

YOUR AUTUMN CHECKLIST

in the greater Champaign-Urbana area

October–December 2026

MAKE IT
CHAMPAIGN
URBANA



MUST-ATTEND EVENTS & ACTIVITIES



1

PUMPKIN PICKING

Fall starts with pumpkins! Stop by Curtis Orchard & Pumpkin Patch in Champaign, Negangard Pumpkin Patch in Sidney, or The Great Pumpkin Patch in Arthur. Don't miss Hardy's Reindeer Ranch for pre-picked pumpkins and one of our area's best corn mazes!



2

CU FOLK & ROOTS FESTIVAL

October 8-10 | 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 more.

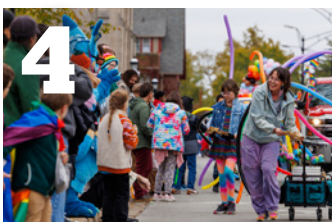
URBANA FALL FUSION FESTIVAL

October 10 | 40north.org

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



3



4

CU PRIDE FEST

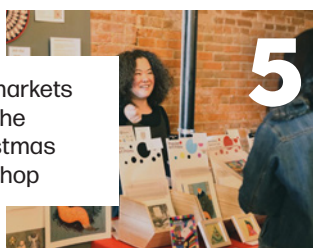
October 11-17 | unitingpride.org

Join the biggest Pride celebration in Illinois outside of Chicago! Along with the parade and fair, CU Pride Fest is full of family-friendly events, a 5K run/walk, community discussions, drag shows, and more.

HOLIDAY MARKETS

November–December

Shop local this season! Starting in November, holiday markets pop up—including the Craft League of CU Fine Art Fair, the CU Yuletide Market, and Riggs Beer Co.'s German Christmas Market. (And keep an eye on experiencecu.org for the Shop Local Holiday Guide.)



5

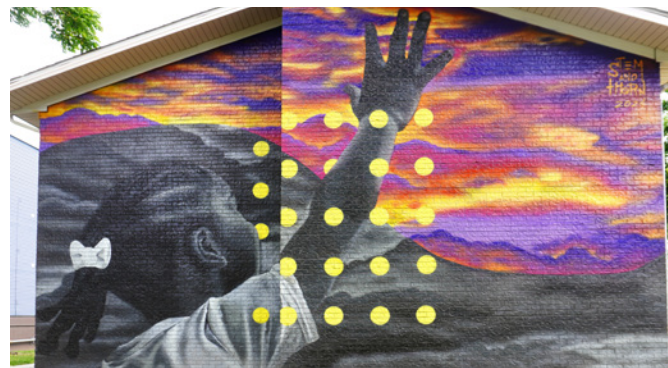


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HOLIDAY GLOW AT ALLERTON PARK

December 6-31 | allerton.illinois.edu

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



Did you know?

■ The **Champaign County African American Heritage Trail** has been named a **2026 Landmarks Illinois Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Preservation Award recipient for Stewardship**. This statewide recognition celebrates the Trail's community-driven work to connect sites of Black historic significance throughout Champaign County and make the stories and contributions of African Americans more visible and accessible.

■ **Time Magazine** named the University of Illinois Research Park one of **"America's Best Incubators and Accelerators of 2026."** The ranking evaluated 80 top programs nationwide based on **track record, alumni outcomes, and peer recommendations** from industry experts. The Research Park was recognized as one of just 13 university-operated incubators and accelerators, and one of six honored in the state of Illinois.



■ **Champaign-Urbana** was featured by **Midwest Living** as one of the **"15 Best College Town Getaways in the Midwest."** The article mentioned eateries BakeLab, Neil St. Blues, Hamilton Walker's, and our nationally recognized Chinese food scene; nightlife spots Gallery Art Bar and 25 O'Clock Brewing Co.; and Krannert Art Museum, Spurlock Museum of World Cultures, and the Virginia Theatre.

■ Looking for your next career move? Check out the **Champaign-Urbana job board!** It connects you with opportunities across all industries in the area. Set up alerts and get job openings delivered straight to your inbox. Explore now: makeitcu.org/jobs.

Want more ideas for events & activities?
experiencecu.org

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

TOP IDEAS FOR FOOD & DRINK

The Wheelhouse

109 N. Main St., St. Joseph
facebook.com/atthewheelhouse

Just a short drive from Champaign-Urbana, The Wheelhouse is a win if you love keeping it local. Chef Ryan Rogiers refreshes the menu each season, and fall's a standout. Oh, and the cheese curds alone are worth the trip.

Mad Goat Coffee

57 E. Main St., Champaign | madgoatcoffee.com
Start your crisp fall morning with one of Mad Goat's seasonal drinks. Think apple cider, pumpkin spice latte (of course), s'mores latte, and their specialty, the caramel apple butter latte. All available hot or iced!

Yoder's Kitchen

1195 E. Columbia St., Arthur | yoderskitchen.net
If you're spending a day at The Great Pumpkin Patch (or really anywhere in Amish country), Yoder's buffet is the perfect place for fall comfort food: chicken and noodles, dressing, mashed potatoes and gravy...you'll leave full enough to need a horse and buggy ride home.

Rick's Bakery

124 W. Main St., Urbana | ricksbakeryurbana.com
Sometimes comfort comes in the form of a hearty, fresh-baked loaf of bread, and Rick's Bakery delivers, whether you're craving sourdough, rye, cinnamon-raisin, challah, even a French baguette. While you're at it, pick up a seasonal fruit tart or two.

Chophouse on Main

2 E. Main St., Champaign
chophouseonmain.com
A fabulous setting for a fall date night, Chophouse on Main brings upscale-casual dining to downtown Champaign. Enjoy dinner in their elevated dining room, then head down to the speakeasy-style lounge for a craft cocktail.

Kohinoor

6 E. Columbia Ave., Champaign
kohinoorchampaign.com
Want aromatic and filling? Kohinoor's your place. Local and family owned, they offer perfectly spiced Northern Indian dishes,

always freshly prepared, for both herbivores and carnivores alike—curries, dal, biryani, masala, tandoori, and more.

The Bread Company

706 S. Goodwin Ave.
thebread.co

Everything on the menu is a safe bet at this authentic Swiss and European spot in the heart of campus. For a truly memorable experience, get the fondue: melty, shareable, and made for lingering over deep conversation.

3 Ravens Food & Spirits

108 S. Charter, Monticello | 3ravens.pub
If you're craving cozy Irish fare, this family- and veteran-owned pub in the heart of Monticello is for you. Their signature dish, bangers and mash, features locally sourced Irish pork, and the cottage pie practically guarantees you a good night's sleep.



Selfie Spots

Check out these spots and share on Instagram with #experiencecu!



Clockwise from top left

1. Curtis Orchard & Pumpkin Patch, Champaign
2. Allerton Park & Retreat Center, Monticello
3. Holiday Tree, downtown Champaign
4. Hardy's Reindeer Ranch, Rantoul

Stay Active & Involved

Recreational Activities

Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve

109 S. Lake of the Woods Rd., Mahomet | champaignforests.org
Get a bird's-eye view of fall foliage when you climb the Hi-Tower Carillon, where you'll see acres of trees in all their autumn glory.

59th Annual Turkey Trot | November 26

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.

Middle Fork River Forest Preserve

3485 County Rd. 2700 E., Penfield | champaignforests.org

Don't miss an amazing view of the stars at Illinois' only International Dark Sky Park. Reserve your camping space!

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 + Chambana Welcome Crew + New to CU Mixers + Chambana Proud Podcast + Chambana Proud Shop
makeitcu.com