

GO!

FESTIVALS

Three reasons you should go to Germantown Pretzel Fest

Staff report

Hello, warm, soft, gooey, delicious pretzels!

Here are three reasons why you don't want to miss this year's Germantown Pretzel Festival:

The pretzels

Who are we kidding? The real lure of this festival is all in the name.

You can bet that vendors will serve the classic salty pretzels, but you also can

expect to see some extra special varieties at this year's pretzel fest.

They'll have gourmet pretzels stuffed with jalapeno cheese, cheddar cheese and cream cheese. There will also be pizza-flavored pretzels and pretzel buns to kick your sandwiching game up a notch or two.

Other good eats? Barbecued chicken and ribs, waffles, pork chops, Chinese, Cajun, funnel cakes and more.

Weekend of entertainment

This family-friendly festival has plenty to keep you entertained beyond the delicious food.

The Pretzel Fest has some awesome live music acts for your viewing pleasure. On Saturday, Locking Up Otis, Triple Nickle Band, and The Sensational Soul Brothers (Blues Brothers tribute) will take the stage. Stan the Magic Man will be performing magic tricks around the park on Satur-

day. Sunday's lineup includes Dale Wright Memorial Singers and Spittin' Image.

On May 16, 1833, the Village of Germantown, originally established in 1804 by German speaking settlers from Berks County, Pa., was incorporated.

A community tradition

When the Germantown Pretzel Festival originally started in 1980, pretzels weren't particularly on any-

one's mind. The initial reason for the event's creation was for local organizations to be able to raise funds by running their own booths, according to Jim Landis, publicity chairman of the Germantown Pretzel Festival.

The committee eventually came up with the name "Pretzel Festival" because it was German. Thirty-nine years later, the festival is still going strong and pretzel-related treats are now a main staple.

HOW TO GO

What: Germantown Pretzel Festival
When: Saturday, Sept. 22, 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.; Sunday, Sept. 23, noon - 6 p.m.
Where: 190 W. Warren St., Germantown
Cost: Free admission
Info: <http://pretzelfestival.com/live/>

GET ACTIVE

Have some hiking adventures close to home

Fill your 'passport' with stickers from beautiful parks.

By **Debbie Juniewicz**
 Contributing Writer

Idyllic waterfalls, winding wooded trails, peaceful wetlands and expansive prairies – there's a world of adventure to discover without even leaving the area code. The Dayton Hikers, however, are encouraging members to pick up a passport – a Passport to Adventure that is.

The Dayton Hikers Passport to Adventure program is designed to help members hike out of their comfort zone and explore the many parks the region has to offer. Participants receive a sticker for their passport book for each park they hike as part of a designated Dayton Hikers program. The program features 24 parks and the passport also includes space for eight specialty stickers – like a night hike or urban hike – for 32 total stickers.

"It's quite common that hik-

ers visit the same park or parks regularly, I even find myself doing it," said Dayton Hikers founder Andy Niekamp. "This program is designed to prompt me, other hiker leaders and members to explore other parks."

The local program was modeled after the interactive Passport to Your National Parks program, which has been helping visitors document their national park adventures for more than three decades.

Get started

First things first, participants must be Dayton Hikers members. But joining is, as Niekamp explains, "fast, free and easy."

Simply visit www.daytonhikers.org to sign up. Members, can read more about the program online and purchase their blank passport book for \$10 (<https://squareup.com/store/daytonhikers/>). Stickers are free.

Participating hikers will get a head start on their 32 stickers when they receive their passport as their Dayton Hikers member sticker is included.

Then it's time to tie up your hiking boots and hit the trails.

Approximately 5,000 people have joined the Dayton Hikers since the group's inception but, according to Meetup, about 1,000 are considered active members, participating in hikes or events.

"We welcome new members but, hopefully, this program will also encourage members who haven't been active for a while, to come out and hike with us," Niekamp said.

Get hiking

From leisurely, short hikes to strenuous, long-distance treks, there are a variety of options to choose from.

"We have hikes of all paces and all distances," Niekamp said. "Something for everybody."

The Dayton Hikers may have as many as five events being run in a single day with various hike leaders. Hikes range from 10 to 20 participants for a regular weeknight hike to 50 or 60 for a special weekend event. Signing up for hikes is easy via the group's Meetup site.

The passport program includes a variety of state, county and city parks as well as nature preserves. The Twin Valley, Buckeye and North Country trails all wind through portions of the Miami Valley and are also included in the program with specialty stickers. As an added bonus, hikers who collect all 32 stickers will receive a \$10 gift card from Great Miami Outfitters.

"With the hot, humid days of summer behind us, this is a perfect time to get hiking," Niekamp said.

Passport to Adventure Basics

■ The program is open to all Dayton Hikers members with a passport booklet.

■ Participating in a qualifying program earns hikers a sticker for each park they hike. Participants must be signed up for the hike.

■ Hikers can begin earning stickers when they receive their passport.

■ Qualifying hikes are led by a participating hike leader and scheduled on the Dayton Hikers site.



The program features 24 parks. The passport has space for eight specialty stickers.

CONTRIBUTED

■ There is no requirement to hike every mile of trail in a park. Hikes of all lengths qualify.

■ Stickers will be distributed by participating hike leaders at the end of the hike.

■ Hikers may earn up to – but no more than – 3 stickers per any one scheduled event.

■ Follow all park rules and regulations and practice Leave No Trace.

■ Present the completed passport at Great Miami Outfitters to receive a \$10 gift card.

Passport Stickers

Ohio State Parks/Nature Preserves: Caesar Creek Gorge, Caesar Creek, Clifton Gorge, John Bryan.

Five Rivers MetroParks: Carriage Hill, Cox Arboretum, Eastwood, Englewood, Ger-

mantown, Hills & Dales, Huffman, Possum Creek, Sugar-creek, Taylorsville, Twin Creek.

Bellbrook Sugar-creek Parks District: Sweet Arrow Reserve

Centerville-Washington Park District: Bill Yeck, Park, Grant Park.

Greene County Parks & Trails: Narrows Reserve, Indian Mound Reserve.

Miami County Park District: Charleston Falls Preserve
Beaver Creek Wetlands Association: Oakes Quarry Park

Nature Preserves: Brukner Nature Center, Glen Helen Nature Preserve,

Specialty stickers: Dayton Hikers Member, Buckeye Trail, Night Hike, Bike Path Hike, North Country Trail, Urban Hike, Twin Valley Trail, Great Miami Outfitters.