

Quad Cities - Enjoy the best of Celtic sports, music, dance, heritage, food and family fun at the 11th annual Celtic Highland Games of the Quad Cities, Saturday, August 22, 2009, at the Mississippi Valley Fairgrounds, 2815 Locust Street, in Davenport, Iowa.

You don't have to be Scottish or Irish to be mad for plaid. The family-oriented event features the cultures of Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Cornwall and Isle of Man, as well as Celtic France (Brittany) and Spain (Galicia), with everything from "men in kilts" to the "throwing of the caber." Day activities - which Scottish athletic events, bagpiping performances and Highland dance competitions - run from about 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission - which is good for all day and all night - is just \$10 for ages 18 and over and \$5 for ages 5 to 17. Children under five are admitted free. A family pass will also be available via the Games website at www.celtichighlandgames.org. The pass admits 2 adults and three children for \$25, which makes each admission just \$5. Persons who have purchased the 2009 souvenir T-shirt - available at the Blue Cat Brew Pub, Katy's Import Foods and online - will continue to be admitted at no charge as long as they are wearing the t-shirt.

But the fun doesn't stop after the competitions, vendor tents, clan society tents and animal events wrap up at 5 p.m. A traditional Ceildih party (pronounced kay-lee), starts at 6 p.m. and features band performances by New Grass News and the Iowa City favorite, The May Flies. "We are celebrating the Celtic roots of American traditional music, which includes folk, bluegrass and country, mixed with the traditional ballads and rollicking tunes everybody loves to sing along with," said Lisa Lockheart, one of the event's many organizers. Music and dancing lasts until 11 p.m. in the fairground's onsite Starlite Ballroom. Admission is included with the day events. If you want to attend the Ceildih only, admission is \$5 for ages 16 and over, and just \$2 for ages 5 to 15. Those under five are admitted free. The Starlight Ballroom is open to families.

With all the kilts, squealing bagpipes and traditional foods, "Attending our event is like having a one-day passport to Scotland or Ireland," adds Lockheart. But Celtic heritage is definitely not required. "If you yearn to explore other countries, why not start in your own backyard, where you'll save a great deal on money. After all, there's no airline

ticket or passport required!" Featured athletic events in the Scottish Games of Strength include the ever-popular caber and sheaf tosses, along with other events that pre-date traditional track and field events, such as the stone and hammer throws. Bagpipe fans will be able to catch performances all day of bands hired to play. Other favorites include workshops in a wide variety of arts, music and cultural topics that let guests learn by doing. Feeling brave? Show off in the just for fun "bonnie" knees competition for men, create your best call to the haggis in the haggis howl, or test the strength of your arm in the "wellie toss." Or make the leap to wearing the kilt yourself by shopping vendor's row, which features a wide array of Celtic goods.

Families may savor the taste of traditional British meat pies, pasties, sausage rolls or fish and chips. Other family-oriented events include children's games and crafts, storytelling, sheep herding exhibitions, chances to meet the Highland cow and other beasties, the family Parade of Tartans at noon, and more Celtic heritage and genealogical information. Entertainment includes rollicking band performances from Celtic music bands, as well as high-stepping dance performances. A complete schedule of events will be posted online at www.celtichighlandgames.org one month before the event.

Special hotel rates are available for the weekend from the Davenport Travelodge and the Heartland Inn, on North Brady Street Davenport. Mention the Celtic Highland Games for best rates. Group ticket rates are available for tour operators. The Mississippi Valley Fairgrounds are located at 2815 W. Locust Street in Davenport, Iowa, and are easily accessible from Interstates 80, 280 and 74. For directions, please visit the Games website at www.celtichighlandgames.org.

Lisa Lockheart,
Celtic Highland Games of the Quad Cities/Celtic Cultures Alliance
Saturday, August 22
Festival of Scottish, Irish and other Celtic sports, music, bagpipes, dance, arts and culture. Great for the whole family!

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