How to celebrate America's 250th in Baltimore



Spectators near the mast of the Pride of Baltimore watch fireworks burst during the city's Fourth of July Celebration at the Inner Harbor in 2024. Karl Merton Ferron/Staff File

By Mary Carole McCauley

Not up for a long trek to the nation's capital in triple-digit heat to celebrate America's 250th? A consortium of local groups have come up with a worthy alternative: a full day of activities in Baltimore on July 4, culminating in the traditional fireworks display and drone show.

More than half a dozen city offices, cultural organizations and tourism agencies joined forces in planning Baltimore's annual Independence Day celebration, from the Mayor's Office of Art, Culture and Entertainment to Pier Six Pavilion to the Cherry Hill Arts & Music Waterfront Festival, according to a news release from Create Baltimore. And many events are free.

"Downtown Baltimore hosts one of the largest Fourth of July celebrations in the city," Shelonda Stokes, president & CEO of Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, said in the release. She added that the 2026 celebration "highlights the power of collaboration while demonstrating how the city comes together to amplify Baltimore as a holiday destination."

Saturday's activities include:

Top of the World, 401 E. Pratt St., 27th floor. Family-friendly activities begin at 11 a.m., and the venue will provide a premier view of the 9:30 p.m. fireworks celebration. Admission costs $8 to $15 depending on time of day.

The Cherry Hill Arts & Music Waterfront Festival will transform Middle Branch Park, 3301 Waterview Ave., from 1 to 10 p.m. The 10th annual free festival will feature arts and crafts vendors, a children's village and historical reenactments. The festival's highlight is often the drone show and aerial display that launches at 9 p.m.

Pier Six Pavilion, 731 Eastern Ave. Free entertainment will be provided between 6 and 10:30 p.m. and will feature DJ Supreme, DJ Mr. Incredible and The Jonathan Gilmore Project.

Pratt Street Market returns from 7 to 11 p.m., bringing a plethora of food trucks and other vendors to McKeldin Square near Pratt and Light streets. The vendors' list includes Auntie Anne's pretzels, Smoke-N-Wheels BBQ, Taharka Brothers Ice Cream, Taco Loco's Mexican food and more.

Red, White & Groove Silent Disco will bring its high-energy but decidedly low-decibel vibe to Point Park, 1201 Point St., between 7:30 and 10:30 p.m. The admission price of $15 provides for the rental of a set of wireless headphones with multiple DJ channels, plus access to onsite food and beverage trucks featuring drinks prepared by DJ Mixology.

Festivities will literally end with a bang at 9:30 p.m. as fireworks light up the sky above the Inner Harbor. The barge housing the fireworks will be positioned between Point Park and Domino Sugar to ensure optimal views for attendees at the Inner Harbor and Federal Hill.

Have a news tip? Contact Mary Carole McCauley at mmccauley@baltsun.com and 410-332-6704.