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Excerpt of the 2005 Top 100 Events in the US

Over 1/6th (17 events) of the TOP 100 Events in the USA are located within a short driving distance of Washington DC. Take time this year to participate in them. Gather a group and give us a call. You won't be let down.

Philadelphia Flower Show
Internationally Known Event
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
March 6-13, 2005

Visitors to the 2005 show, with its theme of America the Beautiful, will pass through the original wrought-iron gates that graced the White House entrance for 118 years. The show spans more than 10 acres, with elaborate exhibits that include blooming trees, shrubs, and flowers, as well as artistic arrangements. Professionals create full-scale gardens, and garden clubs from around the world showcase their prize plants and arrangements. Special events include more than 500 free lectures and demonstrations by gardening experts, afternoon tea in the garden, and culinary events featuring demonstrations by celebrity chefs. Groups can take advantage of private guided behind-the-scenes tours. <http://www.philadelphiaflowershow.com>

National Cherry Blossom Festival
Internationally Known Event
Washington, D.C.
March 27 - April 11, 2005

This annual festival commemorates Japan's 1912 gift of 3,000 cherry trees to the United States, and this year expands to 17 days of activities and special events. The parade showcases marching bands from around the country, international performance troupes, and lavish floats. The Japanese Street Festival, one of the largest in the United States, spotlights Japanese performing arts, crafts, and food. Cultural lectures, exhibits, demonstrations, and performances feature music, dance, and a traditional Japanese tea ceremony. Other activities include a Japanese lantern-lighting ceremony, ceremonial tree plantings, sushi and sake tastings, and a kite festival. Among the sporting events are golf, rugby, and lacrosse tournaments, a 10-mile race, and a crew classic. <http://www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org>

Virginia International Tattoo
Norfolk, Virginia
April 22 - 24, 2005

Less than a decade ago, the great military tattoos took place only in Edinburgh, Scotland, and Nova Scotia. Eight years ago, they were joined by an upstart-the Virginia International Tattoo-that has since grown into a display of pageantry, patriotism, and soul-stirring music performed by more than 650 participants from around the world. With the largest naval base in the world, the oldest army base in America, and NATO's only North American headquarters nearby, it is no wonder that the massed pipes and drums, the marching bands and drill teams, gymnasts, Scottish dancers, and surprise guests draw more than 20,000 spectators in just three days. <http://www.vafest.com>

Preakness Festival
Internationally Known Event
Baltimore, Maryland
May 13-21 (Race: May 21) 2005

To celebrate the Preakness Stakes, the second jewel in horse racing's Triple Crown, the Baltimore area hosts a series of special events and block parties. In keeping with a race theme, the festival includes 5K and 10K runs, a kids' race, a frog hop, and a crab derby. The Harbor Balloon Festival offers balloon launches and glows, a carnival midway, and concerts. The Sunset Cruise features tall ships, while a parade showcases marching bands, floats, large character balloons, and plenty of horses. <http://www.preaknesscelebration.org>



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Red Bank Jazz & Blues Festival

Red Bank, New Jersey
June 3 - 5, 2005

Red Bank is a little town in New Jersey with a very big reputation for jazz. In particular, it's known for its annual free festival that draws upward of 100,000 music lovers and others who just want to have a good time. Taking place outdoors at Marine Park on the gentle Navesink River, the three-day festival offers virtually nonstop jazz and blues concerts played on three stages by some 30 local and national bands, as well as food, arts and crafts, and plenty of fun. Last year's event was a tribute to native son Count Basie, with performances by stars such as David "Fathead" Newman, Billy Hector, and Roxy Perry. <http://www.redbankfestival.com>

Gettysburg Civil War Heritage Days

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
June 25 - July 3, 2005

Historical re-enactments, lectures, books, and memorabilia: Civil War enthusiasts will find a bit of everything during this 10-day tribute to one of America's most important eras. Heritage Days includes the Annual Gettysburg Civil War Collectors Show and Book Fair as well as living-history encampments presented by the National Park Service, and three days of re-enactments. For a change of pace, the Gettysburg Fire Department stages a five-day carnival to coincide with the living history, and visitors are welcome to linger to take in the fireworks display on July 4. <http://www.gettysburgcvb.org>

National Independence Day Celebration

Internationally Known Event
Washington, D.C.
July 4, 2005

The nation's July 4th birthday party gets under way with a parade of more than 100 marching units. Afternoon concerts at historic sites feature popular music groups. After sunset, the National Symphony Orchestra, along with guest stars and soloists, performs patriotic songs that set the stage for the grand finale—the spectacular fireworks display over the Washington Monument grounds. When in town for the July 4th festivities, visitors can also enjoy the Smithsonian's free Folklife Festival on the National Mall. The 2005 festival will spotlight four themes: the Sultanate of Oman; Music in Latino Culture; the U.S. Forest Service's 100th Anniversary; and USA Food Ways. <http://www.washington.org>

Virginia Beach Neptune Festival

Virginia Beach, Virginia
Sept. 1 - Oct. 2, 2005

Summer isn't over until King Neptune says it's over! That's the theme of Virginia Beach's month-long community celebration that encompasses everything from a black-tie Grand Ball to sporting events to a Health Fest weekend. Then there's the event that has defined the festival: the North American Sand Sculpting Championships. Other highlights include Neptune's Wine Festival; the Atlantic Regatta for catamarans and ocean cruisers; the Party at the Fort, a beach blast in cooperation with the U.S. Army's Fort Story; the Sandman Triathlon; an arts and crafts show; and a Grand Parade. The festival also includes Hometown Heroes, a tribute to people and organizations that serve the community. <http://www.neptunefestival.com>

Cape May Food & Wine Festival

Cape May, New Jersey
Sept. 17 - 22, 2005

Hunger is a prerequisite for taking part in this multi-faceted celebration of good food and fun at the historic and charming southern tip of the Jersey Shore. Highlights include the Restaurant Relay Race in which restaurant personnel compete in such events as setting the fastest table, folding the fanciest napkin, and racing an obstacle course without spilling a cocktail glass; and the popular Gourmet Tasting and Restaurant Tour, a "behind-the-scenes" self-guided exploration of more than 12 area restaurants. The Gourmet Marketplace in the Cape May Convention Hall features food and beverages, samples, food products, and the People's Choice Chowder Contest. <http://www.capemaymac.org>

St. Mary's County Oyster Festival

Leonardtown, Maryland
Oct. 15 - 16, 2005

The Chesapeake Bay and its quaint little coastal towns and villages have maintained a timeless appeal and charm despite the fast-changing world around them, and this festival celebrating one of the region's most famous watery denizens is an ideal way to enjoy the region. Oysters, of course, are the star attraction, and they feature in a National Oyster Shucking Championship and in cook-offs and cooking demonstrations, as well as on platters of delicious foods of the region. Honoring the men and women who make their not-easy living on the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, the festival takes place at the County Fairground near Leonardtown. <http://www.usoysterfest.com>



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New River Bridge Day
Fayetteville, West Virginia
Oct. 15, 2005 - Oct. 5, 2005

For a quarter-million people who take their thrills vicariously, there is no better place to be on Oct. 15 than the New River Bridge. This is when a much smaller number of people—highly trained BASE jumpers in parachutes—actually jump off what is the longest single-arch bridge in the world, plunging almost 900 feet to the gorge below. The jump is accompanied by less dramatic but equally enjoyable pastimes, including a Taste of the Bridge Day, arts and crafts, and the pleasures of autumn in the mountains of West Virginia. Bridge Day also provides the only annual opportunity to walk across the famous bridge. <http://www.officialbridgeday.com>

World Championship Punkin' Chunkin'
Millsboro, Delaware
Nov. 4 - 6, 2005

Hurling a pumpkin as far as possible using a strange-looking and gigantic device straight out of the Middle Ages may not be everyone's cup of tea, especially for those who don't know a trebuchet from wadding. But the festival is hugely popular with growing numbers of vacationers who bring lawn chairs to watch men and women, young and old, catapult varying sizes of pumpkins, using non-motorized (and often extraordinarily designed) machines. (No "wadding" with bean chaff, straw, foam, or any other foreign object allowed.) Competitions abound in numerous categories. <http://www.punkinchunkin.com>

Yuletide at Winterthur
Winterthur, Delaware
Nov. 12, 2005 - Jan. 1, 2006

Nestled in the Brandywine Valley between Philadelphia, Pa., and Washington, D.C., is Winterthur, the 966-acre former estate of Henry Francis du Pont. It now houses the world's premier collection of early American decorative arts—more than 89,000 objects made or used between 1640 and 1860. Seasonal tours through 20 of the museum's famous period rooms, each decorated for the holiday season, are not only an opportunity to admire the beauty and elegance of the estate and its furnishings, but also a chance to discover that many of today's holiday customs have changed dramatically over the years. Two examples: Until quite recently, children were not the center of attention at Christmas, and "kissing balls" were far more typical in holiday decorating than Christmas trees. <http://www.winterthur.org>

100 Miles of Lights
Tidewater, Virginia
Nov. 20, 2005 - Jan. 20, 2006

Make that millions of lights glittering, shining, and twinkling all the way from Richmond to Virginia Beach. Virginia's Tidewater region celebrates the season with hundreds of events, from lighted boat parades to living history to music and dance, and 100 Miles of Lights is an impressive way to promote them all. Attractions include the Berkeley Plantation First Thanksgiving near Colonial Williamsburg (which also celebrates the season in historic style), Richmond's Virginia Christmas Show, Winter Wonderland in Olde Towne Portsmouth, and the Hometown Holiday Parade in Virginia Beach. Two-, three- and four-day 100 Miles of Lights packages are available for groups. <http://www.100milesoflights.com>

Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade
Internationally Known Event
New York, New York
November 24, 2005

For many, this annual tradition signals the beginning of the Christmas holiday season. The Tom Turkey float leads the parade of more than 200 different elements, with Santa Claus in his sleigh as the grand finale. In between are giant balloons, marching bands, floats, and falloons (a cold-air balloon-float hybrid). Performers and marchers include celebrities, clowns, cheerleading squads, costumed characters, motorcycle units, and mounted police squads. On Thanksgiving Eve, visitors can watch the parade's signature giant character and novelty balloons come to life as they are inflated with helium. <http://www.nyctourist.com>

Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
December 2005-April 2006

Created and sponsored by a commission chosen by President George W. Bush and members of Congress, in partnership with several noted Philadelphia institutions directly or indirectly identified with Franklin, the tercentenary's centerpiece is "Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World." It is one of hundreds, if not more than 1,000 events, that are expected to reach more than two billion people worldwide. <http://www.benfranklin300.com>

This is a partial listing (within several hour driving distance of DC) of the Top 100 Events for 2005 as compiled by the American Bus Association.



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