



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **WHAT'S HOT, NEW AND MUST-DO AT THE 32<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL MILWAUKEE IRISH FEST**

**MILWAUKEE, WI (July 12, 2012)** – Milwaukee Irish Fest 2012 promises to deliver all the fan-favorites and traditional fun that guests have come to expect. But what are some of the new and exciting things visitors can expect to see and experience at this year's festival? Let's take an inside look at what's new and 'must-do' for 2012.

### **SHOWCASE**

Every year, Milwaukee Irish Fest highlights a region of Ireland or a genre of music with direct lineage to the Emerald Isle. This year, the festival pays tribute to Ireland's influence on Bluegrass music. A special Bluegrass music showcase will come to life on the Celtic Roots stage, as well as other areas throughout the festival. In addition, the International Bluegrass Music Museum, Owensboro, Ken., will bring a traveling exhibit to the Culture Village.

### **MUSIC**

Music is at the heart of Milwaukee Irish Fest and, once again this year, the festival is bringing in the biggest names and most popular acts to perform on 16 stages. Artists back by popular demand include traditional favorites like Slide, Scythian, McPeake, Liz Carroll, Jackie Daly and Matt Cranitch, the Fuchsia Band and Moloney, Keane & O'Connell. Guests can rock out to acclaimed contemporary groups like Skerryvore, Enter the Haggis and Gaelic Storm, soak up folk balladeers like The High Kings and The Makem & Spain Brothers and enjoy the impeccable harmonies of The Henry Girls.

This year's featured Bluegrass music showcase will bring a unique sound to the festival grounds. Guests will be treated to a variety of Bluegrass artists, including headliners, Del McCoury and The Punch Brothers. McCoury is an International Bluegrass Music Association Hall of Famer and former lead singer of the band, Bill Monroe & The Blue Grass Boys. McCoury is a living link to the days when Bluegrass was made only in honkytonks and on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry. On the other end of the spectrum, is progressive Bluegrass band, The Punch Brothers. This Grammy award-winning band has appeared on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and *The Late Show with David Letterman* and recently produced a single for the blockbuster movie, "The Hunger Games."

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## **WHAT'S NEW FOR 2012 – ADD ONE**

### **CULTURE**

Milwaukee Irish Fest offers much more than music. Guests can immerse themselves in the culture of Ireland, including its language, arts, sports and commerce. The Cultural Village is the hub for all cultural activities, including: Genealogy, the Literary Corner, Hedge School, Theater, Archives, Harp Stage, Celtic Roots Stage and the Moore Street Market. A new addition for 2012 includes a traveling exhibit from the International Bluegrass Music Museum that will take center stage in the Cultural Pavilion.

### **SPORTS**

If you love sports, Irish Fest delivers. Guest can enjoy newly expanded tug-of-war and hurling areas, as well as a brand new sports pub featuring flat screen TVs showing Celtic sports including Gaelic football. Sports fans can also catch teams, including the Milwaukee Police and the Milwaukee Fire Department, competing in currach races (traditional Irish boats) on beautiful Lake Michigan.

### **DANCE**

If you are interested in learning about traditional Irish dance, be sure to stop by the Dance Pavilion where instructors will teach you the basics of traditional céilí and set dancing. If dancing isn't your style, sit back and enjoy amazing performances by six Milwaukee-area dance schools on stages throughout the grounds.

### **SHOPPING**

Outside of Ireland, there's no better place to shop for Irish goods than Milwaukee Irish Fest. The festival features more than 90 different vendors selling everything from soccer kits (jerseys) to fine art, jewelry, clothing, music and more. You can even pick up official Milwaukee Irish Fest merchandise to commemorate your visit, including shirts, hats, jackets, poster and other souvenirs.

### **FOOD & SPIRITS**

Be sure to bring your appetite to Irish Fest 2012. In addition to traditional favorites like corned beef, Irish stew and baked potatoes, the festival is cooking up a variety of new entries and drink specials. New items for 2012 include an Irish cream puff, Paddy's espresso and O'Leary's Lemonade (Jameson and lemonade).

### **FAMILY FUN**

Milwaukee Irish Fest is recognized for being one of the best "family-friendly" festivals in Milwaukee – there's literally something to do for kids of all ages. Family favorites include the Children's Area, which is the place to be for crafts and fun activities, including the Pot 'O Gold fishing game, Lilli-Putt miniature golf and the Lego activity area. There are also two family-friendly entertainment stages and an expanded Leprechaun Village where kids can learn about these mythical characters and see how they live. Finally, families can take a tour of Irish Fest with the Family Passport program, a fun and easy way to experience the entire festival.

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## WHAT'S NEW FOR 2012 – ADD TWO

### PROMOTIONS

The organizers of Milwaukee Irish Fest make it easy and affordable to enjoy the festival. There are a wide variety of special promotions and discounts that guests can take advantage of, including discounts for college students, seniors, military personnel and their families. In addition, the festival offers free or reduced admission during special promotional periods on Thursday, Friday and Sunday. There is free admission on Thurs., Aug. 16 between 5 and 10 p.m. with a donation of school supplies. On Fri., Aug. 17, guests can take advantage of **\$5 Buck Friday** between 4 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Finally, there is free admission on Sun., Aug. 19 directly following North America's largest outdoor mass, the Liturgy for Peace and Justice (non-perishable food donation required). To learn more about discounts and special promotions, visit [www.irishfest.com](http://www.irishfest.com) and click on the "Festival Info" tab. General admission for the festival is \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors 60+ and free for kids 12 and under.

### ABOUT MILWAUKEE IRISH FEST

Milwaukee Irish Fest is North America's largest celebration of Irish music and culture. The four-day festival showcases more than 100 entertainment acts on 16-stages at Henry W. Maier Festival Park on Milwaukee's lakefront. The annual festival occurs every third weekend in August. The 2012 festival takes place August 16 to 19.

More than just a festival, the Milwaukee Irish Fest organization is passionately committed to igniting a love of Irish culture in all people. With the help of more than 4,000 volunteers, Milwaukee Irish Fest teaches Ireland's music, dance, drama, sports, culture, children's activities and genealogy through year-round programming. For more information, visit [www.irishfest.com](http://www.irishfest.com).

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