

Phoenix Fourth of July Activities

Written by Written By Emily Zarka

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Our Founding Fathers probably couldn't have guessed that a simple declaration would turn into a national penchant for red, white and blue or an annual explosion of fireworks. Luckily, Americans across the country now have a day to celebrate national pride and patriotic duty, and with a generous list of celebrations the 48th state of Arizona doesn't disappoint. Whether your ideal party includes fireworks, exotic animals, gunfights or reggae music, these Valley events offer something for every American?land of the free indeed.



"A Star Spangled Shoot Out!": Featuring live music, fireworks, gunfights, and a best dressed Cowboy and Cowgirl contest, this unique celebration is sure to cause a bang in your festivities. A treat for all children and kids at heart, this Rawhide event celebrates Independence Day the western way. Admission and parking free. 5:30 p.m.-10 p.m. 480.502.5600, www.rawhide.com.



July Fourth Tempe Town Lake Festival: What's more all-American then beer, bands and bouncy rides? Tempe Town Lake aims to please Valley residents with live music all night, an extensive food court featuring Budweiser Beer Gardens and rides galore. Come early to reserve your spot on the lawn to see "The Best Fireworks Show in the Valley" shot from the Mill Avenue Bridge at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$6 in advance and \$8 at the gate. 4 p.m.-11 p.m. 480.350.5189, www.tempe4th.com.



4th of Zoo-ly BBQ: The classic summer barbeque gets a wildlife twist at the Phoenix Zoo. El Paso caters this all-ages event that also includes water slides, a narrated Safari Train tour and special guests?both the musical and animal kind. VIP seating for all guests will be available at the back of the zoo for a stunning view of the Tempe fireworks show at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$40 for adults and \$35 for children ages 3-12. Children 2 years or younger attend free. 6 p.m.-10 p.m. 602.273.1341, www.phoenixzoo.org.



122nd Annual Prescott Frontier Days and World's Oldest Rodeo: Too big to fit into one day, this annual celebration spans the entire Fourth

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of July weekend and with over one hundred years of celebration under their saddles, it would be almost impossible for Prescott to disappoint. Rodeo dances, multiple parades, an arts and crafts show and traditional rodeo performances are only a few of this historic event's offerings. Tickets available online, prices vary. June 29 through July 5. 1.866.407.6336, www.worldsoldestrodeo.com.



Chandler's Fourth of July 7-UP Fireworks Spectacular: This family-oriented event offers a wide variety of festive events to celebrate this historic day. If a free kids carnival and a 35-foot water slide aren't enough to entice a drive to Tumbleweed Park, the annual Push, Pull, Peddle Bike Parade and classic car display should seal the deal. Admission is free, parking \$5. Begins at 4 p.m., bike parade at 6 p.m., fireworks at 9:30 p.m. 480.236.9123, www.chandleraz.gov.



Great American Barbeque: How many hot dogs can you eat? Maricopa indulges the binge eater in us all with a traditional barbeque complete with pie and hot dog eating contests. Not up for the challenge? Pacana Park's Fourth of July celebration also includes a watermelon seed spitting contest, water slides, the Annual Great American Whiffle Ball Tournament and of course, a fireworks display. Admission is free. 6 p.m.-9 p.m. 520.568.9098, www.maricopa-az.gov.



Gainey Suites 4th of July BBQ: For those seeking a family weekend away from distractions, Gainey Suites is offering the perfect reggae-themed getaway. This package for a family of four includes passes to the activities at the reggae-themed barbeque, teddy bears for the kids, a suite at the hotel and a continental breakfast. Rates start at \$109. 800.970.4666, www.gaineysuiteshotel.com.