses, restaurants, churches, clubs and individuals. Complimentary refreshments are provided and visitors are then encouraged to shop and dine at local establishments via special offers for attendees. A limited edition ornament is offered each year and new this year, a formal dinner will take place prior to the event in order to raise more awareness for the event which helps fund the Greeneville and Greene County Tennessee Tourism Department in promoting the area as a vacation/relocation/retirement and sports destination

November 19 - November 21, Mistletoe and Moss Holiday Market, Lake Charles, LA, www.visitlakecharles.org/ A holiday tradition, this market features more than 80 merchants from around the country, showcasing apparel, gifts and accessories. A Preview Party Gala is offered, allowing for a jump start on holiday shopping, and featuring cuisine from the finest area restaurants plus cocktails, auction items and live entertainment. Depending if you are an early-bird or a night-owl, a Preferred Shoppers Breakfast as well as a Mistletoe & Moss Ladies' Night, featuring wine tasting and appetizers are also offered. Children get a chance to meet with Santa and share their wish list during Donuts with Santa and Cookies with Santa. In addition to shopping, live music, photos with Santa, caroling, a fashion show and more are offered.

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November 20 - November 22, Fine Craft Show, Knoxville, TN, www.foothillscraftguild.org Presented by the Foothills Craft Guild, this event features the original handmade work of over 140 Tennessee Artisans, all juried members of the Guild. Attendees can enjoy creating their own crafts to take home in addition to live demonstrations. Chartered in 1968, the Foothills Craft Guild is the oldest non-profit artisan guild in the state of Tennessee and many of these artisans have carried their tradition throughout several family generations. The Guild's mission is to help increase public awareness about fine, hand-crafted items and ensure that the tradition of the fine handmade crafts is not forgotten.

November 21 - November 21, 20th Annual American Indian Heritage Celebration, Raleigh, NC, www.ncmuseumofhistory.org The state's signature event for recognizing National American Indian Heritage Month, this free festival focuses on American Indian History and culture in North Carolina. Members of all eight state-recognized tribes and four urban Indian organizations help plan and implement the American Indian Heritage Celebration. Over 100 presenters, artists, dancers, musicians, scholars, students and filmmakers share stories, contemporary/traditional music, art and craft skills, dance, drum, traditional games, tribal culture and life ways taught to them by their elders. This year marks the 20th anniversary of this event.

November 27 - November 29, The Craftsmen's Christmas Classic Art & Craft Festival, Greensboro, NC, www.CraftShow.com The Craftsmen's Christmas Classic showcases the very best of "Made in America", offering visitors the opportunity to shop for handcrafted works they cannot find in mass market. The area's Thanksgiving Weekend Tradition for four decades, the event is enhanced by visitors being able to interact with the artisans, ask questions, and see demonstrations as well as learn about the inspiration and techniques behind the various creative processes.

November 7 - December 13, Louisiana Renaissance Festival, Hammond, LA, www.larf.org (Weekends Until December 13) Experience the romance of the 16th century as you visit this enchanting renaissance mini-theme park. Enjoy over 100 unique shops, 40 shows and dozens of demonstrations each day. Featuring eight stages, 100 merchants and a cast and crew of 300 that orchestrate an interactive theatre - The Louisiana Renaissance Festival is more than a festival - it's a mini-vacation!

November 8 - January 4, Stone Mountain Christmas, Stone Mountain, GA, www.stonemountainpark.com Amid more than 2 million lights, gather the family for a holiday tradition featuring live holiday entertainment, including a train ride around the mountain, Christmas parade, visits with Santa and an evening finale of a Snow Angel that flies high in the sky creating snow and fireworks.

November 13 - January 2, Galaxy of Lights, Huntsville, AL, www.hsvbg.org The largest holiday light show in the region, the Galaxy crew is composed of rocket scientists, physicists and aerospace engineers who have retired from the corporate world but still want to use their experience and knowledge to bring something special to the Tennessee Valley. A 2.5 mile Galaxy driving trail and 1.5 walking trail feature more than 170 scenes and 800 individual pieces with 3-4 new exhibits added each year as well as a new layout and themes.

November 20 - January 2, Rock City's Enchanted Garden of Lights, Lookout Mountain, GA, www.seerockcity.com/lights The award-winning light extravaganza features more than 30 holiday scenes that transform the garden's natural daytime splendor into a nocturnal fantasyland. Visit with Saint Nick and his elves! Enjoy gingerbread and cookie decorating, hot cocoa, Sugar Plum Fairy makeovers and nightly entertainment in the North Pole Lodge.

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November 21 - December 31, Holidays in the City, Norfolk, VA, <http://holidayinthecity.net/> The 2015 Holidays in the City, a six week celebration, kicks off with the 31st Annual Grand Illumination Parade. Additional components include a model train exhibit, caroling, "Random Acts of Culture" (entertainment that will "pop up" when least expected during the holiday season and "Random Acts of Kindness" (special treats for you, the visitor!)

November 21 - February 21, Snow Mountain, Stone Mountain, GA, <http://www.stonemountainpark.com/events/Snow-Mountain> Snow-packed family fun! Spend a full day playing across five football fields of frosty joy. Zoom down the 400-foot hill, as a family, or solo as a single rider. From snowman building to snowball shooting, enjoy all the moments that will make for the perfect snow day.

November 27 - January 2, Magic Christmas in Lights at Bellingrath Gardens and Home, Theodore, AL, www.bellingrath.org Celebrating its 20th year, the Magic Christmas in Lights show takes amid the gardens of this 65-acre estate with more than three million sparkling lights. In December of 2014, USA Today deemed this event one of the "10 Best Public Light Displays in America".

November 27 - December 31, A Country Christmas in Lights, The Rock, GA, <http://therockranch.com/country-christmas-in-lights/> It all started when the founder of The Rock Ranch and Chick-fil-A, S. Truett Cathy, made trips to home improvement stores after Christmas and purchased the leftover Christmas lights. They were then hung from fences, barns and more and the public was invited to drive through the light display. This event now involves more than 800,000 lights as well as arts and crafts with Santa's elves and photos with Santa.

November 27 - December 22, Enchanted Airlie, Wilmington, NC, www.airliegardens.org As night falls over the 67 acres of Airlie Gardens, the forest comes alive as "Enchanted Airlie", with more than 750,000 twinkling lights illuminating a half-mile, self-guided, walking trail of holiday displays as seasonal sounds fill the air and warm holiday refreshments keep you cozy. The perfect touch for a winter evening stroll.

December 2015

December 1 - December 31, Southwest Louisiana Christmas Lighting Festival, Lake Charles/Sulphur, LA, www.visitlakecharles.org/ Comprised of a variety of events, Light Up the Lake has families enjoying gingerbread houses and parades on land and sea as well as a fireworks display over beautiful Lake Charles. If you're dreaming of a white Christmas, Sulphur's Christmas Under The Oaks Festival transforms Heritage Square into a winter wonderland with twinkling lights, holly wreaths and yes, even snow! The Holiday House feature more than 25 shops with Christmas decorations, gifts, ornaments and more! Southwest Louisiana has it all to help your family celebrate the most wonderful time of the year!

December 1 - December 23, Ruby Falls Christmas Underground, Chattanooga, TN, <http://www.rubyfalls.com/ruby-falls-christmas-underground> While mining for rubies, at Ruby Falls, an underground passage was uncovered and it leads to the North Pole! Discover "Joystone" and experience Ruby Falls Christmas Underground. Go through an ice cave, see the Northern Lights, Sugar Plum Fairy Village and, of course, Santa!

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December 3 - December 3, Hometown Holidays Parade, Forsyth, GA, www.forsyth-monroechamber.com Middle Georgia's only nighttime parade, Forsyth's Hometown Holidays Parade is a spectacular display of lights, not only on floats and carts but also the participants! Light Up Monroe County will return this year, in conjunction with the parade, in which residents festively compete among each other by lighting up their businesses, store fronts, homes, lawns and neighborhoods in hopes of winning the highly coveted "Christmas Spirit" Cup. The trophy, made by the same company that creates the trophies for the Academy Awards, has not been awarded since the nineties thus making this year's competition all the more rewarding!

December 4 - December 5, Christmas in the Pass, Pass Christian, MS, www.passmainstreet.com/events/Christmas-in-the-pass/ Entering its 30th year, Christmas in the Pass includes a holiday market, featuring more than 100 vendors, as well as a "Pawrade" (a costume dog parade that also includes pet photos with Santa) Additional holiday festivities include the lighting of the Christmas tree, holiday parade and carolers!

December 5 - December 5, Artisans of the Olde English District & Downtown Holiday Market, Lancaster, SC, <https://www.facebook.com/avantgardeartist> This annual event provides the chance to browse and buy quality handmade gifts from traditional crafts, such as quilts and ironwork, to fine arts, such as delicate jewelry and hand-painted functional items for the home. Visitors are entertained with artist demonstrations, music, minstrels and costumed characters. This year will also offer more hands-on activities for children.

December 5 - December 6, Old Wilmington By Candlelight, Wilmington, NC, www.LCFHS.org Usher in the holiday season with this two-day historic event showcasing beautifully decorated private homes, churches and historical sites with seasonal music in the downtown Wilmington area. The tour is self-guided and sprinkled with luminaries and guides in period dress telling the history of the houses in the historic district of Wilmington.

December 5 - December 5, Christmas on the Water, MS Gulf Coast, MS, www.gulfcoast.org/Christmas This community-wide celebration spotlights the parade of festive and holiday-themed boats along its sparkling waters. Dazzling fireworks complete the colorful evening as families welcome the holiday season.

December 5 - December 6, Marietta Pilgrimage Christmas Home Tour, Marietta, GA, www.MariettaPilgrimage.com This Christmas Home Tour features six, private, historic homes, lovingly restored, decorated for the season as well as antique collections. Homeowners invite you inside for unique opportunity to discover how they incorporate these historic treasures into their everyday lives. Along the route, many of Marietta's historic public buildings are decorated and open for touring. A Candlelight tour is also offered on Saturday evening and a shuttle service is available for the daytime tours.

December 12 - December 12, Historic Decatur Christmas Tour of Homes, Decatur, AL, www.decaturchristmastour.com This annual tour of homes includes presentations on historic architecture, Christmas table landscapes by local designers, refreshments and delectable eats from local cooks and restaurants, carriage rides, church concerts and more! Proceeds from the tour benefit neighborhood improvements such as park restorations and tree replenishments.

December 13 - December 13, 14th Annual Florida Holiday Halfathon, St. Petersburg, FL, www.FloridaHolidayHalfathon.com Join Santa, elves and other joyful runners as you run along this flat, fast and visually varied course that begins in Madeira Beach and ends at Taylor Park. Along the way you will run through exclusive residential and commercial area in the beach communities as well as smoothly-paved Pinellas Trail and shaded public parks. Finishers enjoy the natural beauty during the festive post-race party while also admiring their holiday-themed finisher medal.



SOUTHEAST TOURISM SOCIETY

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2015

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December 4 - December 18, The Roanoke Times Dickens of a Christmas, Roanoke, VA, <http://www.downtownroanoke.org> (Also December 11) The Roanoke Times Dickens of a Christmas is fun for the entire family with horse drawn carriage rides, carolers in the streets, street performers, re-enactors dressed in period appropriate costumes, Santa's workshop and artisans. Local merchants can also be found giving away roasted chestnuts, hot cocoa and cider and additional goodies. This year will also mark the opening of a new outdoor ice rink!