

**PRESS RELEASE
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Visit the Celtic Nations Without Crossing the Pond

Music, Dance, Culture and Crafts of the Celts

St. Patrick's Day may be in March, but the 11th annual Celtic Fling and Highland Games will be celebrating June 27 and 28. This two day festival on the grounds of the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire in northern Lancaster County is more than a "wee bit" of Scotland, a dose larger than a "touch of the Irish" and a place where everyone can be Celtic even if it's just for the weekend.

The Fling is a Celtic party like no other honoring the seven Celtic Nations. It's a music festival, a dance competition, a sporting event, a cultural festival, an arts and crafts fair and a food fest all for just one ticket. From 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., the Fling salutes both traditional and contemporary Celtic heritage with non-stop music and dance, sanctioned competitions, foods, ales, crafts and more.

It's A Music Fest

Known as a showcase for the best in Celtic entertainment, the Fling will feature a rich blend of traditional and modern bands performing non-stop on eight stages. This year's lineup will introduce several new musical acts guests are sure to love.

Feverish and stampeding, **The Town Pants** lively renditions of traditional and contemporary Celtic-influenced tunes, combined with the group's original compositions, create a distinctive sound that has attracted fans from around the world.

One of the most talked about bands on the North American Celtic Festival circuit, **Rathkeltair** features three extraordinarily talented, highly experienced and well-traveled multi-instrumentalists and delivers one of the most dynamic, original, audience-friendly shows, which will be seen for the first time at the Fling.

First time Fling performer, **Fieldstone**, has drawn critical praise for their distinctive blend of high-octane Celtic coupled with a liberal dash of Appalachian and old-time fiddle pieces, along with a sprinkling of originals and reinterpretations of some contemporary songwriter fare sprinkled in.

Returning musical favorites add their voices and sounds to the Fling newcomers. Among them are Scotland's **Albannach** with their unique and exciting form of music and tribal drumming; **Brother**, the only independent band to have played the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, combines the deep pulse of the Australian didgeridoo with the soaring highs of the highland bagpipes; Toronto's **Enter the Haggis** who is a energy collision of Celtic, rock and world styles; **Ceann** who has been dubbed one of the most fun, entertaining and musically adventurous bands in the country; **Scythian**, dubbed by The Washington Post as "one of DC's most energetic and eclectic bands," falls nothing short of a Celtic "party band;" and **Icewagon Flu** whose songs are both radio friendly and underground comedic, making them at home in any Irish Pub or funk dance hall.

The Pipes Are Calling

No Celtic festival would be complete without the driving and majestic sounds of the pipe and drum bands. This year, the Fling will bring together two outstanding pipe and drum bands in a pipe-off that will leave the crowds on their feet cheering for more. Loch Rannoch, who is sometimes known as the punk rockers of the pipe world, and South-Central Pennsylvania's Premier Pipe Band, Ceol Neamh, will officially open the ceremonies, perform in processions throughout the day, and bagpipe battle unlike any other.

Everybody Dance Now

Irish dance claims the spotlight Saturday, June 27, with the fifth annual Celtic Fling Feis officially sanctioned by the North American Feis Commission and the only Feis in Central PA. Every year more dancers want to register to compete than there are registration spots. Because of that popular demand, the Feis will expand welcoming 1000 Irish dancers. Girls and boys, women and men ranging in ability from beginner to champion will compete in traditional hard shoe and elegant soft shoe jigs and reels that are at the heart of the Irish culture. With the elaborate costumes worn by the ladies costing up to \$3000 and the dancer's fancy footwork, the artistry of the Celtic Fling Feis is a must see part of the Fling.

Athletics Scottish Style

The Celtic Fling's Highland Games, officially sanctioned by the Mid-Atlantic Scottish Athletics Association, add to the thrill of Saturday's competitions. Pre-registered participants – both men and women – compete in judged events including the Scottish Hammer, the Sheaf Toss, the Clachneart or "Stone of Strength, and impressive Caber Toss involving an 18-foot tree trunk weighing up to 150 pounds. The athlete with the best overall combined performance earns the title "Athlete of the Day" and an automatic berth in the East Coast Championships.

Want to give it a try? Sunday will feature an interactive Highland Games demo where guests can learn to toss a caber with the best of them. Sign-ups are one half hour before the event.

The Grace of Tradition

The Fling, with its unique blend of the past and the present, will showcase a cornucopia of Celtic history, culture and tradition in the Celtic Traditions Glen. Historian and patriotic Scot, **David Ross**, will share his passion for the rich tapestry of Scottish history on the Storytelling Stage. Storytelling group **Tethera** will share the Bardic poetry and song that has flourished in the Celtic world since the Bronze Age. Singer-songwriter, **Allison Barber**, hailed by Irish America Magazine as a "new, young, and exciting talent that guarantees a great future for traditional and contemporary music," will capture audience's attentions with unique blend of traditional Irish music with American folk. A gathering of the Clans of the Highlands will offer the chance to explore clan histories and become familiar with the worthwhile missions the clans and societies maintain. The Irish Encampment, **Campa na BhFliann with Mike Haarstick**, will set up a living history camp and live life as it was done in Ireland centuries ago.

Border collies will be put through their paces on Bosworth Field responding to the whistle calls necessary to gather a flock of sheep just as it's been done for centuries throughout the Celtic Nations.

Arts, Crafts and Food, Oh My!

Twenty two feast kitchens will serve up a tasting tour of the Celtic Nations. Enjoy Corned Beef, once considered a delicacy fit for a king, with cabbage. Indulge in Mince and Taddies, Potato Leek Soup, Irish Bangers and Mash, Fish 'n' Chips, or a Scotch Egg.

Always a favorite is the Swashbuckler Brewery and Restaurant, a micro-brewery located on the festival grounds, featuring a variety of ale handcrafted onsite. It's a delicious menu of hops and malts and barley with four house favorites and the Red Beard Irish Red, an ale prepared exclusively for this event. Palates that prefer the vintner's art will find Mount Hope Wines and Renaissance honey-mead.

The craft marketplace alone makes the Fling a necessary two-day visit. Not only are all of the 100 resident Renaissance Faire shops open, but more than 50 guest artisans and merchants will be on hand offering a wide array of unique items from one-of-a-kind pieces including imported Irish wools and Scottish tartans to “just for the fun of it” souvenirs. Rounding out the list of artisans are weavers, spinners, leather workers, jewelers, sculptors, a demonstrating glass blower, herbalist, blacksmith and more.

Whether you take the high road or the low, the Celtic Fling and Highland Games is Saturday and Sunday, June 27 and 28, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. One-day admission is \$25.95 for adults and \$9.95 for children ages 5 to 11. Festival details, performer biographies and click-to-print advanced tickets can be purchased at PaRenFaire.com or by calling (717) 665-7021.

Friday Night Only!

Kick-off the Celtic Fling & Highland Games with a triple dose of Celtic rock at the Friday Night Concert, June 27. Known as the steerage band in the Hollywood blockbuster, *Titanic*, Gaelic Storm will break open the party once again, not on a ship, but at the Fling’s Friday Night Concert. Their energetic live performance that channels the rowdy communal feel of an Irish pub will have the audience dancing in the aisle and singing along all night long.

Celtic Fling favorites Ceann and Scythian will get the party started with their own unique Celtic sounds. Ceann has made a name for themselves as one of the most fun, entertaining and musically adventurous bands in the country with their mix in modern musical styles and cutting edge sense of humor. Scythian’s “Celtic with an edge” music ranges from traditional folk to rock with strains of gypsy and Klezmer in between making them unpredictable, spontaneous and contagiously festive.

Throughout the evening, fabulous foods and brews are available at the Swashbuckler Brew Pub. The gates open at 5:30PM and the music lasts until 10PM. Adult admission is \$19.95 and child admission, ages 5 to 11, is \$9.95.

The Celtic Fling & Highland Games is located on the grounds of the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire on Route 72, a half mile south of PA Turnpike exit 266, 14 miles east of Hershey and 15 miles north of Lancaster.

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