

TripAdvisor Calls Out America's Top 10 Wackiest Summer Events

Funky Family-Friendly Festivals Promise Unforgettable Summer Fun

NEWTON, Mass., June 23 /PRNewswire/ -- TripAdvisor®, the world's largest travel site*, today announced its top ten wackiest summer events in the U.S., according to TripAdvisor editors. With nearly a quarter of Americans planning to attend a festival this summer, (according to a recent TripAdvisor survey of more than 2,300 U.S. travelers), these events serve up an eclectic menu of eye-opening entertainment -- from mashed potato wrestling, to debating conspiracy theories with alien enthusiasts, to toilet seat throwing contests.

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1. Belly-Floppin' Fun: Summer Redneck Games -- July 10, Dublin, Georgia

www.tripadvisor.com/Dublin-Georgia

For travelers seeking something a little different to sink their teeth into this summer, Bobbin' for Pig's Feet could be the very thing. The hog-tastic event will be just one of many games at the 15th annual Summer Redneck games; a one day extravaganza, featuring a mud pit belly-flop contest, armpit serenade, watermelon seed spitting contest and Redneck Horseshoes, in which toilet seats are thrown. A coveted prize trophy is awarded for each of the day's events: a half crushed, empty mounted beer can. Admission is \$5 and free for kids under five.

2. Mashed Madness: Barnesville Potato Days -- August 27 – 28, Barnesville, Minnesota

www.tripadvisor.com/Barnesville-Minnesota

Travelers with a soft-spot for spuds will be in their element at this annual celebration, which attracts over 16,000 tater lovers from across the country. In addition to feasting on potato produce, travelers can enjoy over 40 unique events, including mashed potato wrestling, a potato peeling competition, mashed potato sculpturing, and a mashed potato eating contest. Style-setters seeking to introduce their potato-print on the fashion scene can even showcase their designs in a potato sack fashion show. Admission is free of charge.

3. Beauty and the Beach: Mid-Atlantic Hermit Crab Challenge -- July 10, Virginia Beach, Virginia

www.tripadvisor.com/Virginia-Beach-Virginia

While many beaches boast their share of brazen beauties strutting their stuff, the Miss Curvaceous Crustacean Beauty Pageant shines the spotlight on a different type of animal altogether. Competing hermit crabs are showcased in uniquely-decorated displays, with prizes awarded for the Friendliest Crab, Shyest Crab, Most Unique Crab Display, and more. Travelers seeking something a little more adrenaline-fueled can also enjoy the Crustacean 500 race, in which hundreds of crabs "race" on an eight-foot track on the beach, for the illustrious Order of the Mercury Claw trophy. Admission is free of charge.

4. Poultry Party: The Wayne Chicken Show -- July 9 – 11, Wayne, Nebraska

www.tripadvisor.com/Wayne-Nebraska

This annual celebration of feathered friends is a must for chicken-loving travelers, who can indulge in all things poultry during the three day fowl-fest. The roster of rooster fun includes the world's largest chicken dance, the best chicken legs competition, and the National Cluck Off, in which competitors have 15 seconds to win over the judges with their best chicken impersonation. Peckish attendees can also participate in the saucy hot wing eating contest or its hardboiled egg counterpart, while those with

a flair for fashion can try their hand at creating the best chicken hat in show. Admission is free of charge.

5. Extraterrestrial Excitement: Roswell UFO Festival -- July 1 – 4, Roswell, New Mexico

www.tripadvisor.com/Roswell-New-Mexico

Travelers interested in rubbing elbows with 20,000 earthlings and alien fanatics should look no further than the annual Roswell UFO Festival in Roswell, New Mexico. From promoting extraterrestrial education through expert speakers and workshops, to an alien pet costume contest featuring other-worldly couture, and an out-of-this-world Fourth of July fireworks show, festival goers are sure to experience a healthy dose of paranormal activity. General admission is free of charge yet various individual events do have fees.

6. Kookie Cookies: Weird Contest Week -- August 16 – 20, Ocean City, New Jersey

www.tripadvisor.com/Ocean-City-New-Jersey

This five-day extravaganza of eccentricity will see a quirky contest held at 11am daily in front of Ocean City's Music Pier, Boardwalk and Moorly Terrace. Travelers with a sweet-tooth can try their hand at taffy sculpting, while those craving a crunch can sink their teeth in to the "That's the way the cookie crumbles" contest, in which contestants bite their way around an 8-inch cookie to create a work of art. With french fry sculpting also on the menu, together with a paperclip art contest and a Mr. and Mrs. Miscellaneous pageant, Weird Contest Week is a must for those with a quirky competitive streak. Admission is free of charge.

7. Flinging Fiesta: Wisconsin State Cow Chip Throw -- September 3 – 4, Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin

www.tripadvisor.com/Prairie-du-Sac-Wisconsin

While cow chips were once used by the settlers as a fuel for cooking food and warming homes, dried dung takes on an altogether different use at this annual event, held in Marion Park and attended by some 40,000 people each year. Travelers can vie to secure the longest throw in the Chip Chuckin' competition -- and will truly have to go the distance, in order to beat the longstanding record of 248 feet -- in addition to enjoying clog dancing, live music, a 10 kilometer run and more. Admission is free of charge for general entry, with a \$3 fee to enter the Cow Chip Throw (\$1 for children).

8. A Novel Event: Hemingway Days Festival -- July 20 – 25, Key West, Florida

www.tripadvisor.com/Key-West-Florida-Keys

The 30th annual Hemingway Days Festival, honoring the life and works of former Key West resident and legendary author Ernest Hemingway, offers entertainment galore to literary enthusiasts and white-bearded travelers in search of the eclectic. More than 125 burly, bearded contestants are expected to compete in the "Papa" Hemingway Look-Alike Contest, while the bushy brotherhood will also compete in the annual "Running of the Bulls" -- a quirky take-off on Pamplona's famous run, featuring liquor barrels on wheels. Admission is free of charge for general entry, yet various individual events do have fees.

9. Floating Festivities: World Championship Cardboard Boat Races -- July 31, Heber Springs, Arkansas

www.tripadvisor.com/Heber-Springs-Arkansas

Now in their 24th year, the World Championship Cardboard Boat Races enjoy a picturesque setting on Greers Ferry Lake. Some 4,000 spectators gather to cheer on the competing corrugated cardboard crafts -- which have taken the form of planes, trains and even the Starship Enterprise in previous years -- as they race to be first across the line of a 200-yard course. Awards up for grabs include the Pride of Fleet trophy, presented to the best looking boat, and the Titanic Award, presented to the vessel that makes it at least 50 yards before meeting the most dramatic watery end. Registration fees are \$45 in advance or \$55 on the day, and include a \$25 deposit (returned following the race, providing all cardboard has been removed).

10. River-Side Revelry: National Tom Sawyer Days -- July 1 – 4, Hannibal, Missouri

www.tripadvisor.com/Hannibal-Missouri

Now in its 55th year, this annual celebration of the works of Mark Twain takes place in the river-side town of Hannibal, where the novelist spent his childhood. Some of the festival's events are pulled straight from the pages of classic Twain tales, such as the National Fence Painting Competition, in which contestants try their hand at whitewashing a fence in the fastest time possible, just as Tom Sawyer set out to do. Visitors can also participate in a frog jumping contest -- with amphibians available to

rent, for anyone not wishing to bring their own -- in addition to mud volleyball and other entertainment. Admission is free of charge.

"For travelers seeking to try something new this summer, these offbeat events are sure to create lasting memories, without breaking the bank," said Karen Drake, senior director of communications for TripAdvisor. "From literary festivals with a twist, to quirky shore side entertainment, these ten events offer a snapshot of the unique and offbeat spirit of America."

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