The National Folk Festival

The National Folk Festival is a celebration of traditional music, dance, craft, and food that captures the heart of the American experience. The free, family-friendly event will be held in Salisbury in September (2018-2020) with a dance pavilion, crafters, regional and ethnic foods, a juried marketplace, and seven amazing stages featuring more than 350 artists along the banks of the Wicomico River.

Ethnic Festivals

All manner of ethnic festivals dot Maryland's landscape, from Polish to African, Greek to Korean, and Caribbean to Ukrainian. Even the unique Baltimore "Bawlmer Hon" culture is celebrated at HonFest each June. The Caribbean Carnival and Parade in Baltimore's Druid Hill Park draws visitors from across Central Maryland and the District of Columbia in July as does the AFRAM Festival in August, Several festivals in Frederick, Hagerstown, Baltimore, Timonium and Prince George's County pay tribute to Hispanic and Latino cultures, with music, crafts and food.

The Little Italy Madonnari Arts Festival takes place in early September offering a full slate of music along with fabulous art created live by international, regional and local chalk painters whose work honors the Italian tradition of street artists. Food is available in abundance at the many restaurants offering side-walk and inside dining.

The First Americans

Native American "pow-wows," or dance gatherings, celebrate the heritage of both the indigenous tribes of Maryland and those from across the continent with crafts, classes, food, drumming and dancing. Each June, Maryland's Piscataway tribe hosts the American Indian Festival and Pow Wow in Waldorf. The annual Drums On the Pocomoke in May in Pocomoke City and the Howard County Pow-Wow in July are smaller, more intimate celebrations, while the annual Baltimore American Indian Center Native American Festival is a larger, more comprehensive event. Others, such as American Indian Heritage Day at the Jefferson Patterson Museum in Calvert County in November, are simple celebrations of Native American heritage as part of local history.

Scottish, Irish, and Celtic Festivals

Festivals to celebrate and preserve Scottish, Irish and Celtic heritage happen in every corner of the state throughout the year, so there are plenty of opportunities to dust off that kilt and get your Irish or Scottish on.

The Mid-Maryland Celtic Festival, typically in June, includes whiskey tastings, scything demonstrations, dancers and pipers. The Maryland Irish Festival at the Maryland State Fair Grounds in Timonium in November features traditional music and the Kilts and Craic 5K run. The oldest Celtic celebration in Maryland, the Southern Maryland Celtic Festival, is held every April at the Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum. Elkton’s annual Fair Hill Scottish Games in May has competitions for athletics, dance, fiddling and piping, as well as the Sheep to Shawl game, where contestants shear, spin and weave in a frenetic race against their fellow contestants (and common sense).
Waterfront Festivals

Annual festivals along the Chesapeake Bay waterfronts—at places like Crisfield, Solomons, Fells Point, Annapolis, St. Michaels and Havre de Grace—celebrate the livelihoods of the Bay's watermen and the seafood they bring to dining tables, with everything from educational exhibits to boat parades. Crisfield, which bills itself as the Crab Capital of the World, holds its annual J. Millard Tawes Crab & Clam Bake in July (the event is named after Maryland’s 54th Governor, a native of Crisfield). Crisfield also hosts a National Hard Crab Derby every Labor Day weekend highlighted by—you guessed it—crab races (there’s also crab cooking and picking contests for foodies). Not to be outdone, St. Michaels holds an OysterFest at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum with live music, boat rides and cooking demonstrations. And duck hunting and the craft of decoy carving are highlighted during Easton's popular Waterfowl Festival in November.

Agricultural Celebrations

Mother Nature’s bounty is recognized with county fairs throughout almost every county in the state between July and October, as well as at the Maryland State Fair in Timonium in August. Harvest festivals galore celebrate the annual crops of peaches, strawberries, apples, pumpkins and even honey at the Maryland State Beekeepers Association’s Annual Maryland Honey Harvest Festival in September. Even wine and beer are recognized at September’s Maryland Wine Festival in Westminster and Baltimore Beer Week in October.