

Senior News

Georgia

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*A Special
Celebration
This Month!*

November 2025

COVER: Bread making is very popular!

November is a delightful month as there are many festivals and events to explore in the Atlanta area. Of course, November brings Veterans Day on November 11 and Thanksgiving Day on November 27th. However, this month there are also many special events: the IrishFest Atlanta in Roswell; the Atlanta Alive Gospel Festival on November 14th to 16th; Georgia Nature's Fest at the Georgia Conservancy on November 8th; Explore Africa, a cultural event on November 12th; Atlanta Flamenco Festival, an evening dedicated to flamenco music and dance on November 8th; the Festival of Trees from November 22nd to 30th - which focuses on decorated trees; the Glow Light Show starting November 15th; and yes, there are many more happenings. But today, let's focus on the IrishFest Atlanta.

This month, the November crisp air will drift through the trees around the city of Roswell as the gates to the IrishFest Atlanta event opens up on November 7th and continues throughout the weekend. This is a fantastic event, fun-filled and action packed, with demonstrations, contests, dances, workshops, crafts, and a lineup of unique musicians. The festival will be filled with vendor booths on the festival grounds, including Celtic crafts, woolen scarves, hand-wrought jewelry, and fragrant tins of tea. As I attended last year, I witnessed, in the back corners of the grounds, children tracing shamrocks with chalk and practicing Irish dance steps. How delightful.

What a glorious festival. It starts on Friday with a concert by the Phoenix School of Irish Arts. Then on Saturday, the 8th, the Zion Baptist Church will open up for the celebrated Irish Tea – an elegant ritual of savoring a cup of Irish tea while delighting in finger sandwiches, scones, and cakes. Guests, in finely decorated hats and coats, will cluster around small round tables, chatting and admiring the decorations and ambiance while enjoying Irish tea and finger foods. The tea will honor a special guest, Frank Groome, Consul General of Ireland in Atlanta. This is a paid special event at the Zion Baptist Church, but there are many more events... some are paid events... but many are free.

Later in the afternoon, is the performance of the Phoenix Céilí Band, which is a free event for the entire family. The Phoenix Céilí Band will take center stage at the Dublin Stage, hosting the festival's storied céilí, which is a social dance anchored by spirited Irish music. This year, the band includes members of the Phoenix School of Irish Arts bolstered by distinguished players from around the community, including the U.S. and all-Ireland champions. Mary Ujda will return to this year's céilí to call the dances, guiding the dancers of all ages and experiences through each tune with precision. There is a lively mix of jigs, reels, set dances, polkas, slides and hornpipes. These are time-honored forms in Irish social dance music, played with clarity and rhythmic emphasis.



Learning Irish Dancing!

As I attended last year it was spellbinding. This November, the ensemble will likely include a range of traditional acoustic instruments such as the fiddle, flute, whistle, accordion or concertina, bodhrán, drum, guitar or bouzouki for rhythm. Because the céilí is open to people of all levels, Mary Ujda paces things so newcomers can follow along, while still giving enough excitement for experienced dancers to enjoy.

But there is more at this charming festival. Workshops, concerts, more performances, and demonstrations. Beautiful sites and tantalizing smells. Ah, there is the scent of Irish stew, freshly baked soda bread, and tasty treats which smells will drift through the air.

Many local bakers come to participate in the famous bread contest. The Irish Bread Making Contest draws competitive banter and applause, and prize money. Last year, and this November, at the “Bread Tent,” local non-professional bakers will arrive carrying their soda bread loaves each on a disposable plate into the room.

Inside, the judging table is set and the Judges, including Chef Thomas McKeown and Chef Judith McLoughlin – stalwarts of the Atlanta culinary scene – will methodically assess each entry. The contest is steeped in tradition, and evaluated on taste, appearance, creativity and texture. After a few hours, the winners are announced and prizes awarded. What an exciting event for all to enjoy.

Bring the grandkids and join in on the special events and features all day. Arts and crafts, face painting by Chelle, sports demonstrations including Gaelic football, hurling and camogie, will occur. The coaches explain that camogie is the women’s version of hurling, and that Gaelic football is part soccer, part rugby, part basketball in its fast-paced footwork. It’s all family fun.

As part of IrishFest’s “Family Fun,” the arts & crafts area opens its arms to creativity. Children, parents, grandparents are all invited to find a table piled with colorful supplies: paper, markers, glue, glitter, maybe even wool or felt. Then the creativity begins as shamrocks, paper harps, Celtic knot designs, or just whimsical doodles are created.

Learn the Irish dance of Sean Nos Dance, beginning fiddle, or Irish whistle and flute. Learn about the uilleann pipes as Kieran O’Hare will teach and perform for us. And, you’ll enjoy so much more.

Sunday brings us harmonious sounds and music by Teada, which is a worldwide traditional band, along with Tigh na Coilie, an ensemble of talented teen musicians, singers and dancers who excel in traditional Irish music. Tigh na Coilie is named after the Irish homeplace in County Clare meaning “house in the woods.” This talented group of young adults play the fiddle, concertina and Uilleann pipes, while celebrating Irish heritage with great passion.

Some of the concerts require a ticket and some are free. Sunday gives us a full day of performances, jam sessions, and spontaneous dance circles all open to the public.

Last year, when we attended there were over 9,000 people; and, this 2025 festival is said to see a surge in popularity. So plan on attending and enjoy a fresh new learning experience this November. For more information, go to Irishfestatlanta.org.



Teada Music Group!