

Winnipeg Folk Festival

The Winnipeg Folk Festival is a year-round arts organization that presents one of North America's premier outdoor music festivals each July.

www.winnipegfolkfestival.ca



Our annual Winnipeg Folk Festival held at Birds Hill Provincial Park has become world renown. What started as a one-time celebration of Winnipeg's 100th Anniversary, back in 1974, has continued to flourish and become a treasured summer music tradition.

The first free 3 day music weekend, back in 1974, attracted 22,000 music lovers and tree huggers. 45 years later, that amount has grown to 70,000+ of visitors and performers, over the 3 day weekend (+Thursday night). They have traveled from across North America and around the world.

It is entertaining to see all the different license plates in the Festival parking lot and realize that people have traveled from the far corners of Canada and the United States to gather for the love of music and the undescrivable atmosphere of the Winnipeg Folk Festival. We have personally made life long friends, having met 1st time Folkies, from Minneapolis, in the Quiet Campground parking lot!

It takes the dedication of over 2,800 volunteers, each year, to make the 3 day weekend run like a well oiled machine. Many of these volunteers have been giving their time and energy for years, even decades.

This love of music and comradery has allowed the organization to evolve to a year-round charitable, nonprofit arts organization with folk music at it's core. Throughout the year there are dozens of concerts and events. Music and community at the forefront.

The Festival weekend is relaxing and welcoming as people of all ages and all walks of life come together and become neighbours and friends.

There is something for everyone. Artists come from around the globe, and for some it's their first time in Canada or Manitoba and/or first time playing at a folk festival. We are glad they chose our Festival as their first! Aside from Folk music, there is a wide range of Americana and genres from around the globe, including Celtic, Country, Electronic, Indie-rock and Roots.

Not only do you get to experience music at 7 **Daytime Stages**, strategically placed throughout the Festival grounds, they are also all running at the same time. So, if you go to the **Snowberry** stage and decide the music isn't quite your flavour, then you can check out the stage line-ups at **Shady Grove, Green Ash, Bur Oak, Big Bluestem, Little Stage in the Forest** or **Spruce Hollow**.



The daytime stages are home to mini concerts and workshops. The workshops feature a handful of different artists/groups, usually with a theme, all subject to interpretation. Some themes from the 2013 (40th year) Festival were: "String Theory" and "Cat Got Your Tongue". Depending on the individual musicians and what part of the world they are from, helps to guide the wide range of music you can expect. Usually at some point in the workshop, either during or at the end, there are collaborative jams of all musicians, which can often end up being the highlight! When the dancing bug hits, get up and head to the areas to the side where other dancers are and join in, letting the music take you away!

The musicians may play just once, or make several appearances at different workshops and/or Main Stage, throughout the 3 day weekend.

After your day full of discovering new and old favourite artists, you have the evening Main Stage concerts to look forward to. This is where the headlining acts perform. Enjoy the dancing on the sidelines, as the aroma of whales tails and kettle popcorn envelope you ... as the magic continues!

You may want to take part in the daily morning infamous **Tarp Shuffle**. Get to the Festival site early in the morning with your tarp and line up, so you can do the fast walk to the grass in front of the Main Stage and claim your spot for the evening performances. You can then later bring chairs no higher than 2' to sit in and enjoy the music. Otherwise, when the site opens in the morning, just bring your favourite folding lawn

chair and set it up to the left of the stage to reserve your seat for later.

There is also an evening concert at Big Bluestem that has more alternative music.



The traditional Finale of the Folk Festival on Sunday night at Main Stage is bitter/sweet - sad that its ending, but leaving us with amazing memories. This night there are only a few performances. Then they pay tribute to volunteers that have hit lengthy milestones etc. Then along with a stage full of officials, prominent guests and honoured volunteers, the audience stands and all join in to sing the traditional 3 Finale songs: The Mary Ellen Carter, Wild Mountain Thyme and Amazing Grace. The audience usually gathers together in their little groups, join hands and sing and sway to the music. Life long images to treasure !!!

If you have a young family, the Winnipeg Folk Festival has just the area for you. **The Chickadee Big Top** is the place to be for children's fun, music and entertainment. The **Family Area** is located beside it, ready for parents to help



their children with games, crafts, reading, puppetry, face-painting and more.

Festival Village is home to all the essentials you will need to enjoy your Folking experience.

Food Vendors - such as East India Company, Kawali Crepe, Santa Lucia Pizza, Gramma's Kettle Corn etc and the festival favourite ... Whales Tails! **Tavern** (alcohol can't be consumed in general public areas) - sit in the shade and enjoy your favourite beverage while listening to the music nearby. **ATM's** and **Audience Services** where you can charge your phone, pick up a program book and check your bag/rain gear etc. **Hand-Made Village** - There are close to 50 artisans booths from across Canada. You can purchase unique pottery, clothing, jewelry, musical instruments etc. **Water** - there are 6 spring fed water taps located around the festival site. Bring your non-glass container and fill up !! **Festival Music Store** has festival and artist merchandise to purchase, so you can continue to enjoy the Festival long after its over.

Support the Folk Festival and buy a **Raffle Ticket** ! Watch for the roving friendly ticket sellers (some are decked out in their own unique eye catching fashion) and buy a chance to win fabulous prizes. Like the Grand 1st prize of The Golden Festival Package (2 back stage passes, The Golden Tarp (first choice of the Main Stage tarp location). Winner is announced at Main Stage on Sunday night.

Environmental Sustainability

The Winnipeg Folk Festival has won numerous awards being recognized as an environmentally friendly event. The festival was even used as a model for Eco-Logo's high environmental standards for events.

Composting - All food vendors participate by providing compostable plates, cups, cutlery,

napkins and packaging. Even the Tavern's beverages are served in compostable cups! Composting and waste stations are located throughout the Festival site.

Recycling - Campers are issued recycling bags and encouraged to reduce waste and recycle.

Water - Bottled water has not been sold at the festival since 2014. Everyone is encouraged to bring their own reusable non glass bottle and fill up at any of the spring fed water taps located at festival site and festival campground.



Come for the day or camp for the 3 day weekend. You can camp in the park at the provincial Birds Hill Campground or you can choose to camp at one of 2 Festival campgrounds. **Quiet Camping** is for those who want the peace and quiet of the night and/or for families with little ones. Pick an area of grass and trees and set up your own little camping area for the weekend. It is 4 km from the festival site which is a short drive or bike ride. Or you can hop on the Shuttle Service which runs from the campgrounds, back and forth to the Festival Site. **Festival Camping** is a friendly, lively, artistic community of around 6,000. Campsites are decorated and music can be heard as you roam around. Modern washrooms are located in both campgrounds.



If you chose to commute to Birds Hill Park, you can help the environment and leave your vehicle at home and utilize the Folk Fest Express. A free bus service to attendees which runs from downtown Winnipeg.



A Typical Day in the Life of a Folkie

(having already gotten your weekend wrist band and program the day before)

1. While having a nourishing breakfast, look through your program & decide the potential workshops you want to attend that day.

2. Pack up a small bag to have with you during the day (program, pen, sunscreen, snacks, non glass water container, hat, & spray water bottle for those Hot Days). As well take your short chairs to sit in at the Daytime

Stages & your tall chair to set up at Main Stage for the evening. (If doing Tarp in evening then omit tall chairs, but include tarp and pegs)

3. Pack separate rain gear bag, that can be checked at Audience Services on the days its needed.

4. We like to take a long warmer evening wear as well. We leave in the car & then can sneak back sometime between Day Stages ending & evening Main Stage starting, to change.

5. Make sure you have on your comfortable walking footwear, load up your car & off you go to the Festival Site!

6. Park your car & grab all gear and head for the main gate. Make note of the colour of the flag at the end of your parking row - makes finding your car later, a lot easier!

7. Stand in the line up at the entrance/baggage check. The cheerful volunteers will briefly check all your bags to make sure you aren't bringing in any glass, booze, drugs, firearms etc. Once through you are now ready to begin your day!

8. Head immediately to Main Stage to place your tall chairs to the left of stage, anticipating your best viewing vantage point! (or participate in the Tarp Shuffle)

9. Now with all the essential duties done, you can chill, relax & enjoy the music for the rest of the day!

10. Head to the Stage that has your first choice of music for the day. Set up your short chair, Sit, Relax, Enjoy, Repeat!! Daytime stages run till about 6 pm.

11. After last Daytime stage performance, then a quick stop at the Tavern for a cool one, before a pit stop at the car for a change of clothes etc.

12. Head to Main Stage for the much anticipated evening performances!



The Winnipeg Folk Festival is an amazing musical and cultural experience. Once you have experienced the musical unity with your fellow Festival goers, you can't help but be hooked to come back again and again ...



“Lest We Forget ...”

All us Folkies owe a debit of gratitude to the founders **Mitch Podolak** and **Colin Gorrie** who had a vision and back in 1974 launched the free Centennial Folk Festival, in August, at Birds Hill Park In August. There were 42 acts.

Mitch and Colin then continued their successful Folk Festival model and help found the Vancouver Folk Music Festival.

Mitch Podalak then helped the Edmonton and Calgary Folk Festival open, as well as contributing to the Festivals in eastern Canada. Mitch also helped create the Winnipeg International Children’s Festival, and Winnipeg’s West End Cultural Centre. Mitch Podolak, being a true legend in the Folk Festival community for 55 years, received the Order of Manitoba in 2015, "for his contributions to the folk music community, and establishing and promoting music festivals and artistic venues in Manitoba and throughout North America." Sadly on August 25, 2019, Mitch passed. RIP Mitch and thanks from all us die hard Folkies !



A Small Sampling of Music Videos featuring Talented Manitoba Artists That Have Played at The Winnipeg Folk Festival Over The Years

The Wailin’ Jennys

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLsIA92sqsm>

Del Barber

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjRxZcFHGhY>

Heather Bishop

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djL6Sm3Elbo>

Romi Mayes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0RZCSYqeq4>

Fred Penner

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLsNG4xmdHo>

Al Simmons

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLDbRWXx3II>

Don Amero

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDSJxsiQhnw>

William Prince

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnJ85TJ7ZHE>

Begonia - Singing to Video Tour of Wpg Folk Festival

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66jfAPoqxTA>

JD Edwards Band

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kfvMDsMZHZQ>

Nathan Rogers

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhI_ywKr1iI



Story and All Photos Submitted by Sharon (Folkie) and Lorne Sinclair (Folkie and 20+yr Volunteer) !!

