

FIESTA

By Lakendra Lewis

2021

Fewer events,
same **great party**
atmosphere



The enduring tradition of **FIESTA** in San Antonio is proof you can't keep a great festival—or a great city—down. This year's schedule of events, the majority of which were moved from April to this month, is smaller but the party atmosphere is as big as ever with a pared-down array of city-wide activities, music, food, and fun that's sure to satisfy Fiesta lovers and get you out of the house and dancing in the streets. Here are some highlights:

RODEO DRIVEN

Looking to go on a little day trip? Then be transported to A Day in Old Mexico and explore the distinctive culture, customs, and family traditions of Mexican horsemanship as a way of life. Sponsored by the **Asociación de Charros de San Antonio**, the oldest Charro association in the United States, this year's family event is scheduled for June 20th and June 27th, and features gourmet food vendors, concessions, Ballet Folklórico, live mariachi music, and Charreada, Mexico's official sport.

Long described as "living history," the charreada is a competitive sport pre-dating the American rodeo and borne from animal husbandry practices used on the haciendas of old Mexico. Watch and enjoy the pageantry of this centuries-old tradition! Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at the gate on the day of the event.

HERZLICH WILLKOMMEN!

Celebrate Fiesta German-style in an authentic, family-friendly German beer garden hosted by the Beethoven Maennerchor (men's choir), a group founded in 1867 dedicated to the preservation of German music, language, culture, and customs, and is the oldest active singing society in Texas.

This year's Gartenfest will take place June 23rd through June 25th and features German cuisine including

Bratwurst, Reuben sandwiches, Bavarian-style soft pretzels, and Leberkäse, as well as more than 20 German and American craft beers available on tap, and a dozen different wines.

The 50-piece Beethoven Concert Band, the Beethoven Big Band, the Maennerchor men's choir, and the Damenchor women's choir also will be on hand to help frolickers kick up their heels through song and dance. So, raise a glass and shout "Ein Prosit!" And keep your eyes peeled for special appearances by Fiesta royalty, including King Antonio and El Rey Feo and their courts.





NIOSA

Come join the downtown fun of A Night In Old San Antonio®, one of Fiesta's largest and most popular events, as it once again celebrates the city's diverse cultural legacy over four festive nights.

A long-standing tradition that began in 1938 as a one-night street fair, NIOSA has become a major annual attraction catering to more than 85,000 revelers annually.

This year's 72nd celebration, slated for June 22nd through June 25th, is sponsored by the Conservation Society of San Antonio and held in the downtown historic arts village of La Villita located on the banks of the San Antonio River.

Festivities will include food, drink, and atmosphere booths; live music; children's games; decorations, and souvenirs. Food is created, perfected, and prepared by NIOSA volunteers in certified NIOSA kitchens. All of the booths also are run by Conservation Society volunteers, many of whom are second or third-generation volunteers.

All proceeds from the event benefit the Conservation Society of San Antonio, one of the oldest and most active community preservation groups in the United States. Parking and ticket information is available on the NIOSA website.



TEXAS CAVALIERS RIVER PARADE

This one-of-a-kind boat parade has been a crowd-pleaser for the thousands of onlookers who've gathered to watch alongside the banks of the River Walk since 1941, and this year is no different.

Don't miss the lights and decorations illuminating the river with the bold colors of Fiesta as floats decked in bright flowers and vibrant colors set sail from 7 pm-9 pm on June 21st, with the traditional investiture of the King of San Antonio slated for June 19th.

Funds raised from the event support local children's charities through the Texas Cavaliers Charitable Foundation. Ticket information is available on the event website.

MASK APPEAL

When life hands you a mask, decorate it! That's the premise behind the *#ShowMeYourMask* virtual competition hosted by District 4 Councilwoman Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, the Fiesta Commission, MySA, and Palo Alto College, to allow the community a safe way to get creative and show their Fiesta spirit.

On June 18th the top finalists in various age groups will participate in a Fiesta "Maskerade" Runway Show at the college with an announcement of the winners. The event is free and open to the public. Masks are mandatory and social distancing is recommended.

The contest is a spin on the popular Fiesta phrase, "Show Me Your Shoes" often said during Fiesta parades. Entry themes include "Classic Fiesta," "Flores de Fiesta", and "Fiesta Royale."

Descriptions for these categories and more information about online submissions can be found on MySA.com.



ANIMAL ATTRACTION

Finish Fiesta 2021 strong with a visit to the San Antonio Zoo to explore the various species of Latin America during the zoo's two-day Fiesta event, *Festivale de Animales*, June 26th and 27th, hosted by the San Antonio Zoological Society.

Help celebrate the animals, culture, and food of Latin America as the zoo highlights creatures native to South and Central America, as well as its conservation efforts in these areas. Enjoy a culinary tour of Latin America at select zoo restaurants and pop-up booths. Admission information is available on the zoo's website.

WRITER'S BIO

Lakendra Lewis is an arts & entertainment journalist, editor, and author whose articles have appeared in Edible San Antonio Magazine, The Texas Observer, and San Antonio Christian Woman Magazine. She enjoys movies, music, cooking, singing, and telling other people's stories. You can contact her/read more of her work at lakendralewis.journoportfolio.com.

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FESTIVALE DE ANIMALES

[Aazoo.org/zoo-events/festival-de-animales](https://aazoo.org/zoo-events/festival-de-animales)

FIESTA GARTENFEST

[Southtownbeethoven.com](https://southtownbeethoven.com)

NIOSA®

Niosa.org

FIESTA 2021

FULL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

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SHOW ME YOUR MASK

Mysanantonio.com/showmeyourmask

TEXAS CAVALIERS RIVER PARADE

Texascavaliers.org