

Follow the festivities from the mountains to the coast as the [#NCFallofFame](#) unfolds.

Mayberry Days

Sept. 20-24, 2017, Mount Airy

To be honest, every day is a Mayberry day in Mount Airy, Andy Griffith's hometown and inspiration for the "The Andy Griffith Show" setting. But this September celebration is when you can see Thelma Lou (Betty Lynn) and others associated with the show and channel the era with a checkers tournament, pork chop-eating and apple-peeling contests, trivia competitions and horseshoes plus entertainment and a parade. www.mayberrydays.org

Benson Mule Days

Sept. 21-24, Benson

A Southern tradition for more than six decades, the festival features rodeos, a mule-pulling contest, arts and crafts, street dances, carnival rides, camping and bluegrass. The not-to-miss event is the parade with horses, mules, buggies and more unusual entries. The festival, which draws 40,000 to 5,000 people, is a Library of Congress Local Legacy event. www.bensonmuledays.com

Mountains to Coast Bicycle Ride

Sept. 30-Oct. 7, 2017

See the state in all its fall glory on this scenic ride from Jefferson in the Blue Ridge Mountains to Swansboro on the Atlantic Coast. Riders can pedal the more than 400-mile distance or join in at the host towns: Jefferson, Elkin, Oak Ridge, Chapel Hill, Knightdale, Wilson, Kinston and Swansboro. cnc.ncsports.org/fallCNCRide

NC Seafood Festival

Oct. 6-8, 2017, Morehead City

The 185,000 festival-goers are unlikely to leave hungry: Seafood sampling along the port city waterfront covers everything from fried favorites to inspired chef creations — and that includes Charcoal Mullet and Sea Urchin on a Stick. You can aim to win an "I flung a flounder" T-shirt, watch the sailing regatta and attend Sunday morning's Blessing of the Fleet, which pays tribute to the watermen who make it all possible. ncseafoodfestival.org

Wilmington Riverfest

Oct. 7-8, 2017, Wilmington

This family-friendly cultural festival is held along Wilmington's scenic Cape Fear River. Now in its 39th year, the weekend includes about 200 craft and food vendors, entertainment on two stages, crowning of the annual Miss Riverfest, the Invasion of the Pirates, treasure hunt and ball, fireworks, Rowing Regatta, Kidz Zone and more. www.wilmingtonriverfest.com

North Carolina State Fair

Oct. 12-22, 2017, Raleigh

The fun stretches on and on each fall at the state fairgrounds in Raleigh with a Folkfest, grandstand shows, agricultural exhibits and competitions, rides and games, racing pigs and Kiddieland Fun Park. The all-North Carolina concert lineup features Country Music Hall of Famer Ronnie Milsap, and the fried-and-true food offerings include Deep Fried Pumpkin Pie and Cheerwine Funnel

Cake. www.ncstatefair.org

Wings Over Water Wildlife Festival

Oct. 17-22, 2017, various coastal locations

Take a walk – or a paddle – on the wild side along North Carolina’s Outer Banks and inner coastline. Serious birders flock to Wings Over Water for one of the East Coast’s largest concentrations of wintering waterfowl. Photography, painting and videotaping sessions, moonlight paddles and keynote speakers are all part of the adventure. There’s even a chance to visit Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge at night and use spotlights to watch for deer, bear, birds and other wildlife. www.wingsoverwater.org

Carolina BalloonFest

Oct. 20-22, 2017, Statesville

Soaring for the 44th year, the festival features 50 colorful hot air balloons, mass ascensions, a Saturday night balloon glow, balloon rides, plus such well-grounded pursuits as local wine sampling, craft beer and food, entertainment and children’s activities. www.carolinaballoonfest.com

Woolly Worm Festival

Oct. 21-22, 2017, Banner Elk

Here’s our prediction: Fall foliage will be near its peak in Banner Elk when Isabella tiger moths race up 42-inch strings to forecast the severity of the coming winter. We further predict that the 20,000 festival-goers will delight in the fun, food and mountain setting — regardless of whether their woolly worm wins the race. www.woollyworm.com

Barbecue Festival

October 28, 2017, Lexington

Even without the music, craft vendors and other activities, people would flock to the Barbecue Festival. It’s held in a town whose name is synonymous with pit-cooked pork, North Carolina’s most famous heritage food. Organizers plan for 150,000 visitors, who can pig out, take part in a month’s worth of events, and buy Childress Vineyards’ Fine Swine Wine, which like the barbecue sauce is red. www.barbecuefestival.com

Wilson Whirligig Festival

Nov. 4-5, 2017, Wilson

Vollis Simpson turned metal scraps into towering delight with his wind-powered whirligigs, which can be seen at museums in New York, Atlanta, Baltimore and Raleigh. For the full effect, head to the Wilson Whirligig Festival and the Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park, where 29 of the kinetic collector’s items are being installed. Simpson died May 31, 2013, at his home in Lucama, about 10 miles from the park. He was 94. www.whirligigfestivalinc.com

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CONTACT:

Eleanor Talley
919-447-7783
eleanor.talley@VisitNC.com

Stacey McCray
704-552-6565
mccray@lgaadv.com