



Potato Days Set For Friday And Saturday, August 23 & 24



The Potato Days Festival features something for everyone. Just south of Midwest Bank, a variety of inflatables are setup for kids to blow off some steam and get rid of some pent up energy.

By: Theresa Olson
Food, family fun and many events make up the Potato Days Festival held annually Friday and Saturday, August 23 and 24 in Barnesville.

Well known for its potato production, Barnesville draws on its potato heritage for two days of “spud”rific fun! Each year, an estimated 20,000+ tater lovers from across the country descend upon Barnesville to enjoy bushels of FREE fun for the entire family.

The main-stay of the festival is the Potato Peeling and Potato Picking Contests but family fun continues with such events as the Nick Manston Memorial Strongman Contests, Sculpting Contest, Street Fair, Stage Entertainment and the ever growing Car Show. In addition, there is the contest consisting of making the best lefse entry. Fun to bring back some history and show the kiddos how to make lefse!

Both days of the Potato Days Festival are full of activities. It all begins as the Kiddie Parade kicks off the festival on Friday at 10:00 a.m.

The categories for the Kiddie Parade are doll buggies, wagons, historical, cartoon, character/storybook, hobos/clowns, king/queen, bride/groom, decorated bikes and pets. Immediately following the Kiddie Parade, the Street Fair consisting of arts and crafts, flea market and produce opens. For the rest of the day and night there is something to make the day a s“mashing” good time!

With two days that are packed full of “spud”rific family fun you can enjoy unique activities and food eating at its best. Bushels of fun await the entire family. Whether one likes to use the potato for eating, sculpting or to play in, there is an activity to do just that. No one will want to be a spec“tator” because they will want to join in and be a partici“tator.”

Maybe being a spec“tator” is a better idea for some. Down on the main stage, the Miss Tator Tot Contest tugs at the heartstrings of all who attend. The judges really have the hardest job at this event because



Lefse. You either love it or you put sugar on it. Either way, it’s an amazing way to transform a potato. People from all over the country bring their lefse making skills to Barnesville to see if they can be the top dog in the lefse field.

they are all winners! The Miss Tator Tot Contest is open to young girls ages five and six. Each contestant is interviewed and the day of the contest they model a potato sack outfit of their choice and a party dress. Each contestant is a winner and receives a trophy and is encouraged to ride on the float during the Potato Days Parade on Saturday at 5:30 p.m.

Although that should be a rousing good time for many, there is a Teen Dance for our seventh grade through 12 grade and lots of entertainment downtown where the food court serves up many a“peeling” food items.

Anyone who has attended the festival raves about the good food court that serves up the best of potato pancakes, dumplings, Norwegian lefse, french fries, mashed potatoes and gravy and potato sausage. There are non-potato items such as pork or beef sandwiches, hamburgers, and smoothies served as well.

If one hasn’t gotten enough fun yet they will be up bright and early to get to the KC’s pancake breakfast beginning at 7:00 a.m. Saturday. After eating this hearty breakfast, you will be ready for another fun-filled “spud”tacular day of events. Or enter the Jaynie (Herbranson) Halvorson Memorial 5k/10k/ Fun Run to run off those pancake calories!

The Potato Picking Contest is held in a field right next to town and has moved up to 9:30 a.m. The rules of the contest are simple: pick as many potatoes as possible in a given amount of time. A gleaner, person following behind, picks up potatoes

left behind and this amount, plus penalty, is subtracted from the total weight.

Following the Potato Picking contest for adults, the Potato Scramble for ages four through 16 is held in the same potato field. They are allowed so much time to pick as many potatoes as they can. They have an added incentive to picking other than being able to take the potatoes home with them. Some potatoes are marked and when turned in, the picker receives a quarter for each one. The Potato Sack Sewing and Stacking Contest is at 11:30 to pick up the spuds that have been picked and see how fast and how many you can pick!

Other events include the Horseshoe Tournament, and the Pinochle Tournament and one is sure to find a game of Bingo somewhere!! And don’t miss the Mashed Potato Wrestling Competition held on Friday night in Assumption Church parking lot! This is definitely one event not to miss!

Another mainstay of the festival is the Potato Peeling Contest. This contest is held on the main stage downtown. Contestants are given three minutes to peel as many spuds as possible. At the end, judges deduct the weight of the peelings and determine a winner. Contestants are asked to bring their own peeling device, but a peeler will be provided if necessary. Pre-registration is encouraged but contestants can sign up the day of the contest if there are still openings.

The Car Show is making this year its 22nd anniversary. The show has gone from 45 entries to over 200 entries! The show is held at McGrath Park, two blocks west of the main street where the Street Fair and Food Court are held. The show is on Saturday, August 24 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. At 5:15 p.m. a Car Cruise will proceed down the parade route and the Potato Days Parade will follow.

The Potato Days Parade is always a big crowd pleaser. Not only are there many units handing out candy along the parade route, but there is over 170 units of antique potato machinery, tractors, trailers, marching bands, floats, and many horses both pulling carts and with riders. We encourage anyone interested in having a unit in the parade to call the Potato Days office at 800-525-4901. The parade is on Saturday at 5:30 p.m. and begins at the Clay County Fairgrounds.

Potato Festival souvenirs are available both days. Each year a new logo is designed and used for t-shirts and sweatshirts. There are also aprons and the commemorative button, which is a real collector’s item! We have a cookbook and many other potato kitchen items you won’t want to go home without! There are also many other souvenirs to check out at the Potato Days Souvenir Booth located inside our office right at 4-way stop!

The festival doesn’t just happen. If it weren’t for the organization of the nine-member Board of Directors and hundreds of hours from volunteers, there wouldn’t be a Potato Days Festival. It is successful because of corporate sponsors, businesses, churches, civic organizations and the volunteers all working together with the common goal being to make sure visitors have a s“mashing” good time during the two day festival.

Whether “spuds” are part of the activity or not, combine all the food and events and you’ve cooked up a “spud”tacular Friday and Saturday while attending the Potato Days Festival in Barnesville, MN on August 23 and 24, 2019.

If you would like more information please visit us at www.potatodays.com or call us on the “spud” line at 1-800-525-4901! See you at Potato Days!



After the kids Potato Scramble, it is time for the adults to dig in the dirt during the Potato Picking Contest. Potato pickers do just that. Pick as many potatoes as possible in an allotted amount of time. A gleaner picks up potatoes left behind and this amount, plus penalty, is subtracted from the total weight.

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Every year, thousands of people flock to the small town of Barnesville to enjoy the Potato Days Festival. Back for it’s 28th annual year, the festival is set for Friday and Saturday, August 23 and 24, 2019.

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