(https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book) Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Introduction

Oregonians have always looked for reasons to celebrate. Native Americans gathered at Celilo Falls on the Columbia River for thousands of years to fish, trade and celebrate. A growing wave of Euro-American settlers in the mid-1800s brought many of their own traditional festivals to Oregon. Celebrations from other continents followed.

Local festivals reveal a lot about how communities see themselves and want to be seen. They strengthen bonds between existing members by highlighting cultural and economic commonalities. They lay out the welcome mat for visitors to come and see what makes them unique and exciting. And, of course, boosterism has played a large role over the decades. Town leaders have seen festivals as a way to promote more growth and attract new members to the community.

While generally centered on a geographic area, festivals tend to focus on a broad range of subjects such as industries, crops, ethnic cultures, art, and so on. Thus, many festivals pay tribute to how we work. Since Oregon historically has been dominated by timber, agriculture, fishing and mining, it's not surprising that these economic drivers figure prominently into the celebrations.

Communities also love to celebrate their cultural traditions from around the world. So, Oregonians willing to travel around the state can experience the look, sound, smell and taste of far-off places. Examples include the Japan Nite Obon Festival in Ontario, the Woodburn Fiesta Mexicana and the Portland Greek Festival. Art is another excuse to come together and celebrate. Oregon boasts numerous festivals centered on music, film, visual arts and more.

In an age when it's easy to concentrate on what divides us, Oregon's festivals and celebrations bring us together—if only for a day or two. Maybe we need even more festivals!



This photo from a 1963 Portland Rose Festival souvenir program shows the Grand Floral Parade moving through downtown Portland. (Portland Rose Festival Association)



This graphic of a Greek dancer is used in literature to promote the Portland Greek Festival. The festival began in the early 1950s. (Portland Greek Festival)

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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Pioneer Picnic Knife Thrower

As the caption reads, this knife thrower and his trusting assistant entertained thrill seekers in a sideshow at the 1908 Linn County Pioneer Picnic in Brownsville. Accounting for inflation, people could see this "daring exploit" for the equivalent of less than 3 in today's money. Originally called the Pioneer Reunion, the annual gathering brought together early Euro-American Oregon settlers and their descendants. The name of the event changed from Reunion to Picnic after all the original pioneers died and it continues today as the Linn County Pioneer Picnic. (Linn County Pioneer Picnic) Slide 1 / of 54



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Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival

Children dressed in traditional outfits perform a folk dance at the 2016 Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival. (Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival) Slide 2 / of 54



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Grecian Pastries

Women offer Greek pastries to a young woman circa late 1950s. (Portland Greek Festival) Slide $3\ /$ of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Portland Rose Festival Artwork

Artwork from the 1908 Portland Rose Festival evokes the design aesthetic of the time. (Oregon State Archives photo of print in Portland Rose Festival Association Office) Slide 4 /of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

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Sutherlin Timber Days

A two-man team races to cut through a large log in the shortest time during a circa 1950s competition at the Sutherlin Timber Days Festival. In addition to cross-cut sawing, festivals such as this often featured log rolling, wood chopping and other competitive events. Logging related festivals, such as the Albany Timber Carnival, thrived during the mid-1900s as log trucks and mills ran at full speed. Many timber events waned as logging declined in the late 1900s. (Douglas County Museum) Slide 5 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

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Oregon Country Fair

Children play in front of a giant and fanciful character at the 2009 Oregon Country Fair near Veneta. The fair is an annual three-day event that has been held at the site since 1970. It features 22 stages where musical, theatrical, comedic, juggling, daredevil and vaudeville performers entertain the fairgoers. The fair offers a variety of food and crafts as well as educational and workshop resources. (Oregon Country Fair Archives)

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Pacific City Dory Days Parade

A dory boat is all dressed up for the Pacific City Dory Days Parade, complete with an octopus on top and pirates below. The event dates back to 1959 and celebrates the dory fleet, which uses open hulled, flat bottomed boats that can be rowed from a beach into water deep enough to use an outboard motor. The fleet fishes for salmon, crab, tuna and rockfish.(Pacific City Dory Days) Slide 7 / of 54



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Portland Greek Festival Dancers

Young men in traditional Greek clothing jump while dancing at a circa 1980s Portland Greek Festival. (Portland Greek Festival) Slide 8 / of 54



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Canby Rodeo

Lisa McLean rounds the second barrel as she competes in a barrel race during the 2017 Canby Rodeo. The rodeo, presented by the Clackamas County Fair, dates back to 1958. (Clackamas County Fairground and Event Center) Slide 9 / of 54



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Baker City Mining Jubilee Parade

Queen of Mines 1938, Miss Ellen Hayden, rules over the Mining Jubilee Parade in downtown Baker City on July 4, 1938 in celebration of Baker County's continuous gold production since 1861. This local festival was later renamed Miners' Jubilee and is still held annually in mid-July. (Baker County Library Slide 10 / of 54



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Portland Rose Festival Artwork

Roses are prominently featured in this artwork from the 1911 Portland Rose Festival. (Oregon State Archives photo of print in Portland Rose Festival Association Office)

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Oregon State Fair Poster

This 1985 Oregon State Fair poster evokes many of the top draws at the fair through the years. It shows happy children interacting with a prize-winning horse while livestock, food booths and carnival rides fill the background. The text reminds people of the many top musical acts coming to the fair and points out that the horses race daily. The fair has been operating in Salem since 1862. (Oregon State Fair and Event

Center) Slide 12 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

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Portland Rose Festival Brochure Page

This beautifully rendered drawing from a 1908 Portland Rose Festival brochure depicts a float based on a Chinese dragon. (Portland Rose Festival Association) Slide 13 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

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Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival Court

Members of the 1972 Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival Court practice spinning yarn, churning butter and other traditional work at the local Pioneer Museum. (Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival)

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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

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Pendleton Round-Up

Bryson Bronson, clad in colorful tribal regalia, rides a horse named Chinook as he carries the tribal flag for the grand entry at the circa 2017 Pendleton Round-Up. Traditionally, the Round-Up Court circles the arena on horseback followed by the flag carriers. (Pendleton Round-Up Association) Slide 15 / of 54



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Salem Cherry Fair

Women stand on a flower-covered Rebekah Float atop an automobile during the circa 1910 Salem Cherry Fair. The Daughters of Rebekah is an organization connected with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF), a fraternal group that was particularly popular during this time. (Willamette Heritage Center) Slide 16 / of 54



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Pear Blossom Festival Parade

U.S. Senator John Kennedy of Massachusetts sits on a 1959 Lincoln Continental convertible as he serves as Grand Marshal of the 1960 Pear Blossom Festival Parade in Medford. The charismatic senator was campaigning for the U.S. Presidency, which he won that November. (Shirrel Doty) Slide 17 / of 54



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Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Lebanon Strawberry Festival Carnival

Evening arrives at the carnival associated with the 2017 Lebanon Strawberry Festival. The festival, held the first full weekend of June each year, started in 1909 to celebrate the local strawberry crops. (Lebanon Strawberry Festival) Slide 18 / of 54



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Summit Summer Festival

This Robert Hunt photograph of belly dancers at the 2001 Summit Summer Festival captures the spirit of the event that started in 1969. The all-day festival features musicians, crafts, food and more in the small Coast Range community of Summit. (Benton County Historical Society Collection) Slide 19 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Cranberry Festival Court

The 1949 Cranberry Court rides in the annual Saturday morning Cranberry Festival Parade, which pays tribute to Bandon's most important crop. The festival features live music and entertainment, a food fair with judging of cranberry dishes, a Cranberry Bowl football game and more. (Coos History Museum, CHM 995.1.8114.1)



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Mt. Angel Oktoberfest

Members of the Salzburger Echo celebrate Bavarian heritage by performing with alphorns in St. Mary Catholic Church during the Mt. Angel Oktoberfest. The horns can be more than eight feet long. (Mt. Angel Oktoberfest)

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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Portland Greek Festival Food Servers

Women fill plates with tasty Greek food for festival goers during a circa 1950s Portland Greek Festival. (Portland Greek Festival) Slide 22 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Portland Rose Festival Brochure Cover

This cover of a brochure for the 1937 Portland Rose Festival features Queen Dorothy III standing in front of a backdrop of roses. The "Special Fleet Week Edition" designation refers to the tradition dating back to 1907 in which U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, Royal Canadian Navy and other ships dock at the Portland waterfront during the festival. The visits allow the public to tour ships and learn about the Navy and Coast Guard while giving sailors an entertaining break from duty at sea. (Portland Rose

Festival Association) Slide 23 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

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Oregon Country Fair

The Shook Twins perform on the Shady Grove Stage during the 2012 Oregon Country Fair near Veneta. In addition to stage acts, other performers wander the fairgrounds, and many fairgoers also get into the spirit of participating in the living art with colorful costumes, face painting and more. (Terry Baxter) Slide 24 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

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Cranberry Court in Bog

The 1949 Cranberry Court poses with boxes of cranberries in a bog near Bandon. The court of princesses is elected each year at Bandon High School and participates in activities leading up to the Cranberry Festival weekend. (Coos History Museum, CHM 995.1.8082.1) Slide 25 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Alpine Thunder

The band Alpine Thunder wows a room full of enthusiatic dancers during the 2013 Mt. Angel Oktoberfest in Mt. Angel. The group specializes in German Alpine folk and pop music. (Mt. Angel Oktoberfest)

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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

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Troutdale Smelt Court

The 1998 Smelt Court reigns over the Troutdale Summerfest Parade, which dates to 1972. Members of the court from left are David Traxler, Jean Holman, Dorothy Sturges and Penny Balch. Smelt are small fish that are caught in the nearby Columbia River. (Troutdale Historical Society) Slide 27 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Sutherlin Timber Days Competition

Nita Allen of Camas Valley saws through a large log with a huge chainsaw during a circa 1950s logging competition at the Sutherlin Timber Days Festival. (Douglas County Museum) Slide 28 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

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Philomath Buckaroo and Loggers' Frolic

Spectators at the 1954 Buckaroo and Loggers' Frolic in Philomath watch as a parade of log trucks carrying giant old-growth logs passes. The event is now called the Philomath Frolic & Rodeo. (Photographer, Dr. John Giffin; Image, Benton County Historical Society) Slide 29 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Portland Greek Festival Diners

Festival goers dine on Greek food at a circa 1970s Portland Greek Festival. (Portland Greek Festival) Slide 30 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Mt. Angel Oktoberfest Dancer

A Mt. Angel School student in a colorful traditional dress dances at the 2012 Mt. Angel Oktoberfest. The students perform daily during the festival. Dances include the Webertanz, also known as the Weavers Dance or the May Pole Dance, in which careful dance steps result in a closely woven pattern at the top of the central pole. (Mt. Angel Oktoberfest)

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Ontario Obon Festival

Members of the Japanese American community in the Ontario area sit for a group photo during the 1951 Obon Festival in Ontario. (Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple) Slide 32 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

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Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival Artwork

Evocative artwork designed to advertise the 2017 Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival shows dancers in traditional garb. (Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival) Slide 33 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

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Portland Rose Festival Grand Marshal

Lorne Greene, star of the hit television western Bonanza, stops to smell the roses while serving as 1961 Portland Rose Festival Grand Marshal. (Portland Rose Festival Association) Slide 34 / of 54


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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Student decorated potatoes sit on display during the annual Klamath Basin Potato Festival in Merrill on Saturday.

Festival goers review dozens of creatively dressed potatoes made by local students during the 2017 Klamath Basin Potato Festival in Merrill. (Klamath Basin Potato Festival) Slide 35 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Lebanon Strawberry Festival

Children march in costumes based on the theme "Wish Upon a Star" in the 1988 Lebanon Strawberry Festival. The celebration selects a unique theme annually to ensure that parade entries are fresh each year. (Lebanon Strawberry Festival) Slide 36 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

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Philomath Buckaroo and Loggers' Frolic Parade

Spectators at a circa 1950s Buckaroo and Loggers' Frolic in Philomath watch as a parade of horseback riders passes. The event is now called the Philomath Frolic & Rodeo. (Benton County Historical Society) Slide 37 / of 54



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Portland Greek Festival

Father Elias Stephanopoulos, uncle of ABC television news host, George Stephanopoulos, talks with a member of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church at a circa 1980 Portland Greek Festival. The men are barbequeing meat for souvlaki served at the festival. (Portland Greek Festival) Slide 38 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Portland Rose Festival Parade

2000 school children, trained in "Kaleidoscopic marching movements" by a professor, perform in downtown Portland as part of a Floral Parade during the 1907 Portland Rose Festival. (Portland Rose Festival Association) Slide 39 / of 54



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Woodburn Fiesta Mexicana

A colorfully dressed woman dances during the Woodburn Fiesta Mexicana. The event has been celebrating farmworkers and the end of the harvest since 1964. (Woodburn Fiesta Mexicana) Slide 40 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Pioneer Picnic

Fairgoers walk around the grounds of the Pioneer Picnic in Brownsville circa 1905. A Ferris wheel stands as part of a small carnival in the background. (Linn County Pioneer Picnic) Slide 41 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Pacific City Dory Days Parade

Members of the Kellow Family, decked out in western-themed clothing, ride atop their commercial dory during the Pacific City Dory Days Parade. (Pacific City Dory Days) Slide 42 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Lebanon Strawberry Festival Shortcake

The World's Largest Shortcake is pulled down Main Street in Lebanon during the 1949 Lebanon Strawberry Festival. Today, the festival continues to serve shortcake with strawberries for free to thousands of spectators in the hours after the Grand Parade. (Lebanon Strawberry Festival) Slide 43 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

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Klamath Basin Potato Festival

Spud Man towers over a parade during the Klamath Basin Potato Festival in Merrill. (Klamath Basin Potato Festival) Slide 44 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

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Dance of the Old Men

Dancers perform the traditional Danza de los Viejitos, or Dance of the Old Men, at the 2016 Woodburn Fiesta Mexicana Parade. The dance, which originated in Mexico, is intended to honor the Elderly God, Huehuetéotl. While it can appear outwardly comical, the dance has its cosmic and spiritual sides too. (Woodburn Fiesta Mexicana)

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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Portland Rose Festival Car

A postcard shows a car festooned with flowers and ferns during the 1913 Portland Rose Festival. (Portland Rose Festival Association) Slide 46 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

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State Fair Poster

This inviting Oregon State Fair poster from circa 1960 captures the playful and innocent mood of classic mid-1900s style in its illustrations and typography. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center) Slide 47 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

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Portland Greek Festival Pastries

This young boy can't believe his good fortune in being offered plates of Greek pastries by women of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church during an early 1950s Portland Greek Festival. (Portland Greek Festival) Slide 48 / of 54



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Portland Rose Festival Artwork

This dramatic drawing from a 1908 Portland Rose Festival brochure depicts a float based on a Viking ship. (Portland Rose Festival Association) Slide 49 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Ontario Obon Festival

Dancers in traditional Japanese clothing perform in Ontario during the 1947 Obon Festival. The block where this photo was taken was home to several Japanese American businesses, most notably the Eastside Cafe. (Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple) Slide 50 / of 54



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Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Portland Rose Festival Parade

A clown float rolls down Broadway Street in downtown Portland during the 1991 Portland Rose Festival parade. (Portland Rose Festival Association) Slide 51 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

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Scandinavian Dancers

Young dancers, dressed in traditional Scandinavian clothes, circle a maypole in downtown Astoria during the Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival in circa 1985. A maypole is a painted pole that is decorated with flowers. People traditionally dance around the maypole on May Day while holding long ribbons that are attached to the top of the pole. (Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival) Slide 52 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Bohemia Mining Days Pie Eating

Contestants compete at pie eating during the Bohemia Mining Days festival in Cottage Grove. Slide 53 / of 54



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Oregon's Colorful Festivals

Celebrating Oregon's Local Festivals

Lebanon Strawberry Festival Royal Court

The princesses of the 2016 Lebanon Strawberry Festival Royal court share smiles at a festival event. (Lebanon Strawberry Festival) Slide 54 / of 54

