

Tons of Festival Fun

Ohio Sauerkraut Festival will celebrate 48th year with tons of sauerkraut and fun

BY HALEY JENA

Most festivals attract their audiences through a weekend promising non-stop concerts or drinking, but this Waynesville festival implements a far different theme: sauerkraut.

The Ohio Sauerkraut Festival, put on annually by the Waynesville Area Chamber of Commerce, will celebrate its 48th year this year with approximately 300,000 visitors.

The festival was born in 1970 under the suggestion of the chamber's then-president, Al "Capp" Stubbs, who came up with the idea to serve a sauerkraut dinner instead of what was originally planned to be a sidewalk sale. Its simple genesis originally served 528 pounds of sauerkraut to 1,500 visitors; today, the festival brings in a whopping *seven tons* of Ohio SnowFloss sauerkraut and hosts more than 450 craft vendors hailing from over 29 states.

Additionally, this festival proves that sauerkraut isn't just reserved for Reuben sandwiches (although it's definitely a popular seller). Food items include sauerkraut pizza, brownies, pie, fudge, donuts, egg rolls, soup, several pork combinations and more—and every single food must come from the Waynesville ZIP code only, ensuring local support and top-notch quality.



TOP: More than 300,000 people are expected to attend this year's Ohio Sauerkraut Festival Oct. 14-15. **RIGHT:** The Ohio Sauerkraut Festival features plenty of food items made with sauerkraut, including pizza topped with sauerkraut.



While the festival's food is known for its implementation of sauerkraut, there are plenty of nosh-worthy, non-kraut options for those who don't like it, with several vendors offering the ability to customize menu items depending on whether the customer is pro-kraut or not (such as mac 'n cheese with the option of a kraut topping).

Beyond all the scrumptious food, there are hundreds of craft vendors that offer gorgeous art, such as sculptures, ceramics, paintings, woodworking and more, offering a wide range of unique gifts perfect for the holiday season.

And the products are sure to be good; each and every vendor (from food to crafts) is heavily vetted by a jury team to make sure the items are all handcrafted.

"The uniqueness of each vendor *must* be handcrafted," says Office and Event Coordinator Barb Lindsay. "We have a jury team for vendor applications and they determine if more information is needed on how the vendor crafts the product to make sure it's handmade. We want to keep this festival totally handcrafted, which is what makes this event really special. We want guests to go to a booth and go, 'Oh my god, they *made* these.'"

Additionally, there are several enter-

tainment options, with a stage and even a mascot, Captain Kraut. Also, about \$4,000 in scholarships is always awarded to local students.

While hundreds of thousands of people have fun just by attending the event, the festival's focus is on helping the community.

"The No. 1 mission is to keep our nonprofits going for our small community," Lindsay says. "All the powers that be over these years fine-tune the festival each year to focus more on what they can do for the community. For instance, once we were able to help a real small Girl Scout troop—all of a sudden they had money they could do things with... without this, they wouldn't have been able to do that," Lindsay says. "Whatever money our nonprofits make at the festival keeps them going, and all the benefits come right back to the community. It's really special." ■

The Ohio Sauerkraut Festival will be Oct. 14 from 9 a.m.-8 p.m. and Oct. 15 from 9 a.m.-6 p.m.