

Where to Celebrate July 4 in Phoenix

Written by Emily Ward



It just wouldn't be a 4th of July celebration without fireworks, and the greater Phoenix area has plenty of shows on both Friday, July 3 and Saturday, July 4 for the whole family to enjoy. But why stop at just fireworks? Patriotic music, swimming, barbecues, parades, picnics, flyovers and lots of fun games and activities will all be included in the festivities. Here are our picks for where to spend your holiday weekend in the Valley this 4th of July.



Arizona Celebration of Freedom

Mesa's Arizona Celebration of Freedom is a one-day patriotic extravaganza. The festivities will be held at the Mesa Convention Center and Amphitheatre on Saturday, July 4 from 6 to 10:30 p.m. This event will feature a military vehicle display, Fallen Soldier memorial, car show, public safety vehicle display, American Heritage exhibits, a kids zone and a splash zone with inflatable waterslides. There will also be indoor entertainment, a food court and beer garden, Revolutionary War Reenactments and a Naturalization Ceremony. Three stages will provide live entertainment from local bands including Desert Dixie and Western Fusion. The 20-minute fireworks show will begin at 9:45 p.m. While admission and parking are both free, there may be a charge for some of the activities. For more information, visit mesaaz.gov.



Fabulous Phoenix 4th

The Fabulous Phoenix 4th is typically televised each year but why not make it out in person this summer? This patriotic event will take place in the Steele Indian School Park on Saturday, July 4 from 6 to 10 p.m. Kiddos will enjoy free inflatable rides and activities in the kids zone and "Hurricane Beach Splash Zone," while parents can enjoy a classic car exhibit and three different stages of live local music. Everyone will love the spectacular Patriotic Program complete with an F-16 flyover. Guests will be able to purchase food and drink from more than 50 different food and beverage vendors. Bring blankets and lawn chairs to enjoy the fireworks show at 9:30 p.m. For more information, visit visitphoenix.com.

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Firework Fest

The sky will light up over Westgate Entertainment District for the third annual Firework Fest on Saturday, July 4 during the West Valley's largest fireworks show and festival. This free, family-friendly event will have ample, convenient and free parking in all lots surrounding Westgate Entertainment District. Arrive before the festivities begin at 5 p.m. to dine, shop and let the kids play at Fountain Park's Slash Pad. From 5 to 9 p.m., a family stage will have a DJ, dancing, activities for kids and giveaways while a second stage will have a variety of rock, alternative, pop and country performances by local bands. For the 21-and-over crowd, a beer garden will be setup with a broad selection of beer choices while a portion of the proceeds will benefit 100 Club of Arizona. Bring blankets and lawn chairs to picnic in the park with grab-and-go dining deals from participating restaurants and enjoy the 15-minute fireworks show beginning at 9 p.m. For more information, visit westgateaz.com.



Independence Day Music Festival

Salt River Fields 5th Annual Independence Day Music Festival will take place on Friday, July 3 and will include both musical celebrations and patriotic fireworks (the largest show in Arizona). Doors open at 5 p.m. while the music begins at 5:30 p.m. with Arizona favorite, Banana Gun. The headliner is Wilco with Dr. Dog and tickets range from \$25 to \$95 on ticketmaster.com. The initially planned two-day celebration is being condensed back to its traditional one night of fun after Little Big Town's performance on Saturday, July 4 was cancelled due to one of its member's impending throat surgery. All July 4 tickets will be honored on July 3 and members of the military get in free with proper ID. For more information, visit saltriverfields.com.



Red, White & Boom

Come join the fun at Ahwatukee's 40th Annual Red, White & Boom Fireworks Festival on Friday, July 3. This year, the festival is being held in a brand new location at Pecos Park from 5 to 10 p.m. This summer fun event is free to the public and includes a fireworks display, live entertainment, food, drinks and patriotic games. Water zones, bounce houses and a zip line (extra charge) will all be offered as well. Summer treats will include BBQ, burgers, hotdogs, nachos, fry bread, kettle corn, shaved ice, frozen lemonade, cotton candy and ice cream as a sweet reprieve from the Arizona heat. A limited number of tickets are being sold to the Oasis Lounge for \$40 per person or to the Boom Room for \$25 per person. For more information, visit ahwatukeechamber.com.

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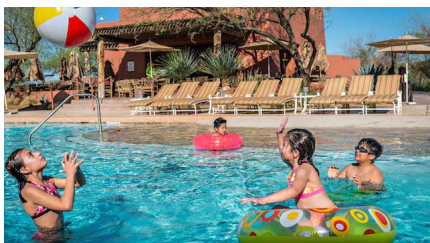
Red, White and Cool

The second year of WestWorld's Red, White and Cool 4th of July celebration is delivering a patriotic and play-filled wonderland in the 300,000-sq.-ft., fully-air conditioned Tony Nelssen Equestrian Center. Doors open at 2 p.m. for a full afternoon and evening of interactive games, food and family entertainment before the fireworks show at 9 p.m. General admission is \$12 in advance and \$17 at the door; children five and under are free. (Scottsdale residents can enjoy a reduced price ticket of \$6 in advance.) General admission includes Grand Prix "Gatsby" Racing (ages 16 and up), an extreme trampoline show, a bull riding show, "Frozen" 4th Spectacular: Ana and Elsa appearances, a dance party, video game trucks, a half pipe BMX and skateboard stunt show and the TNT Dunk Squad. Wristbands are available for purchase for unlimited access to the zip line, 35-foot black diamond slide, shock wave obstacle course, 22-foot vertical rush obstacle course, bungee run, mechanical bull and rodeo calf-roping machine. For more information, visit westworldaz.com.



Sensational 4th of July Weekend

A glittering fireworks show will light up the night sky on Saturday, July 4 at the Arizona Biltmore to cap off a holiday weekend filled with special entertainment and activities including live music and poolside grilling. Other festivities include wine tastings, beer dinners, kids cooking classes, salsa-making demonstrations, kids tennis camp, glow-in-the-dark golf, cigar rolling, Parent's Night Out, guided hikes and Summer Tea – a special iced tea version of the Biltmore's traditional Afternoon Tea served in the Tea Lounge. Fourth of July weekend room rates start at \$159 and the All-Inclusive Package – including breakfast, lunch and dinner for two, accommodations and 20 percent off à la carte spa treatments – start at \$249. For more information, visit biltmore.com.



Sip, Soak and Splash Star-Spangled Weekend

Unite your family and friends under an eventful sky with the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort & Spa's Sip, Soak and Splash Star-Spangled Weekend. With offers from \$149 per night, this party package includes accommodations, access to the premier fireworks viewing party hosted with Rawhide beginning at 10 p.m. on Saturday, July 4 and four wristbands granting entrance for two children and two adults into the resort's soak and splash lawn. (Additional wristbands for resort guest entrance are available for \$20 per person.) To ensure a weekend of summer holiday fun, festive activities will include live poolside music, bocce ball, life-sized Jenga, competitive pool games, a BBQ grill buffet and fireside

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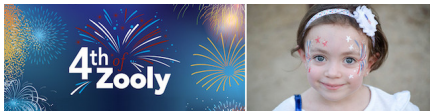
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s'mores. For more information, visit wildhorsepassresort.com.



Tempe Town Lake Festival

Each year the Tempe Town Lake 4th of July Festival is one of the park's most popular events, and one of the largest fireworks displays in Arizona. On Saturday, July 4, the Family Fun Fest will begin at 5 p.m. and will include an inflatable village with rides, a rock-climbing wall, fun activities and lots more. Special entertainment will feature face painters, relay races and local live entertainment on the Main Stage. The City of Tempe Fire and Police Honor Guards along with the Tempe Police Pipe Band will perform this year's national anthem and six RV aircraft from the West Coast Ravens aviation group will perform a flyover during the Star Spangled Banner. The 35-minute fireworks show will be shot from the Mill Avenue Bridge and is choreographed to patriotic and classical music. Tickets cost \$6 in advance and \$8 at the door. Children 12 and under are free as well as active military members with current ID. For more information, visit tempe4th.com.



4th of Zooly

Celebrate the 4th of July with the Phoenix Zoo at its annual 4th of Zooly festivities. On Saturday, July 4 from 7 to 10 p.m. there will be plenty of family fun with exclusive access to the zoo. A classic summer BBQ featuring pulled pork and chopped chicken sandwiches, green salad, corn on the cob and fresh fruit salad will be served on the Lakeside Lawn from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Also at that time, free carousel rides and access to Stingray Bay will be offered. Throughout the evening, guests can enjoy face painting, special animal guests, live music and games. The night will finish with a unique viewing of the Tempe Town Lake Fireworks Festival at 9 p.m. in a special seating area behind the zoo. Tickets cost \$45 for adults, \$35 for children ages 3-12 and children two and under are free but still require a reservation. For more information, visit phoenixzoo.org.