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ALWAYS A HOLIDAY TO CELEBRATE IN CLEVELAND PLUS

FROM KAZOO DAY TO ROLLER SKATING MONTH, REGION OFFERS YEAR-ROUND FUN

Cleveland, Ohio – Everyone celebrates the big holidays like Memorial Day, Thanksgiving and Valentine's Day, but what about Frozen Food Day, Mustard Day and National Joke Day?

Whether looking to kick-off National Hamburger Month with a sandwich from a family credited with creating the burger or observe National Weatherman's Day with a festival celebrating a caterpillar, visitors to Cleveland Plus can find celebrations as unexpected, unique and memorable as these offbeat holidays themselves.

JANUARY

National Hat Day (Jan. 15)

January 15 is the day to sport a sombrero, fashion a fedora or bust out a beret. Visitors to Cleveland Plus can make a trip to downtown Cleveland's famous hat store, [Mike the Hatter](#), to purchase a new chapeau. This 70-year-old, family-owned business carries a massive inventory of more than 40,000 hats – ranging from \$5 knit caps to \$400 mink fur head warmers.

Sporting a hat not your cup of tea? How about a visit to the hip, happening [Warehouse District](#)? In its early 20th century heyday this district located on the west side of downtown was where several wholesale and commercial companies held their operations – particularly those businesses in the garment industry. At the time, Cleveland was one of the country's leading centers for this industry, second only to New York City. Many of what is now inhabited by some of the best nightclubs, bars and restaurants in Cleveland are former millineries where hats were made.

National Kazoo Day (Jan. 28)

Originally created for African tribal ceremonies, the kazoo made its mark in Western culture as a musical instrument for amateurs – and a quirky instrument at that.

For visitors on the lookout for another kazoo to add to their collection, [Big Fun Toys](#), Cleveland's ultimate toy emporium with two locations retailing vintage toys, unique childhood favorites and collectables, sells a wide variety of both plastic and metal versions of these iconic instruments.

Did you know? In 2008, Cleveland Metroparks set an ultra-quirky Ohio record for the "[Largest Kazoo Play-Along](#)" at the [Cedar Valley Settlers Celebration & Music Festival](#), where visitors experience Ohio's frontier days with Americana music, storytelling, food and pioneer crafts. (By the way, they broke the world record for "Largest Harmonica Play-Along" at the event in 2007.)

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FEBRUARY

National Weatherman's Day (Feb. 5)

With four beautiful seasons and a bounty of weather patterns over Lake Erie, Cleveland Plus has a fond affection for its beloved meteorologists and a reason to celebrate on this day.

That includes [Al Roker](#), meteorologist on NBC's *Today* show. The seven-time Emmy Award winner also co-hosts "The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade" and "Rose Bowl Parade" But most don't know that Roker got his start on Cleveland's [WKYC-TV](#) during the late '70s and early '80s.

For travelers that can't celebrate on Feb. 5, they can visit Vermilion, Ohio in the fall and join one of Cleveland's most legendary forecasters, [WJW-TV's Dick Goddard](#), for the [Woolly Bear Festival](#). Goddard, who's been broadcasting in Cleveland for more than 40 years, started this one-day festival in celebration of a caterpillar affectionately called the "woolly bear." Folklore states the severity of winter can be predicted by the exposure of the woolly bear's red middle area. Visitors of The Woolly Bear Festival dress their dogs in caterpillar costumes, the ice cream stands make branded "woollybear" cones and the whole town gets into the huge festivities.

National Random Acts of Kindness Week (Feb. 15 – 21)

Most visitors who leave Cleveland Plus are astounded by the kindness, friendliness and Midwest warmth they receive from the locals here. And, that couldn't be more fitting for one Cleveland Plus resident, Bob Votruba.

After seeing the Virginia Tech shootings on television, Bob realized that he needed to do whatever he could to change the direction of the country. It was in August of 2009 that Bob sold his house, bought a school bus and, with his Boston terrier Bogart, embarked on a ten-year journey around the US. His goal: To encourage young people, particularly college students, to perform [one million acts of kindness](#) in a lifetime.

During [National Random Acts of Kindness Week](#) visitors can take a visit to Bob's home of Cleveland Plus to experience the generosity and spread kindness to others.

MARCH

National Old Stuff Day (March 2)

As America prospered during the 19th and 20th centuries, regions like Cleveland Plus saw an influx of immigrants seeking a new life. The result was a region boasting more than 117 different ethnicities. While this certainly equates to a wide variety of interesting food options, it also makes Cleveland Plus a destination for antique shoppers seeking more valuable and diverse pieces.

National Old Stuff Day can be celebrated in one of the area's antique districts like [Larchmere Boulevard](#) or [Lorain Avenue](#), where the streets have several antique shops within walking distance. The region boasts numerous large antique malls with hundreds of dealers like the [Valley View Antique Mall](#), the largest of its kind in the nation.

Or, experience history museums like the [Western Reserve Historical Society](#) or the [Dunham Tavern Museum](#), the oldest building in the city. Still on its original foundation, Dunham throws one of the nation's longest running antique shows each year, with 2010's November show being its 115th.

National Frozen Food Day (March 6)

In 1922, Abraham and Mahala Stouffer opened a small coffee shop in Cleveland featuring homemade food. Later, the couple's sons noticed that customers were looking for take-out versions of the menu items to be enjoyed at home. So began the [Stouffer's](#) tradition of freezing popular menu items and selling them at a retail outlet nearby. Today, that small coffee shop is a multimillion-dollar corporation that is a leader in the frozen food industry and still calls Cleveland Plus "home." So, poke holes in the cellophane, pull up a TV tray and dig into National Frozen Food Day in Cleveland Plus.

APRIL**National Peanut Butter and Jelly Day** (April 2)

What American child hasn't opened their lunchbox to find a rich, delicious PB&J sandwich? So, it shouldn't be any big surprise that there's a holiday dedicated to this lunchroom delicacy. And, Cleveland Plus boasts its utmost important ingredients with two very important companies.

In 1937, Clevelanders Earl and Edna Balliette opened a store where they created a smorgasbord of products made from nuts including peanut butter. Nearly 50 years before that, Orville, Ohio resident Jerome Monroe Smucker was selling apple butter out of the back of a horse-drawn wagon. Today, both Ohio businesses – [King Nut](#) and [J.M. Smuckers](#) – are now premier, worldwide providers of peanut butter and jelly (respectively).

Want to try a unique way to eat PB&J? Head over to Grandma Freda's, a family-owned stand at the [West Side Market](#) selling homemade cupcakes. Enjoy their mouthwatering peanut butter and jelly cupcake that's topped with rich, peanut butter cream icing and cake filled with strawberry jelly.

National Siblings Day (April 10)

April 10 is a day to appreciate and cherish our brothers and sisters. But the Cleveland Plus town of [Twinsburg](#) (aptly named after the identical twin founders) has been doing that for years. Get to the town the first full weekend in August to celebrate [Twins Days](#), the largest gathering of twins in the world. The festival includes the "Double-Take" parade, contests, food, games and fireworks celebrating all different kinds of twins and multiples.

MAY**National Hamburger Month**

Visitors could literally eat their way through this month-long holiday in Cleveland Plus.

Frank and Charles Menches from Akron, Ohio are credited with inventing the hamburger when they ran out of pork for sausage patties they were selling at the 1885 Erie County Fair and decided to spice up some beef (with coffee, brown sugar and other ingredients) and hock them as "hamburgers," so named for Hamburg, NY, where the fair was held. Later, they went on to open [Menches Bros. Restaurant](#), which is still operated by family today in Cleveland Plus, where their legendary burgers are served.

Akron also is home to the [National Hamburger Festival](#) (July 17 –18), kicked off with tasting competitions, competitive eating, live music and even a Miss Hamburger Festival competition.

How about just celebrating with a great burger? Cleveland's hidden gem of a bar called [Johnny's Little Bar](#) located in the Warehouse District was recently given the distinction of having the "Best Burger in Cleveland" by a local alternative publication.

[The Buckeye Beer Engine](#) in Lakewood features a unique burger of the month and other gourmet burgers including the Cyclops made with a sunny side up egg and a bologna burger topped with mounds of bologna and American cheese.

And, for those seeking a little nostalgia, take a drive over to one of seven area [Swenson's](#) to enjoy a Galley Boy hamburger, fries and chocolate milkshake at a real, old-fashioned drive-in restaurant.

International No Diet Day (May 6)

No Diet Day could be any day in Cleveland Plus with its emergent culinary scene, award-winning chefs and nationally recognized dining districts.

So, why not burn off those extra calories taking a hike through the 22,000 acres that make up the [Cleveland Metroparks](#)? This massive park system encircles the city and is known to locals as the "emerald necklace."

Or, swim off the pounds in Lake Erie at [Cleveland Lakefront State Park](#), a 43-acre park system located up the coast of Lake Erie (broken up). Edgewater Park, one of the more popular beaches, is located just seconds from downtown Cleveland.

Visitors also can bike their way through the [Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail](#). This multi-purpose trail is the major trail through the [Cuyahoga Valley National Park](#). From it, bikers can make connections to many of the natural and historic sites in the park and to other trails that intersect it along the way. Ride your bike to one end, then pick up [Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad](#) train back to your original location.

Or, visit Cleveland Plus during one of the healthiest events in the region – [The Rite Aid Cleveland Marathon, Half Marathon and 10K](#) (May 16, 2010) one of the flattest and fastest courses in the country.

JUNE

National Dare Day (June 1)

Ride a record-breaking roller coaster, slide down a 100-foot-tall waterslide and eat a sandwich with 13 slices of cheese – we dare you.

Daredevils need not look any further than Cleveland Plus when celebrating this day of limitless challenges. Get to [Cedar Point Amusement Park](#) located in Sandusky, to experience a whopping 17 roller coasters, hailed by coaster enthusiasts as being some of the best in the world.

Thrillseekers can get their beach on at [Geauga Lake's Wildwater Kingdom](#) to slide and splash through acres of waterpark fun, including Ohio's tallest waterslide complex and a huge tornado slide.

And, daredevils should check out the Melt Challenge at [Melt Bar & Grilled](#), Cleveland's Mecca of gourmet grilled cheese. Here, visitors compete to win by devouring a monster sandwich comprised of 13 cheeses, three thick slices of bread, cole slaw and fries – a total of five pounds of food.

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National Cheese Day (June 4)

From cheddar and colby to crumbled and stinky, celebrating this special day is a cinch with the abundance of selections of cheese. Celebrate in Cleveland Plus with a dinner at the [Lockview](#) in Akron, a restaurant serving wine and gourmet grilled cheese (like the Number 10 with havarti dill cheese, caramelized onions, pickles and mustard).

Visitors indulge at [Heini's Cheese Chalet](#) in Geauga County where all of the wholesome, all-natural cheeses come from 100 percent Amish farm milk. Cheese is also the main focus at the [Baricelli Cheese Company](#) in Cleveland Heights. Owner Paul Minnillo "blooms" more than 40 varieties of the finest, handcrafted and properly aged goat, cow and sheep milk cheeses in its state-of-the-art affinage cooler. Visitors can have a taste at his crowning endeavor, [The Baricelli Inn](#).

Cleveland Plus also is home to two goat cheese creameries. [Learn more here](#).

JULY**National Joke Day** (July 1)

Cleveland Plus often finds itself as the butt of jokes from its critics. But folks in this region know the joke's actually on those critics. With dozens of comedy venues and performing troupes, Cleveland Plus knows how to laugh.

One such performance troupe is [Something Dada](#). Formed in 1994, the improvisational group features a fresh and fun experience that is completely structured on audience suggestions – so you never get the same show twice.

And, visitors can treat themselves to some laughs at a Cleveland Plus comedy venue like [The Improv](#), [Hilarities Fourth Street Theater](#), [Bogey's Comedy Club](#), [PlayhouseSquare](#), [House of Blues](#), [The Funny Farm](#) (Youngstown) and [The Funny Stop](#) (Cuyahoga Falls).

National French Fries Day (July 13)

Some like them curly, others like them crinkled. Regardless of how you eat them, there's no shortage of ways to enjoy this holiday in Cleveland Plus.

[Tommy's Diner](#), located in Coventry, started as a small soda fountain shop in 1972. Today, it still serves up piping-hot heaps of its famous French fries. While there, guests can't forget to top off their fries with a burger and milkshake – a Cleveland tradition.

Also a tradition are the oh-so-heavenly Notso Fries served at local [Yours Truly](#) restaurants. The deliciousness starts with cottage fries, which are French fries shaped like disks, not straws. Then, they're smothered with melted cheddar cheese, covered in bacon and slathered with sour cream. The result? Amazing.

French fry aficionados also should try [The Greenhouse Tavern](#), Ohio's first LEED-certified green restaurant serving up a menu of totally organic and locally-produced foods. Chef Jonathon Sawyer creates an irresistible order of pomme frites, which are hand-cut fries fried in duck fat and smothered with gravy, mozzarella cheese curds and eggs.

Duck fat not sitting well with the vegetarian crowd? Then visit [Vegiterranean](#) in Akron, an award-winning restaurant owned by Chrissie Hynde, lead singer of the Pretenders. The menu is completely vegetarian and fused with the tastes of the Mediterranean. Here veg-heads can dine on what Chrissie claims to be "the best fries you've ever had" complete with tofu ricotta and house-made balsamic ketchup.

Even [Iron Chef Michael Symon](#) is into the French fry action, but with his own upscale twist. Diners at his ultra-trendy restaurants can taste "Lola Fries," which are thin-cut, fried in pork grease and served in a unique milkshake container.

AUGUST

National Mustard Day (Aug. 4)

While Cleveland Plus certainly can't claim to be the birthplace of baseball, it is the place where the brown, spicy mustard topping the hotdogs at those baseball games was first created.

Joe Bertman developed a smooth, old-world style brown mustard product specifically for League Park, a baseball field in Cleveland in 1938. When the Cleveland Indians baseball team moved to Municipal Stadium, Bertman's Original Ball Park Mustard moved with them.

But at Progressive Field, today's home of the Cleveland Indians, [Authentic Stadium Mustard](#) is served. This Cleveland-based company perfected its recipe and preparation so that its mustard is now available in more than 150 stadiums and arenas through the country.

National Radio Day (Aug. 20)

Many folks know that Cleveland is the home of rock and roll, but most don't know why.

In 1952, Cleveland radio disc jockey Alan Freed hosted the "Moondog Show" on WJW, broadcasting only rhythm and blues music that he called "rock n' roll." Later that year, Freed organized the first ever rock show in Cleveland. The concert, oversold by more than 10,000 tickets, caused an overflow resulting in the crowds breaking down the doors and storming the arena.

So on National Radio Day, visitors should consider paying homage to Alan Freed's legacy with a trip to the [Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum](#).

SEPTEMBER

National Mini Golf Day (Sept. 21)

A day for kids of any age, Cleveland Plus is filled with an abundance of putt-putt courses.

Everything glows at [Firefly's Miniature Golf](#). This 18-hole indoor miniature golf course features balls, putters, walls, floors and 3-D creatures that all glow under the blacklights.

Also going with the glow-in-the-dark theme is [Monster Mini Golf](#). Experience 18-holes of indoor miniature golf in the presence of glowing monsters around every corner. The thrilling experience, for guests of all ages, also showcases a deejay on site spinning some great tunes as you golf.

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For families with little ones, check out [Memphis Kiddie Park](#), a retro children's amusement park with all sorts of rides, games and attractions for little kids. The park also offers 18-holes at the Memphis Championship Miniature Golf Course, said to be one of the most challenging in the region.

Visitors also can ride the go-karts, play in the bumper boats, hit a homerun at the batting cages or get a hole-in-one at the mini-golf course at [Swings-n-Things Family Fun Park](#).

National Comic Book Day (Sept. 25)

Comic book fans can make a pilgrimage to Cleveland Plus, as many of the creators and artists of pop culture's most famous comic books were from the region.

Visitors from around the world flock to Cleveland Plus to see the place where Superman was born seven decades ago by creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. Siegel's childhood home recently underwent a \$70,000 renovation funded by fans of the comic book icon and now features the superhero's colors and s-shaped emblem.

Others are fascinated to learn that [Harvey Pekar](#), creator of the comic book series "American Splendor" still calls Cleveland Plus "home." Cleveland also is home to one of few local newspapers that have a column solely dedicated to comic books. [Mike Sangiacomo](#) writes this column for the [Plain Dealer](#), as well as authoring several comic books and graphic novels on his own. Most recently, this local's novel, *TALES OF THE STARLIGHT DRIVE-IN*, was voted "Best Graphic Novel of the Year" by *Cosmic Buyer's Guide* annual fan poll.

And, there's no shortage of locations to find your favorite comic book. At [Carol & John's Comic Shop](#) on the west side, avid collectors and everyday enthusiasts can find new and hard-to-find, nostalgic comic books.

OCTOBER

National Roller Skating Month

Roller skating is making a huge comeback in Cleveland Plus with the addition of two all-female, skater-owned, flat-track derby leagues. [The Burning River Roller Girls](#), based out of Cleveland, consist of more than 60 players over five teams with creative names like Cleveland Steamers, Hard Knockers, Hellbombers and The Rolling Pin-Ups. In Akron, visitors can watch a rough and tumble roller derby match by the [Rubber City Roller Girls](#).

Sweetest Day (Third Saturday in Oct.)

Every year, more Americans are catching on to Sweetest Day, a holiday created to spread love and cheer to the unfortunate. The first Sweetest Day occurred in Cleveland Plus in 1921. It was created by a committee of Cleveland's top candy makers to provide candy and chocolates to the sick, elderly, orphaned and poor.

Today, the holiday is still widely celebrated throughout the Midwest and continues to branch out to other states with help from major greeting card manufacturers and retailers like [American Greetings](#). This corporation got its start when its founder, a young Polish immigrant by the name of Jacob Sapirstein, became a broker of post cards in 1905. Today American Greetings Corporation is still headquartered in Cleveland and generates an annual revenue of more than \$1.7 million.

NOVEMBER

Sandwich Day (Nov. 3)

Epicurean travelers should plan to celebrate Sandwich Day with a trip to Cleveland Plus to experience [Slyman's Deli](#) where they've been serving up countless generations of their legendary corned beef sandwiches. Or, make a trip to one of more than a dozen [Panini's Bar and Grille](#) locations. This bar piles mounds of hand-cut fries and cole slaw on top of their famous overstuffed paninis – perfect after a late night or before a sporting event.

And, visitors can't forget to make a stop at a psychedelic [Dave's Cosmic Subs](#) location. These fresh subs are made with the highest quality meats, cheese and vegetables and are topped off with one of the shop's proprietary sauces. As *Rolling Stones* put it, "Dave makes one hell of a sub."

Take a Hike Day (Nov. 17)

While Cleveland Plus offers metropolitan downtown experiences and trendy, urban hotspots, the region also offers tens of thousands of natural spaces where travelers can hike the outdoors. This includes the [Cleveland Metroparks](#), [Lake Metroparks](#) and [Cuyahoga Valley National Park](#) (the sixth most visited national park in the US that is just minutes from downtown).

For travelers looking for something a little more educational, several neighborhood development programs created ["Take a Hike!" tours](#), which are offered May – September. These educational tours take visitors on guided walking tours to explore Cleveland's history, architecture and future plans with actors and actresses portraying historic figures along the way.

Also, visitors can experience Cleveland Plus on a [CityProwl](#) audio walking tour. Simply visit the website, download a tour onto an iPod, mp3 player, computer or other audio device and corresponding map to learn about the city including its culture, community, history and architecture.

DECEMBER

National Chocolate Covered Anything Day (Dec. 16)

Today is a day to indulge in anything covered in a generous amount of chocolate. And, chocoholics shouldn't look any further, as Cleveland Plus dishes out all kinds of great ways to dig in.

This includes a stop at [Lilly's Handmade Chocolates](#) in Tremont. Lilly's is a cute candy shop serving inventive, yet ultra tasty, chocolates like "The Red Head," an intense dark chocolate truffle filled with blueberry vintage port ganache, and "The Southern Gentleman," top shelf Makers Mark Bourbon paired with buttery pecans in deep milk chocolate.

Travelers also can indulge in the famous chocolate covered bacon and chocolate covered grapes available at [Malley's Chocolates](#), a Cleveland-based, family chocolatier with several candy and ice cream parlors throughout Cleveland Plus.

Or, chocolate lovers can pamper themselves with dinner and dessert at the all-new [Chocolate Bar](#), located off East Fourth Street downtown. A full 50 percent of the menu is dedicated to sweets including tarts, cakes, crepes, ice cream, fondue and brownies. But the real creativity comes in menu items such as the white chocolate pasta and decadent mint chocolate martinis.

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On their way out of town, your average sweet tooth can have a field day stocking up on their favorites at [b.a. Sweetie Candy Company](#), a 60-year-old, family-owned candy company that's average inventory level is in excess of 300,000 pounds of just about every kind of candy you can imagine.

Maple Syrup Day (Dec. 17)

Most people are unaware that the majority of the maple syrup found on grocery store shelves doesn't contain a single drop of real maple. Ohio, however, happens to be the third largest producer of real, true maple syrup in the country. And, the region's location in the northeastern portion of the state, in addition to the elevation and average temperatures, make it an ideal area to harvest the maple tree sap.

Cleveland Plus offer maple sugaring-related activities during the late winter/early spring at places like [Lake Metroparks Farmpark](#) and [Hale Farm and Village](#) where visitors can learn to drill a maple tree, cook the sap and enjoy maple candy galore.

Or, make way to [Geauga County](#) – the number one producer of maple syrup in Ohio. Visitors can experience springtime maple sugaring at the area's many sugarhouse or take a "Maple Madness Tour," a self-guided tour around the county showing visitors how maple syrup is made first-hand.

For those looking to celebrate, get to Chardon Square, located in Geauga County, during the last full weekend in April to experience the [Geauga County Maple Festival](#). This unique festival celebrates the production of maple syrup with two parades, a queen's contest, bathtub races, craft shows, rides, games and...plenty of maple syrup!

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