



experience
festivals

A FESTIVAL FOR ALL SEASONS

“There is nothing like festival time in the Amana Colonies!”

Carl Oehl
Oktoberfest Burgermeister

A crowd has gathered to watch the Winterfest log-sawing competition. Bundled in warm clothing they cheer for their favorite teams. Once the competition is over, folks head out to watch the ice-harvesting demonstrations on the Mill Race canal or stop by one of the restaurants for a hearty lunch. This is **Winterfest, January 28**, one of many celebrations held each year in the Amana Colonies.

From the homespun appeal of Winterfest to the rollicking kick of Oktoberfest to the holiday magic created at Prelude to Christmas, there are dozens of events and festivals in the Amana Colonies. Be sure to check the calendar of events in this issue of the Amana Colonies Visitors Guide for more information.

Maifest, May 6 – 7, this spring celebration combines old world traditions and new world entertainment featuring the Taste of the Amana Colonies food fair at the Festhalle Barn (Amana) with local nonprofit groups, restaurants,



Winterfest



God's Grand Garden Walk

candy shops, bakeries and beverage establishments offering delicious food and drink. Also enjoy the colorful ribbon dances of the Maipole dancers; this rite of spring has been a German tradition since before the Middle Ages. The dancers, dressed in traditional German costumes with flowers in their hair, perform the intricate Maipole dances as the Amana Colonies recognizes its German heritage.

The Iowa Renaissance Festival and Gathering O' Celts, May 5 – 7, is held at the Middle Amana Park during Maifest. This popular event features entertainment on multiple stages, 16th century costumed characters, living history encampments, food, drink and activities for children; the Renaissance Festival combines an enchanting mix of fantasy, folklore and fun.

Take a trip down south, never leaving the Amana Colonies, during **Taste Louisiana Cajun and Zydeco Fest, May 27 – 29** at the Amana Colonies Outdoor Convention Facility. The Midwest's largest Cajun and Zydeco festival offers a zesty blend of toe-tapping music and Cajun food. Cooking demonstrations and cultural events pay tribute to Louisiana's enduring heritage while the Mardi Gras themed party prompts you to celebrate good times.

There is nothing quite like **Beckster Fest, June 2-4**, at the Amana Colonies Outdoor Convention Facility. Up-tempo polka music gets everyone on the two wooden dance floors with music provided by nine of the best polka bands in the United States. Barefoot Becky and the Ivanhoe Dutchmen host this 4th annual polka fest.

This year the Amana Arts Guild celebrates regionalist art and the folk craft traditions of the Colonies at its annual **Festival of the Arts, August 12**, at the Middle Amana Park. Beneath the shade of huge oak trees, local artists and craftspeople exhibit, demonstrate and sell their work. The festival features craft activities for kids and hot apple fritters made on the spot plus other foods.

America's largest agriculture trade show and exhibition, the **Farm Progress Show, August 29 – 31**, will be at the Amana Colonies Outdoor Convention Facility. You'll discover the Farm Progress Show to be a multifaceted event with field demonstrations, speakers, workshops and the very latest in agriculture and agribusiness. Drawing people from across the globe, the Farm Progress Show is a world-class celebration of American farm innovation.

Oktoberfest, September 29 – October 1, held in the village of Amana, is a Bavarian bash with a prairie harvest connection. From the moment the first keg is tapped by the Amana Colonies own Burgermeister, Carl Oehl, to the last dance on Sunday afternoon, the fun and entertainment are nonstop. German-style bands, dancing, German foods, plus the Saturday morning parade and the special autumn-themed events make Oktoberfest Iowa's favorite fall festival.

The Tannenbaum Forest, November 24 – December 10, in the Festhalle Barn, Amana, is proof positive that dreams do come true. The Tannenbaum Forest with over 40 live, decorated theme trees, a giant 17-foot-tall, German Christmas "pyramid," and a breathtaking Nativity, is one of the top holiday attractions in the Midwest. Voluntary donations taken at the door

of the Tannenbaum Forest help the Iowa Chapter of the Make-a-Wish Foundation fulfill the dreams of critically ill, eastern Iowa children. As you might expect, the Tannenbaum Forest is a huge hit with children, especially since Santa Claus is a resident. Santa (in his own beautifully decorated sleigh) is on hand to hear all holiday wishes. The Tannenbaum Forest also features St. Nick's Café, with hot cocoa and holiday treats to warm and delight.

During **Prelude to Christmas, December 1 – 3,** the Tannenbaum Forest is open extended hours with additional holiday activities. Prelude to Christmas offers special events, craft demonstrations and evening hours to accommodate shoppers in the candlelit village of Amana. While at the Amana Heritage Museum, you can see "A Glimpse of Amana Christmas Past,"

a delightful vignette featuring German carols, folklore and traditions from the communal era. At the church in Amana handmade craft items and literally thousands of cookies are for sale at the Amana Church Holiday Bazaar and Cookie Walk benefit event.

A special treat for this holiday weekend is the **Christmas Haus Tour, December 2.** Travel through the villages to tour historic homes decked out in their finest holiday trimmings. Sponsored by the Amana Arts Guild, the tour takes you through private homes, as well as artists homes and galleries. This is an event that is sure to please, plus give you great decorating ideas for the holidays.

The Amana Colonies offers a festival for all seasons, whether you plan to visit the Colonies in the spring, summer, fall or winter; there is a festival for you.

Oktoberfest

