



THE *Original* DENTON DISTRICT

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Arts & Jazz Festival: Established in 1980, this three-day, free festival features seven stages, roving musicians and entertainers, and hundreds of artists booths to Quakertown Park, Denton Civic Center, and the courtyard of City Hall. This event brings together more than 225,000 attendees each year and includes the most diverse, and far-reaching, audience of any Denton festival.

Arts & Autos Extravaganza: Established in 1999, this one-day festival, based in and around the Courthouse-on-the-Square, hosts hundreds of classic cars, art booths and a sidewalk chalk festival. Attendance is 10,000-12,000. Attendees range in age from those in stroller to those with walkers.

Denton Black Film Festival (DBFF): Established in 2014, DBFF is a five-day event that allows attendees to immerse themselves in the “best artistic showcases of Black cinema, music, spoken word, art, and more. The DBFF was created to share the stories of the Black community, address underrepresentation in film, and provide Black creatives a platform. More than 7,000 people attended in DBFF in 2019, which featured 64 unique films. Proceeds from the annual festival fund scholarships for African-American students in Denton.

Denton Blues Festival: The Denton Black Chamber of Commerce hosts the annual Denton Blues Fest every September in Quakertown Park. This two-day festival invites people of all ages to enjoy well-known and local blues acts, while also enjoying delicious festival food, arts and crafts, kid-friendly activities, and vendors.

Cinco de Mayo Celebration: Started in 1988, this free event commemorates the historic battle of Puebla and celebrates the diversity in the Denton community. Numerous vendors at the event offer a variety of foods, beverages, jewelry, crafts, and a children’s arts and crafts area gives children the opportunity to create and keep traditional Mexican crafts. A diverse audience of 7,000 people attend each year.

Denton Community Market: Founded in 2009, the Denton Community Market is a producer-only farmer’s and art market in downtown Denton. The market is held every Saturday, April through November (35 weeks), and features live music, kid and pet friendly activities, local farms, local artists, food trucks, and food vendors. Approximately 50,000 people attend over the eight-month market season.



Denton's Day of the Dead Festival: Started in 2010, Denton's Day of the Dead Festival is a free multicultural, family-friendly festival with activities, music, and food for all. The fun trunk-or-treating, a pumpkin patch, games, and activities for children make event a staple of festivals in Denton. Salsa cook-offs, street performers, and vendor booths feature local art, crafts, and food. The highlight of the day is the famous coffin races, where local teams compete in a themed downhill soapbox car race down Hickory Street. The popular lantern-lit twilight parade takes place at the end of the Festival, featuring costumed crowds and thousands of paper puppets and lanterns. More than 17,000 attendees take part in this one day (and one-of-a-kind) event.

First Friday Denton: Created in 2009, this merchant-run event is held every Friday of the year and features local artists and musicians at various shops, galleries, restaurants, and bars. Downtown shops and galleries offer refreshments as patrons stroll from one venue to another over the course of the night, and local art businesses offer classes, crafts, and more.

Denton Holiday Lighting Festival and Wassail Weekend: Denton's unique spin on the lighting of a Christmas tree began more than 30 years ago in 1988. This beloved community event, held on the second Friday following Thanksgiving, includes musical and dance presentations, horse drawn carriage rides, children's crafts, and visits with Santa, and culminates in a crowd of thousands counting down to light the beautiful Christmas tree on the Courthouse lawn. Live entertainment is provided by local musicians, with the Denton Community Band being involved since the beginning. Every year, this "Norman Rockwell" event, brings in a crowd of thousands to enjoy arts and crafts, food, and music. A key feature of this event is Wassail Weekend, where more than 50 local shops, merchants, and more offer their best wassail for visitors and compete for the title of Best Wassail Stop.

July 4th Celebration and the Yankee Doodle Parade: Independence Day is a great day to be in Denton, as downtown is packed with crowds for a number of fun events. Early in the morning, runners of all ages come out for the Liberty 5K run or 1-mile walk. Later, the community's patriotism is on full display at the Yankee Doodle Parade, which meanders around downtown Denton and ends at the Denton Civic Center in Quakertown Park. Festivities and BBQ continue in Quakertown Park and Denton Senior Center's Young at Heart Band holds a performance to play a selection of patriotic tunes.

Juneteenth Denton: Since 1971, the Denton community has come together to celebrate and commemorate this historic day in Texas. This two-day event includes a community parade, gospel extravaganza, and live bands and artists. The celebration focuses on reserving and promoting the broad spectrum of African American heritage through educational and cultural activities that benefit the Denton community.

Make Music Day: Started in 2018, Make Music Day (MMD) is a free celebration of music



around the world on June 21. Originally launched in 1982 in France as the Fête de la Musique, this one-day celebration of music is now held on the same day in more than 800 cities in 120 countries. Completely different from a typical music festival, MMD is open to anyone who wants to take part. Denton will participate for the second year in June 2019 and invite musicians from around our community to celebrate the unique and beautiful contributions of musicians to our local culture.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration and March: For years, the Denton community has joined together to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Locally, the celebration begins with a youth flag football tournament at the MLK, Jr. Rec Center in Southeast Denton. By early afternoon, crowds gather at the UNT Union Building to march to Fred Moore Park. Together, marchers and the community unite in share and rejoice in the messages of Dr. King. The event ends with a community dinner at the MLK, Jr. Rec Center.

Denton Redbud Festival: The Denton Redbud Festival is a celebration honoring Denton as the Redbud Capital of Texas and is Denton's Official Arbor Day celebration. Although the Festival looks different today, it has roots back to an annual Texas Woman's University festival that was held from the 1930s to 1981 to celebrate the school's beautification and tree planting efforts. In 1994, Keep Denton Beautiful revived the event, which now features dozens of vendors with tree and plant sales, gardening supplies, household items and local/handmade products, along with family-friendly activities and live, local music. One of the most fun events of the day is the annual TRASHion Fashion Runway Show, hosted by local nonprofit SCRAP Denton. At this event, dozens of makers strut their best runway looks, made almost entirely out of recycled items or "trash."

Texas Storytelling Festival: Established in 1985 by the Tejas Storytelling Association, this festival is dedicated to fostering an appreciation of storytelling as an oral tradition, a performing art, and an educational tool. Tellers and listeners from across the country come together in Denton to partake in stories that uplift, inspire, and entertain. This tribute to the spoken word started as a humble gather, but is now one of the largest celebrations of storytelling to be found. Attendees of all ages and backgrounds can find something to keep them entertained at this four-day storytelling event.

Thin Line Festival: Thin Line began in 2007 as a documentary film festival, but has grown to include music and photography as well. As the only documentary film festival in Texas, Thin Line is a one-of-a-kind festival that creates an engaging, multi-layered, artist experience. During this week-long event, crowds flock to local film, music, and photography venues throughout downtown Denton. While the marquee and lights of the historic Campus Theater draw in the filmgoers, bars, restaurants, galleries, and recording studios host dozens of exhibits and performances that inspire and entertain.

Twilight Tunes: Using the 1886 Courthouse-on-the-Square as a backdrop, this weekly spring and fall event draws more than 500 people a week to the Denton's front lawn. Anyone who



enjoys local music and picnic baskets, will delight at the sounds and smells at each concert. Kids and dogs are encouraged and are often found dancing and barking under the twinkle lights draped in the large oak trees. This event is now celebrating its 26th year of making music and having a good time.

Denton Wine Walk: Started in 2018, this new event brings Dentonites and local businesses together while raising money for nonprofit organizations. Held on the last Wednesday of the month, there are an average of 15 wine stops, with each location serving different kinds of wine. It's the perfect way to unwind in the heart of Denton and visit the shops, restaurants, and galleries that line the historic downtown streets.