

Get your Greek on!

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From Friday (May 22) through Sunday (May 24), the 2015 New Orleans Greek Fest will feature a variety of family-friendly entertainment, including live performances of traditional Greek dancing. (Photo from the New Orleans Greek Festival)

If you're still saving for that dream vacation to the Greek Isles, visit the banks of Bayou St. John in New Orleans during Memorial Day weekend for the local equivalent of a Mediterranean getaway. From Friday (May 22) through Sunday (May 24), shouts of "Opa!" will echo across the grounds of Lakeview's Holy Trinity Cathedral during the 42nd annual [New Orleans Greek Festival](#).

"We're a very small community of 250 families. Our traditions, religion and ethnic background go hand-in-hand," says festival co-chair Gail Psilos.

Greek families have called New Orleans home since the mid-1700s. Desiring to preserve their cultural heritage and customs, the community constructed the first Greek Orthodox church built in the Americas in 1866. Generations later, the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral was completed on Robert E. Lee Boulevard in 1985.

"The festival began as a way to raise money to build the cathedral, and now the festival helps to keep the church supported. It's a wonderful festival with something for everyone ? 25,000 to 30,000 people come every year," says Psilos.

With a crowd that size, the festival's annual Toga Sunday, in which all attendees wearing togas receive free admission, promises to be the biggest toga party in New Orleans.

Greek Fest hosts a variety of family-friendly entertainment, including traditional Greek dancing performances by Hellenic dancers. Visitors are invited to learn the steps of the Zorba as they enjoy live music by The Night in Athens band.

Guests may also stroll through the agora's aisles of artwork, clothing and jewelry, or browse the Greek grocery's selection of imported feta, fresh Kalamata olives and homemade tzatziki dip.

The festival's kitchen offers a wide array of homemade traditional delicacies. Patrons can bite into a juicy goat burger, share dolma (stuffed grape leaves) or dig into a baklava sundae, ending their weekend on a sweet note.

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Festival co-chair