

YOUR FALL CHECKLIST

in the greater Champaign-Urbana area

October–December 2025

MAKE IT
CHAMPAIGN
URBANA



MUST-ATTEND EVENTS & ACTIVITIES



1

PUMPKIN PICKING

Fall doesn't really start until you've picked your pumpkins! Stop by **Curtis Orchard & Pumpkin Patch** in Champaign, **Negangard Pumpkin Patch** in Sidney, or **The Great Pumpkin Patch** in Arthur, which features over 300 varieties of cucurbits in astounding displays.



2

CU FOLK & ROOTS FESTIVAL

October 2-4 | folkandroots.org

This homegrown festival brings dozens of folk, acoustic, and singer-songwriters from around the country to downtown Urbana, taking over multiple venues with live music, demonstrations, and so much more.

URBANA FALL FUSION FESTIVAL

October 4 | 40north.org

Pumpkins and gourds take over downtown Urbana for this annual fall festival. Enjoy live music, art, performances, professional pumpkin carving demos, kids' activities, photo ops and more!

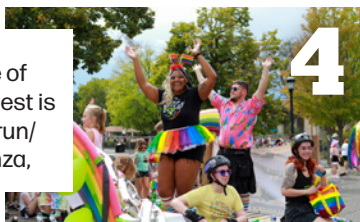
CU PRIDE FEST

October 16-26 | unitingpride.org

Join the biggest Pride celebration in Illinois outside of Chicago! Along with the parade and fair, CU Pride Fest is full of programming like Queer Homecoming, a 5K run/walk, community discussions, the Drag Extravaganza, and tons more.



3



4



5

HOLIDAY MARKETS

November–December

Shop local this season! Starting in November, holiday markets—including the **Craft League of CU Fine Art Fair**, **Mistletoe Market**, and **Riggs Beer Co.'s German Christmas Market**—begin popping up. And keep an eye on experiencecu.org for the annual Shop Local guide, featuring hundreds of locally owned businesses.

PARADE OF LIGHTS

November 29 | champaigncenter.com

Be ready for a visit from Santa during the annual Parade of Lights in downtown Champaign! Always held the Saturday after Thanksgiving, this special event features carolers, hot chocolate, and the traditional tree lighting.



6



Did you know?

■ **The New York Times** spotlighted the incredible Chinese cuisine scene around the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign with the article "Chinese Students Flocked to Central Illinois. Their Food Followed." In it, writer and food critic Pete Wells explores how the surge in foreign students has transformed our area's food scene, and features **Golden Harbor**, **Dim Sum House**, and **Northern Cuisine**.

■ **Gies College of Business** at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign tops the charts—its undergrad **accounting program ranks #1 in the US**, with the graduate program at #3, according to **US News & World Report**. Along with world-class faculty and a highly engaged alumni network, partnerships with leading firms give students hands-on experience and powerful momentum to launch successful careers.



■ **CU Adventures in Time & Space** in downtown Urbana was recently honored with **two prestigious Golden Lock Awards** for their **Rise of the Icarus** and **Forest of Fables** escape rooms. These awards are the top recognition from **Room Escape Artist**—the premier escape room review website in North America.

■ Explore the heart of the Champaign-Urbana area's farm scene! With the new **CU on the Farm** experience pass you can meet our growers, celebrate local flavor, and support sustainability, from educational tours and u-pick experiences to fun workshops and kid-friendly animal encounters! Learn more at experiencecu.org/experience-passes.



Want more ideas for events & activities?
experiencecu.org

Learn more about the community + search for jobs:
makeitcu.com

TOP IDEAS FOR FOOD & DRINK

The Yard on Broadway

401 N. Broadway Ave., Urbana
theyardonbroadway.com

A family-friendly hangout with plenty of room to kick back. Grab bites from 6 locally owned eateries (!), chill with friends, and enjoy the Urbana vibes.

Roselen's Coffees & Delights

1045 E. Columbia St., Arthur
roselenscoffeesanddelights.com

When you're exploring Arthur this fall, this coffee shop is a must stop! Along with a sizeable latte menu, their fresh pastries and sweet treats are perfect for a cozy break.

Papa Del's Pizza Factory

1201 S. Neil St., Champaign
papadels.com

An Illini institution for epic slices and hearty pies—deep, cheesy, and loaded just how you like it. Great for game days, group outings, or serious pizza cravings.



Lazy Daisy Diner & Café

140 Lincoln Square, Urbana | lazydaisydiner.com
Comfort food with a sunny outlook. Think hearty breakfasts, classic diner plates, and a friendly spot to linger inside Lincoln Square.

Blind Pig Brewpub

301 N. Neil St., Champaign | blindpigco.com
A downtown craft beer staple—revived! This new/old favorite pours house-made brews, local favorites, and an excellent food menu. Settle in for a pint, a burger, and good conversation on Neil Street.

Black Dog Smoke & Alehouse

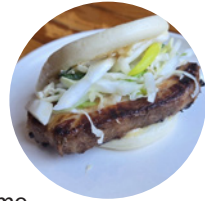
210 N. Broadway Ave., Urbana
blackdogurbana.com

Slow-smoked barbecue, done right. Pile your tray with brisket, ribs, and delectable sides, all accompanied by sauces so good you'll want to take extras home with you.

Cast Iron Pub

125 W. Sale St., Tuscola
castironpub.biz

Laid-back Tuscola spot serving elevated comfort food and crisp pints. Cozy enough for a fall date night, casual enough for a post-game bite.

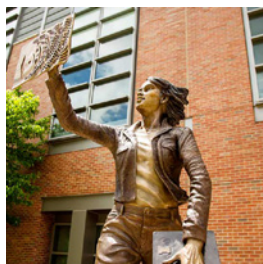
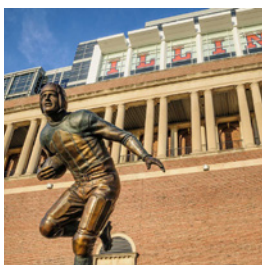
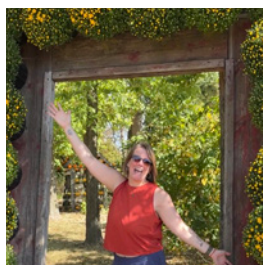


Farren's Pub & Eatery

17 E. University Ave. | farrenspub.com
In a new location in the Inman in downtown Champaign, this popular spot uses locally-sourced ingredients, award-winning burgers, and a variety of lunch and dinner options.

Selfie Spots

Check out these spots and share on Instagram or Bluesky with #experiencecu



Clockwise from top left

1. The Great Pumpkin Patch, Arthur
2. Red Grange outside Gies Memorial Stadium
3. Hardy's Reindeer Ranch in Rantoul
4. Quinn the Engineer on the Engineering Quad

Stay Active & Involved

Recreational Activities

58th Annual Turkey Trot | November 27

Crystal Lake Park, Urbana | urbanaparks.org

A Thanksgiving morning tradition, the Turkey Trot is a free 1-mile run, walk, or roll through Crystal Lake Park.

Holiday GLOW at Allerton Park

December 5-31 | allerton.illinois.edu

Wander through a wonderland of twinkling lights as Allerton Park & Retreat Center glows to life. Grab a cocoa, snap some pics, and soak up the holiday magic.

Bruce Hannon Levee Trail

Open 7 days/week | landconservationfoundation.org

Owned by the Land Conservation Foundation, the Bruce Hannon Levee Trail is a 2.3-mile loop that's part of the Sangamon River Corridor Reserve near Monticello. A beautiful fall hike!

Robert C. Porter Family Park

Open 7 days/week | champaignparks.org

Champaign's first natural areas park—which protects diverse habitats—Porter Park features a kids' playground, walking trail, pond, restored prairie area, and native plantings.

Volunteer Opportunities

Area Rotary Clubs

Local Rotary Clubs offer a great way to build community, develop friendships, and serve others. See a full list at rotarydistrict6490.org.

United Way of Champaign County

United Way connects volunteers with local organizations that need a hand. Explore opportunities at uwayhelps.org/volunteer.

PLUG INTO

Job Board + Community Job Application + Champaign Welcome Crew + New to CU Mixers + Champaign Proud Podcast + Champaign Proud Shop
makeitcu.com