



Dog Day Diversions

CENTRAL FLORIDA OFFERS PLENTY OF ARTFUL—AND AFFORDABLE—FAMILY ACTIVITIES TO KEEP THE SUMMER DOLDRUMS AT BAY.

BY KRISTEN MANIERI

Summer and family time go hand in hand. Whether braving the heat at a lively festival or chilling out in a blissfully air-conditioned museum, families will find plenty of events and activities to lure them away from the swimming pool and into Orlando's cultural ocean.

Be Festive

Orlando's family-friendly festivals are jam packed with activities, so slather on the sunscreen and keep the camera handy—you'll want to capture every snow-cone-slurping moment.

The summer season starts on May 1 with the **3rd Annual PLAYGROUND Arts & Music Fest** (407.221.4932; www.playground-magazine.com) at Lake

Eola. The festival features fun stuff for kids, such as jam sessions, a graffiti wall, art centers, make-your-own music videos, and the new Triple Threat contest, a Glee-esque competition for kids. Admission is free.

Music fans won't want to miss Downtown Kissimmee's free **Festival of Rhythm and Blues** (407.847.3174; www.kissimmeechamber.com) on June 4. Showcasing local and national artists, the event celebrates a variety of musical genres, from rhythm and blues and gospel, to jazz and Caribbean. Enjoy ethnic food, African-American history displays and a special kids' village and craft tent.

Celebrating the day slaves learned of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, the

annual **Florida Juneteenth Music Festival** (407.245.7535; www.florida.juneteenth.com) takes place June 11-18. Kicking off with a gospel talent show and culminating in a music festival on June 18, Juneteenth is held at several locations, including the Wells' Built Museum, the organizer of the event. All events except the music festival are free.

In July, family fun takes center stage at the **Target Family Theater Festival**. Produced by Orlando Repertory Theatre (407.896.7365; www.orlandorep.com), this ten-day celebration returns to Loch Haven Park July 22-31 with a variety of kid-centric performances, including a fully staged Youth Academy production of *Hair Spray*. Tickets to most shows will be



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FACE PAINTING and other kids' activities are staples of the Target Family Theater Festival.



ENZIAN

KEEP YOUR COOL: From July 16-31, Enzian will show a variety of family films for free on Mondays through Thursdays during its KidFest Summer Movie Series.

free during the Party in the Park event, which will take place July 30 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Film Fun

One of America's perennial pastimes, going to the movies, is a summertime favorite and one of the only ways to get kids to sit still for two hours.

On May 12, the City of Winter Park and Enzian present a free screening of *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* in Central Park during **Popcorn Flicks in the Park**. The program's summer lineup also includes *Blue Hawaii* (June 9) and *Rocky* (July 14). Complimentary popcorn is provided.

At Uptown Altamonte, enjoy **Cranes Roost's Sunset Cinema** (407.571.8863; www.uptownaltamonte.com), an al fresco movie night scheduled for May 14, June 11 and July 9 at 8 p.m. Bring blankets or chairs and kick back as you watch free films in the park's plaza.

In Sanford, **Cinema in the Park** (407.688.5004; www.sanfordfl.gov) takes place on the third Friday of the month. Visit the website for movie titles and start times for the May 20, June 17, July 15 and August 19 films.

For those who prefer air conditioning, Regal Cinema's **Summer Movie Express** (www.regmovies.com) begins in June and screens classic kids' favorites—including *Despicable Me* and *The Muppets Take Manhattan*—select theaters on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 10 a.m. Admission is just \$1.

For an even cheaper outing, there's Enzian's **KidFest Summer Movie Series** (407.629.0054; www.enzian.org), which runs July 16-31 and features free screenings of family-friendly films during the week. Weekend screenings are \$5.

A Mid-Summer's Night Play

Experience live theater with your gang at two family-friendly productions this summer. From July 7 to August 7, the Orlando Shakespeare Theater (407.447.1700; www.orlandoshakes.org) presents an interactive production of ***Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs***.

From July 8 to 10, the Osceola Center for the Arts (407.846.6257; www.ocfa.com) presents the Center Children's Theatre production of ***Willy Wonka, Jr.***, a one-act musical based on the book *Charlie & the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl.



THE ORLANDO MUSEUM OF ART offers creative activities for parents and kids in honor of Mother's and Father's Days. Moms can help their little ones make a one-of-a-kind gift for dad during Daddy-O on Saturday, June 18.

ORLANDO MUSEUM OF ART

Holiday Happenings

The summer holidays were made for families, and local cultural venues are offering creative ways to make new memories together.

Dads and kids can create wearable art for unique Mother's Day gifts at the Orlando Museum of Art (407.896.4231; www.omart.org) on Saturday, May 7, during **mOMart**. Moms get to return the favor and help whip up something special for dad on Saturday, June 18, during **Daddy-O**. Both events start at 1:30 p.m. and admission is \$20 per family (\$15 for members); registration is required.

On June 18, dads and their handy little helpers can head over to the Waterhouse Residence Museum (407.539.2181; www.artandhistory.org) for its annual **Father's Day Carpentry Crew**. After touring the historic museum to learn about carpenter William Waterhouse, families will use both modern and antique tools to create wooden toolboxes together. Adults, \$5; children ages 7-12, \$15.

Both moms and dads receive free admission on their respective holidays at **Harry P. Leu Gardens** (407.246.2620; www.leugardens.org)—a quiet botanical oasis nestled in the heart of the city—and at **Orange County**

Regional History Center (407.836.8500; www.thehistorycenter.org). This museum presents traveling exhibitions and features three floors of permanent exhibits that are perfect for exploring as a family, including the city's original courtroom from 1927. *Florida in the Civil War* is on display through June 12.

Families can celebrate the Fourth of July together in two great settings. At Bok Tower Gardens (863.676.1408; www.boktowergardens.org), special **Independence Day Carillon Concerts** will include favorites such as "America, the Beautiful," "Yankee Doodle" and "The Star-Spangled Banner." Both active and retired military personnel will receive free admission.

The patriotic holiday lasts for three days at the Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens (407.323.4450; www.centralfloridazoo.org), where its annual **Red, White and Zoo** bash takes place July 2-4 from 9 a.m.-3p.m. Featuring games, face painting, kids' crafts, live music, encounters with zoo residents and even an old-fashioned watermelon-eating contest, this event is sure to be a hit with all members of your family.

See "Just for Mom" on page 15 for more great Mother's Day activities.



CREALDÉ SCHOOL OF ART'S clay sampler workshop for parents and kids covers hand building, surface decorations and the potter's wheel.

CREALDÉ SCHOOL OF ART

Connecting Creatively

Several Central Florida venues help you reconnect with your kiddos while making or exploring art.

It's a hands-on heyday for promising potters at the **Crealdé School of Art** (407.671.1886; www.crealde.org), which offers a variety of clay workshops for adults and children. On May 1 and 8, families can make musical whistles and rattles. A clay sampler workshop on May 7 lets you build works by hand and introduces the potter's wheel. On July 31 and August 7, create organic lidded cookie jars. Workshops are for ages 5 and up and cost \$120, \$100 for members.

Unleash your creativity at the Cornell Fine Arts Museum (407.646.2526; <http://cfam.rollins.edu>), which hosts its monthly **CFamilies** event on May 1, June 5, July 3 and August 7 from 2-3:30 p.m. Museum members and children are free; non-member adults are just \$5. RSVPs required.

At the nearby Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art (407.645.5311; www.morsemuseum.org), summertime events for families have been a staple since 2003. Designed for elementary school children and their parents, the **Tuesday Family Tours** (June 21 and 28; July 5, 12, 19, and 26; and August 2) include a 45-minute guided tour and culminate in a hands-on mixed-media project. On June 24, July 8 and 22 and August 5, the Morse presents **Friday Family Films**,

a 90-minute program featuring a short film, *Stack It Up*, which examines the building of a stone cathedral in New York City. Afterward, participants are guided through Morse Museum's new Tiffany wing and then get to make their own creation with a painted box craft.

"It is important that we make art accessible to people of all ages," says Betsy Peters, curator of education at the Morse. "Children who come to museums with their families will learn at a young age the joy of looking at a beautiful object. As adults, they will continue to seek out cultural activities as sources of inspiration and enlightenment."



FAMILY DAYS at The Mennello Museum of American Art are free and take place monthly.

MENNELLO MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

In Orlando, The Mennello Museum of American Art (407.246.4278; www.mennellomuseum.com) features **Family Days** on the second Sunday of each month (May 8, June 12, July 10 and August 14). The free program includes arts and crafts, storytelling and guided tours.

Nearby, the Orlando Museum of Art (407.896.4231; www.omart.org) is a great place to bring kids. "The museum opens up a whole new world to children," says Jane P. Ferry, the curator of education. "It sparks their imagination and gives them a chance to explore their creativity."

This summer, check out the museum's **A Book and a Look** bags, free learning tools that have art-related picture books and discussion starters. A new storytelling series, **Family Treasures**, will take place one Sunday each month, beginning June 26 with master storyteller Bill Cordell.

Enjoy more stories and songs at **Story Time at Leu Gardens** (407.246.2620; www.leugardens.org). A mainstay since 2005, the program features different storytellers on the first Monday of the month, excluding holidays (May 2, June 6 and August 1). Presented by Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children, the free program is held in the Camellia Room at 10 a.m.

Forget the lazy days of summer; this year is all about cultural family fun. **oam**

Kristen Manieri writes lifestyle and travel articles about Orlando and other locales.

Mom and Dad Moments

FOR CULTURAL COUPLE TIME THAT WON'T BREAK THE BANK, CONSIDER THESE FRUGAL FINDS.



LIVE ENTERTAINMENT is a staple at **Cocktails & Cosmos**, a popular evening event for adults at Orlando Science Center.

PHOTOLOCITY.COM

Walk the Walk

Artists converge along Orange Avenue to sell their works during the **First Friday Art Stroll of Ivanhoe Village** (407.393.8765; www.ivanhoevillage.org). Check out their wares, then stop in Washburn Import's Imperial Bar, where patrons are encouraged to try out the showroom's furniture. Summer strolls are May 6, June 3, July 1 and August 5 from 6-9 p.m.

The party moves to Thursday for the Downtown Arts District's (www.orlandoslice.com) monthly **3rd Thursday Gallery Hop** (May 19, June 16, July 21 and August 18), when galleries, shops and restaurants spotlight the work of local artists from 6 to 9 p.m.

Another great mid-week interlude is **Sanford's Alive After 5** (407.302.2586; www.sanfordinfo.com), a themed street

party held in the historic district. The revelry ensues on the second Thursday of the month (May 12, June 9, July 14 and August 11), with live music, food and beverages, and local artwork. Admission is \$7.

Do It Up Downtown

Dubbed Orlando's "original art party," **1st Thursdays** at Orlando Museum of Art (407.896.4231; www.omart.org) is a monthly themed shindig that showcases works by local artists. From 6 to 9 p.m., attendees enjoy live music, fine art and tasty fare. Summer dates are May 5, June 2, July 7 and August 4. Admission is \$10; members get in free.

One of the most popular events for grownups is Orlando Science Center's (407.514.2000; www.osc.org) **Cocktails & Cosmos**, a themed happy hour with music, live entertainment and food and beverages. On June 18, it's all about rock 'n' roll, while the August 20 event will have a Middle Eastern flair. Admission is \$12. In addition, laser light shows will be offered in the Dr. Phillips Cinedome on Friday and Saturday evenings from June 18 to August 19.

Enjoy the Great Outdoors

There's mood lighting each month at Greenwood Cemetery (407.246.2616; www.greenwood-cemetery.net), where its free **Moonlight Walking Tours** offer a glimpse into the lives of its notable residents, such as T.G. Lee and Harry P. Leu. Upcoming dates are May 20, June 17 and July 15. Tours start at 9 p.m., so grab a bite in one of Thornton Park's great restaurants first and make a night of it.

Bok Tower Gardens (863.676.1408; www.boktowergardens.org) offers great music in a fabulous setting with its **Live at the Gardens!** summer concert series. This year's lineup includes Juniper on May 21, the Cajun sounds of The Porchdogs on June 25, Beatles tribute band The Repeatles on July 23, singer/songwriter Garrison Doles on August 27, and on September 24, the Victoria de Lissovoy Jazz Quintet wraps up the series. Tickets are \$25; performances start at 7:30 p.m., with an optional prepaid dinner at 6 p.m. in the Blue Palmetto Café on site.



ENZIAN

GROWNUPS can escape to Enzian, where favorite flicks and fabulous food go hand-in-hand.

Make Movie Magic

For the reliable dinner and a movie date, head to Enzian (407.629.0054; www.enzian.org) for great films, fine fare, and a full bar. Admission to its **Cult Classics** films is just \$5 and the summer lineup includes favorites *Harold and Maude* (May 10), *They Live* (May 31) and *Fargo* (June 14). Also, the new **Wednesday Night Pitcher Show** series at Eden Bar features outdoor screenings of funky films, complete with pre-show trivia, and drink specials from 7-11 p.m. The lineup includes *Strange Brew* on May 25 and *The Monster Squad* on June 1.

Date Night at Leu Gardens (407.246.2620; www.leugardens.org) has become legendary for its unbeatable ambiance. For \$5 plus tax, film fans can enjoy blockbusters such as *Inception* (June 3) and *Twilight* (August 5) on an outdoor screen beginning at dusk. Grab provisions first at nearby Blue Bird Bake Shop, where artful cupcakes will make a tasty addition to your spread.

Palate Pleasers

Gourmets go to Whole Foods (407.673.8788; www.wholefoodsmarket.com/winterpark) in Winter Park for **Wine Lounge**, featuring a food and wine pairing from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on the last Friday of the month (May 27, June 24, July 29 and August 26). Tickets are \$10.

Take an informal art lesson together at **Cheri's Art Uncorked** (407.920.0692; www.cherisartuncorked.com) where lots of personal attention and step-by-step instruction help students create frame-worthy works. At \$45 per person, it's a splurge, but you'll have new wall art to show for it.