



ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

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VISITORS TO ILLINOIS FIND FALL-O-WEENSM FESTIVALS APLENTY

Halloween and autumn celebrations make for memorable getaways

CHICAGO – **Fall-O-WeenSM** in Illinois is the distinctive time of year when harvest festivities and Halloween events await travelers in every region of the state. Whether it's a celebration of crisp apples and colorful foliage or orange pumpkins and spooky scarecrows, a cornucopia of fall festivals can be found in Illinois this Fall-O-Ween.

Pumpkin Celebrations

Illinois is the nation's leading pumpkin-producing state and home to Morton, the world's pumpkin capital. Numerous family-friendly roadside patches and pumpkin celebrations make Illinois an ideal destination for harvest adventures.

Chicagoween, October 15-31, turns Chicago's Daley Plaza into "Pumpkin Plaza," with pumpkin decorating, scary storytellers, fortunetellers and trick-or-treating. Additionally, visitors can march in a costume parade down State Street October 23, concluding at Pumpkin Plaza where children with creative costumes can win various prizes. (Chicago)

For more information, contact the city of Chicago (312-346-3278, www.cityofchicago.org/specialevents)

Didier Farms Pumpkinfest, September 25-October 31, in Prairie View, offers 20 acres for pumpkin picking and hayrides. Guests to the farm can explore a five-acre corn maze, take pony rides, relax at the Pumpkin Patch Café and participate in barn activities. (Chicagoland)

For more information, contact Didier Farms (847-634-3291, www.didierfarms.com).

In addition to enjoying pumpkins, visitors to the Chicagoland area can enjoy 100 handmade scarecrows at the **18th Annual St. Charles Scarecrow Festival**, October 10-12, in St. Charles. The festival hosts live entertainment, a "Make Your Own Scarecrow" interactive exhibit, and the Autumn on the Fox Art & Craft Show, which features crafts from more than 200 artisans from Illinois and surrounding states. As tradition dictates, the 2004 festival will include a scarecrow contest with five categories: traditional, mechanic, whimsical, children's and even one designated specially for St. Charles-area businesses. Winners in each of the five categories are selected by popular vote of festival guests. (Chicagoland)

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Governor Rod R. Blagojevich

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism

For more information, contact the St. Charles Convention and Visitors Bureau (630-377-6161, www.scarecrowfest.com).

The 43rd Annual Sycamore Pumpkin Festival, October 27-31, in Sycamore, reveres the famous orange fruit with a weekend of pumpkin events. Held at the DeKalb County Courthouse, the 2004 festival includes several local crafts shows, a Giant Pumpkin Weigh-in, a Pumpkin Parade and hundreds of decorated pumpkins on display. After the pumpkin-pie-eating contest, visitors can work off their feast by participating in the Annual 10,000 Meter Sycamore Pumpkin Festival Road Race. (Northern)

For more information, contact the Sycamore Pumpkin Festival Hotline (815-895-5161, <http://sycamorepumpkinfestival.com>).

Indian Corn Festival at Pumpkin Works 2004, October 4 and 5, in Paris, celebrates the bountiful time of year with buggy rides, a haunted house and a giant “pumpkin sling,” where children aim their pumpkins for harvest-themed targets. Nine mazes – made of corn, wood and straw – also make for extraordinary adventures. In fact, the six-acre corn “Jungle Maze” is known to make even the bravest explorers a little nervous. (Central)

For more information, contact Pumpkin Works (217-275-3327, www.pumpkinworks.com).

Galesburg Scarecrow Festival, October 4 and 5, is held each year at Standish Park Arboretum in Galesburg. Children will enjoy the pumpkin-painting booth and autumnal obstacle course while their parents dance to various country and acoustical bands. The main event is the popular scarecrow contest, where winners are determined by festival attendees. The festival is also an official stop on the Knox County Scenic Drive so that motorists can help judge the hundreds of festive scarecrows. (Western)

For more information, contact the Galesburg Convention and Visitors Bureau (800-916-3330, www.visitgalesburg.com or www.galesburg.org/commercecenter/dgba/scarecrow.html).

Pumpkin Festival at Boyd Orchards, October 18 and 19, in the quaint town of Anna, is a family-oriented festival with food, music, hayrides, pumpkin painting and a petting zoo. For adventurers, Boyd Orchards offers a 40-foot slide, a rope swing and a corn maze. (Southern)

For more information, contact Boyd Orchards (618-833-5553, www.boydorchards.com).

The Great Godfrey Maze, September 4-October 31, in Godfrey, is a maze carved into a seven-acre field featuring a new theme each year. This year’s theme celebrates the many adventures of Tom Sawyer with a maze designed like a giant steamboat chugging along the Mississippi River. (Southwest)

For more information, contact the Alton Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (618-466-1483, www.greatgodfreymaze.com).

Autumn Festivals

Illinois harvest festivals wouldn't be the same without treats for the taste buds.

Chicago's Berghoff Oktoberfest, September 8-11, is the annual event when the famous Berghoff Restaurant in Chicago takes its German comfort food to the streets, creating an authentic German festival. The Berghoff Oktoberfest, held at Adams and Dearborn streets, features traditional German music by The Johnny Wagner Band during the day, with local Chicago bands entertaining the crowds at night. German-inspired fare, such as bratwurst and locally brewed beers, will be served throughout the festival. (Chicago)

For more information, contact The Berghoff (312-427-3170, www.berghoff.com).

The 12th Annual Long Grove Apple Fest, October 1-3, is a great pick for a fall weekend excursion, complete with a country setting. Among the festival offerings are pony rides at the Long Grove Covered Bridge and Long Grove Historical Society Tours of a 19th-century farmhouse. This year's festival will celebrate autumn and the apple with a harvest of treats, including apple pie (4,000 were sold last year), apple cider and apple muffins, along with inspired creations such as apple cinnamon pretzels, apple salsa and taffy apple beer mug sundaes. (Chicagoland)

For more information, contact the Lake County, Illinois Convention and Visitors Bureau (800-525-3669, www.lakecounty.org) or the Long Grove Information Center (847-634-0888, www.longgroveonline.com/apple.html).

Children will love the tricks at the **14th Annual Fright Fest** at Six Flags Great America in Gurnee. Held each weekend October 9-31, Fright Fest transforms the 100-acre theme park into a haunted festival, with thousands of props, facades, decorations and special effects. (Chicagoland)

For more information, contact Six Flags Great America (847-249-4636, www.sixflags.com/parks/greatamerica).

Nouveau Wine Festival, November 19 and 20, is hosted by Galena Cellars in downtown historic Galena to celebrate the release of its Nouveau wine. The festival includes special luncheons at several local restaurants, some of which are followed by live entertainment and an afternoon wine and cheese party. The DeSoto House, the oldest operating hotel in Illinois, will host an evening of dancing with a live band on November 20. (Northern)

For more information, contact Galena Cellars (800-397-9463, www.galenacellars.com).

The 32nd Annual Amish Cheese Festival, September 4-6, in Arthur offers many traditional Amish, kid-friendly activities such as the national cheese-curling contest, cheese-eating contest, kiddie tractor pull, and arts-and-crafts booths. Sidewalk sales will entice visitors with fresh baked goods, homemade jams and jellies, quilted items and a variety of cheeses. (Central)

For more information, contact the Arthur Amish Country Visitors Center (800-722-6474).

Peoria Riverfront Ribfest & Barbeque Competition, September 10 and 11, pits more than 30 teams competing in an event that began originally as a small contest to see if locals could make better ribs than the mayor. The event has now grown from the city hall parking lot to the riverfront with thousands attending and teams competing for approximately \$10,000 in prize money. Visitors get the real rewards at the Ribfest by sampling world-class barbeque. (Western)

For more information, contact Peoria Area Community Events (309-495-0700, www.peoriaevents.com).

Fall Color Fest, October 9 and 10, celebrates the beauty of both fall and grapes. Held at Alto Pass Winery and Vineyard in the foothills of the Shawnee National Forest in Shawnee, the festival will feature blues, rock and folk music performers, along with Alto Pass' award-winning wine. (Southern)

For more information, contact Alto Pass Winery and Vineyard (618-893-4898, www.altovineyards.net).

Johnny Appleseed's Birthday Party at Eckert Farms, September 25 and 26, will commemorate the birth of the King of the Apple Orchard. This is no ordinary birthday party, since guests will enjoy the traditional birthday cake and ice cream, and also have the chance to hear the legendary story of Johnny Appleseed and meet the "real" Johnny. Storytelling is followed by a wagon ride to the orchard for a lesson in picking the perfect apple. (Southwest)

For more information, contact Eckert Farms (618-233-0513, www.eckerts.com).

The Illinois Bureau of Tourism offers free travel resources with additional information on **Three-Day Getaways**, scenic drives, fall festivals, events and attractions. All are available by calling **800-2CONNECT** to speak with an Illinois travel counselor or by visiting the bureau's Web site at www.enjoyillinois.com. The fall issue of *Illinois Now!*, a seasonal magazine devoted exclusively to travel in Illinois, will be available late August for fall travel planning. The magazine can be obtained by calling 800-2CONNECT or by visiting the bureau's Web site.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Statewide photography is available electronically or in slide format. For artwork, contact Katie Markese at katie.markese@edelman.com, 312-297-7561 or Amy McGee at amy.mcgee@edelman.com, 312-240-2829.

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism manages industry efforts that result in sustainable and significant economic and quality-of-life benefits for Illinois residents.

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