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Estes Park Home to Largest Midsummer Festival in Colorado

Estes Park – On June 28 and 29 Scandinavians will join hands in Bond Park in the center of downtown to celebrate the longest sunlight day of the year with a festival of light, flowers, food and music.

The 16th annual festival celebration begins at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday with the raising of the Midsummer Maypole followed by a traditional march of beautifully dressed families carrying flags from their native Scandinavian countries. Festivities begin at 10 a.m. on Sunday and conclude on both days at 5 p.m. All festival events are free.

The Scandinavian Festival is filled with music, dances and games for the entire family. Traditional folk dances from Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Finland will be performed by various groups from around the country and spectators will be invited to join in line and circle dances similar to the polka and schottis.

Among the featured performers will be the Lindsborg Folkdanslag, Fjellborg Vikings, M&M Dancers, Texas Leikarringen, Carnerlian, Ron Tomocik and Boulder's Spelmanslag.

A Viking tent village will take families back to a time of raids, wars, exploration and cultural change influencing much of Europe, England, Russia and the Americas. Historical re-enactments include demonstrations in textile arts, blacksmithing and carpentry, and in live combat using sword, axe, spear and shield.

And in true Scandinavian tradition, visitors can expect plenty of food and craft booths to interest and entice.

The summer solstice celebration has its origins in Pre-Christian practices when communities escaped to the country to spend a relaxing time in nature rejoicing in the long days of summer. Originally a fertility festival, Midsummer celebrations are filled with many customs and rituals and are considered by Scandinavians to be one of the greatest festivals of the year. Women wear flower wreaths on their heads and many people dress in traditional folk costume as they gather to sing and dance around the festive Midsummer Pole.

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