

# Music, food, fireworks to mark Mesa's Fourth

By John Stanley  
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John Adams would be proud — and perhaps more than a bit bemused — by the Fourth of July celebrations around the Southeast Valley this weekend.

When he wrote to his wife, Abigail, that Independence Day “ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations from one end of this continent to the other ...,” chances are good he never envisioned an assortment of activities, which range from the simple pleasures of grilling hot dogs and sipping lemonade to watching extravagant fireworks set to patriotic music.

On the other hand, he may have enjoyed tubing the Salt River or slamming a patriotic vodka martini.

Who's to say?

Here are some of the celebrations coming up around the Southeast Valley:

## » Arizona Celebration of Freedom

This downtown Mesa celebration includes live music, classic cars and motorcycles, a family fun zone, a wet zone, games, a beer garden and food. Stop by Heritage Lane to sign the Declaration of Independence. Fireworks are Saturday night. Several downtown businesses and restaurants will remain open.

**When:** 6-10 p.m. today and Saturday.

**Where:** 58 W. Main St., Mesa.

**Admission:** Free.

**Details:** 480-644-2069,

arizonacelebrationoffreedom.org,  
downtownmesa.com.

## » Fire in the Sky

A Gilbert church is participating in the Arizona Hunger Campaign food drive with a goal of collecting 25 pounds of



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July Fourth Tempe Town Lake Festival tickets are available at city outlets for \$5, online and at Fry's Food Stores for \$6.

out featuring hot dogs, pie and ice cream, served with lemonade, tea or water. Children and adults can play board games indoors or take part in the water-balloon toss outdoors.

**When:** 4 p.m. Sunday.

**Where:** East Mesa Christian Church, 706 S. Greenfield Road, Mesa.

**Admission:** Free. Donations accepted, as well as bottled water and canned food.

**Details:** 480-830-3474, emccaz.org.

## » Fun at the Farm

Munch on everything from hamburgers and hot dogs to snow cones and Indi-

tle ones can cool off at the Splash Playground. In addition to hamburgers and hot dogs, visitors can dine on barbecue, roasted corn, snow cones and ice cream. Bands will perform pop, rock and country music on the Main Stage from 4:30 to 11 p.m. After an honor guard presentation at 7 p.m., the winner of the Star Spangled Idol competition will sing the national anthem. The festival's famous fireworks are set to patriotic and classical music.

**When:** 4 p.m. Sunday.

**Where:** Tempe Town Lake, 80 W. Rio Salado Parkway, Tempe.

**Admission:** Tickets available at Tempe locations for \$5, online and at Fry's Food Stores for \$6. VIP options are available at additional cost.

**Details:** 480-350-5189, tempe4th.com, tempe.gov/lake, protixonline.com.

## » Gilbert's Old Fashioned Fourth of July Fireworks

Just one part of a big weekend in which Gilbert also celebrates its 90th birthday.

**When:** 6 p.m. Sunday.

**Where:** Big League of Dreams, 4536 E. Elliot Road, Gilbert (west of Power Road).

**Admission:** Free, nominal fees for parking and activities.

**Details:** gilbertpromotionalcorporation.com (also includes information on the 90th birthday party on Monday).

## » Chandler Fourth of July 7Up Fireworks Spectacular

The children's carnival features water-balloon wars, a dunk tank, climbing wall, a bike parade, games and a 35-foot water slide. White as Wool, Madison Heights and other bands are scheduled to perform. Fireworks after dark.

**When:** 4 p.m. Sunday.

**Where:** Thunderbolt Park, 2350

## » Ahwatukee Red, White & Boom

The fun begins with Ahwatukee's annual bike parade at 6 p.m. There will be games; food and drinks for sale, including beer and wine; and live music. Fireworks at 9 p.m.

**When:** 6 p.m. Saturday.

**Where:** Ahwatukee Country Club, 12432 S. 48th St., Ahwatukee.

**Admission:** Free.

**Details:** 480-753-7676, ahwatukeechamber.com.

## » Fireworks Celebration and Variety Show

Entertainment appropriate for families. Barbecue is available for purchase. Fireworks at 9 p.m.

**When:** 5 p.m. Sunday.

**Where:** Living Word Bible Church, 3520 E. Brown Road, Mesa.

**Admission:** Free.

**Details:** 480-964-4463, livingwordonline.com.

## » Apache Junction Fourth of July

Family event features inflatables and water games. Live music 7-9 p.m. and fireworks at 9.

**When:** 6-9:30 p.m. Sunday.

**Where:** Apache Junction High School, 2525 S. Ironwood, Apache Junction.

**Admission:** Free.

**Details:** 480-983-2181, ajcity.net.

## More Fourth of July options

### » Star-Spangled Bucks

Float down the Salt River during the weekend and earn a \$5 discount coupon for your next tube rental when you "Bag It for Bucks" by gathering trash. The weekend includes live entertainment, water-balloon and hula-hoop

