

GET IN THE
SPIRIT

4. Livestock

The Iowa State Fair is one of the largest livestock shows in the country. Many national breed shows are held at the Fair where exhibitors compete for top honors. From cattle, sheep and swine to poultry and rabbits, to the draft horse pulling competitions and llamas, there are livestock competitions featuring animals of all shapes and sizes!

5. Games & Rides

People of all ages can find a thrill at the Iowa State Fair Thrill Parks! From amusement park rides to games, there's some fun to be found. Scream your way down the Giant Slide, see the Fair from above while riding the Sky Glider or take a slow ride through the historic Ye Old Mill, one of only three remaining in the United States.

6. Entertainment

Are you a music lover looking for free entertainment? Go to the Bill Riley Talent Search at the Anne and Bill Riley Stage, or find free music entertainment options at the Iowa State Fair's three main stages where you can find artists playing rock, country and more!

7. Kid Activities

Kids can find adventure at the Iowa State Fair! Watch 4-H and FFA members show their livestock, present demonstrations and share their static exhibits in the Bruce L. Rastetter 4-H Exhibits Building and FFA Display Building. Or, get hands-on at the Andringa Family Foundation Little Hands on the Farm, Blue Ribbon Kids' Club or the Paul R. Knapp Animal Learning Center, where you get a chance to make fair crafts to take home or see baby animals. It's all part of the fun at the Iowa State Fair!

8. Fair Sights

There are many different places to relax on the Iowa State Fairgrounds! Look over the grounds from Expo Hill or enjoy water features in the Pella Plaza or on the Legacy Terrace. The Polk County Master Gardener's Discovery Garden is also a beautiful setting to relax.

9. Contests

Every year, thousands of Fairgoers and exhibitors compete for first place. Contests range from the Ugliest Cake in the Elwell Family Food Center to the Bubble Gum Blowing Contest on the Anne and Bill Riley Stage. The Iowa State Fair has one of the largest food departments and quilt shows in the country. Competition and special contests vary each day, so see the daily program for more information!

10. Shopping

If your wallet is feeling heavy, lighten it at the Iowa State Fair! Whether it's shopping in The Marketplaces under the Grandstand, exploring artwork in the Patty and Jim Cownie Cultural Center, purchasing Iowa-made crafts in the Walnut Center, Fairgoers will find opportunities to shop around every corner.

11. New Experiences

There is fun for everyone at the Iowa State Fair! Adults and children alike can find wonder in the Animal Learning Center, where newborn chicks, pigs, cattle, goats and sheep are born every day! Adults can learn more about Iowa's wine industry at the Iowa Wine Growers Association in Grandfather's Barn or relax with your favorite craft beer at the Iowa Craft Beer Tent.

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IOWA STATE FAIR

AUGUST

13-23

2026

Guide For First-Time Fairgoers

IowaStateFair

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