

Alma Highland Festival & Games 2017 Preview

Break out the kilt!

By **Matt Collins** - May 23, 2017



The campus of Alma College will soon be clad in tartan with the sound of bagpipes as the 50th annual Alma Highland Festival and Games begins on Friday. The Highland Festival is our third major spring festival in mid-Michigan. The annual Memorial Day weekend event draws thousands of fans of all things Scotland to Alma. So, here's what to look forward to as you plan your Alma Highland Festival weekend.

1 Alma Highland Festival Traditions



2015 Piping and Drumming Competition. / (Eric Stafford | The Morning Sun)

One of the most unique things about the Alma Highland Festival are the festival traditions. The **Highland Dance Competition** offers unique Scottish competitive dance you won't find anywhere else in mid-Michigan! The competition runs from 8:00AM-4:00PM on Saturday, with more Highland Dance Sunday at 9:00AM, and again at 1:00PM at the Hogan Center.

In addition, the Piping and Drumming Competition offers your best chance to enjoy some incredible bagpipe performances Saturday at 12:30PM and Sunday at 1:00PM. And if all of that wasn't enough, don't miss the Great Lakes Scottish Heavyweight **athletic events** on Saturday and Sunday.

Away from the competition, the Alma Highland Festival offers two family favorites on Saturday. The morning begins with the Road Run 10K, 5K and children's fun run at 8:30AM in front of the Tyler Van-Dusen Center. Registration begins Friday evening and continues on Saturday morning. Then, bring your lawn chair for the parade immediately following the run at 10:30AM.

2 Entertainment Tent



The American Rogues. / (Alma Highland Festival & Games)

A weekend at the Alma Highland Festival offers entertainment for every member of the family. The Alma College Jazz Band kicks off the festivities with a performance Friday at 5:30PM on the Remick Heritage Center front lawn. Cèilidh, a gathering with Scottish or Irish folk music with singing, dancing and storytelling, follows from 6:30-11:00PM at Hamilton Commons, featuring Colin Grant-Adams, the Alma College Pipe Band, the Great Lakes Pipe Band and the Scottish Country Dancers. Or, enjoy **The Rock Show** in the entertainment tent from 8:30PM-1:00AM.

The entertainment tent stays busy with plenty of unique performances throughout the day on Saturday. **Fresh Pict** opens the performances at 1:30PM with traditional Celtic tunes. Then, **Chelsea House Orchestra** takes the stage at 3:00PM, and again at 7:00PM offering more traditional Scottish sounds. **Steel City Rovers** take the stage at 4:30PM, combining Celtic and North American traditions for a wonderful sound. Finally, **The American Rogues**

hit the stage at 8:30PM with an electrified performance infusing Celtic/Rock/World music.

On Sunday, *Chelsea House Orchestra*, *Steel City Rovers* and *The American Rogues* all hit the stage again starting at noon.

3 **Craft Show**

One of my personal favorite reasons to attend the Alma Highland Festival is the arts & crafts show along Wright Avenue near the Alma College campus. The show features a slew of carefully selected vendors who create quality, handmade items. Pro tip: It's a great place to pick up a unique Father's Day gift! The arts & crafts show runs from 9:00AM to 6:00PM on Saturday, and 10:00AM to 4:00PM on Sunday.

4 **Dining/Accommodations**

If you get hungry during the Alma Highland Festival, you have several options. Vendors park their food trucks throughout town. Or grab a bite to eat from one of the vendors at the arts & crafts show. Alma College also offers breakfast from 6:30-10:30AM at Hamilton Commons. Adults pay \$7, and kids cost \$3.

If you or someone you know needs a place to stay, you have a few options as well. Alma College offers on-campus housing during the event at \$49 per night for up to two people. Make sure you call (989) 463 – 7950 or email rees@alma.edu for your reservation. The **Gratiot County Fair for Youth** and **Church of God St Louis Campground** also have campsites available throughout the weekend.

The Alma Highland Festival wraps up with the closing ceremony Sunday at 5:00PM at the football stadium. During the ceremony, awards are given out, and the [Massed Band](#) performs.

Enjoy the Highland Festival, and your entire Memorial Day weekend! And be sure to check out the [full schedule of events](#).

Matt Collins

Whether it's nature or the city, I love to travel. Craft beer enthusiast, big Detroit Tigers fan, born and raised in West Michigan. Fire up Chips!

