



2018 Smithsonian Folklife Festival Sensory Guide

Welcome! This document will provide sensory information in advance of your visit to the Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

The Folklife Festival is an outdoor event. As is the case with most outdoor spaces and events, it can be sometimes difficult to predict the sensory environment as a result of weather, natural smells, and the volume of visitors on any given day. This guide will focus on an overview and sensory information for program areas/built structures located on the Festival site.

Please visit our webpage, festival.si.edu/visit, for general information about visiting the Festival.

Detailed Accessibility information can be found at festival.si.edu/accessibility.

The Festival

The Folklife Festival is an open-air, vibrant, and well-attended event. DC can be very hot and humid in the summer. It can be helpful to bring a water bottle (there are refill stations throughout the site) as well as comfortable shoes for walking, and clothes appropriate for the weather conditions. The Festival tends to be more crowded in the mid-late afternoon and on the weekends. As our Festival site is on the National Mall, July 4th will also bring large crowds to the area.

The Festival is divided into program areas, which each take up a different space at the Festival and on the Mall.

This year, the Festival contains two main program areas: **Armenia** and **Catalonia**. Many of our Festival Participants—people who come to share their cultures and experiences with us—will be excited to meet and talk to you about their countries! You can learn more about them at our Festival website, festival.si.edu.

There are other programs which are not part of our main program areas: two of our smaller programs are called **On the Move** and **Crafts of African Fashion**. *On the Move* focuses on experiences of immigration throughout the world, while *Crafts of African Fashion* focuses on African and African Diaspora fashion and crafts. On most days, there are **Evening Concerts** on our Festival Mainstage featuring musicians and

artists from around the world. You can find out more about these programs from our Festival schedule, festival.si.edu/schedule

The **Festival Marketplace** showcases works of art by our Festival participants. Items are available for purchase, and the Marketplace also features artisan demonstrations. The Marketplace is air conditioned—a treat on hot summer days!

Concessions are available for purchase and feature the cuisine of our featured countries. Additionally there are beverage and gelato stands. The Festival also features fresh fruit-sellers known as **Arabbers**, who use distinctive calls depending on the types of fruit they are selling.

The Armenia Program Area

The Armenia Program Area is made up of several different types of venues.

Stages:

- Aygi Stage: Featuring music and dance performances, as well as interactive dance workshops.
- Hyrasenyak: Featuring discussion based sessions and smaller music performances.
- Hatsatoun: Cooking Demonstrations

Craft Tents (featuring ongoing artisan demonstrations of cultural craft):

- Ironwork
- Stonework
- Clay
- Tonir (wood-fired oven)
- Woodworking
- Script
- Needlework
- Carpet weaving

Additional Spaces:

- Hazarashen: bakers making *lavash* flatbread in a *tonir* (wood-fired oven)
- Areni Cave: interactive experience that mimics an archaeological dig
- Wine Tent: highlighting discussions of Armenian wine-making and wine-tasting
- The Workshop: interactive “make-and-take” craft activities
- Tree of Life: brightly colored structure adorned with fabric pieces

Armenia Program Sensory Information (separated by sense):

SOUND:

- All of the **Stages** with amplified sound may be loud throughout the day. Check the schedule to find out when events and concerts are happening on various stages.
- Some of the **Craft/Artisan Tents** may be loud at times depending on the craft

SMELL:

- **Concessions and Dining Areas** will have food smells throughout the day
- **The Hatsatoun** will have food smells associated with cooking demonstrations
- **The Hazarashen** will have a wood-burning clay oven baking bread during most of the Festival. It may smell like charcoal or a barbecue.
- **The Iron/Blacksmith Tent** will have a fire burning throughout the day

SIGHT:

- The **Shadow Theater** will be a darkened space
- The **Iron/Blacksmith Tent** will have a fire.
- The **Areni Cave** will feature virtual reality glasses to view a cave interior.

TOUCH:

- The **Tree of Life** is covered with yarn and fabric items which you can touch
- The **Areni Cave** will have sandy areas to dig through and find items/artifacts.
- Some of the **Craft/Artisan Tents** may have things you can touch.

The Catalonia Program Area:

The Catalonia Program Area is made up of several different types of venues.

Stages:

- Plaça Major / Plaza Stage: Featuring music performances as well as large scale public art displays featuring movement, masks, puppetry, stilt walkers, etc.
- Ateneu Exchange: Featuring discussion based sessions and smaller music performances
- Dance Workshop: Primarily featuring music and dance performances, as well as interactive dance workshops.

Craft Tents (featuring ongoing artisan demonstrations of cultural craft):

- Street Decoration
- Mosaics
- Ceramics and Glasswork

- Iron (Blacksmith) and Wicker
- Dry stone work
- Net making / Knotting
- Herbal Products (soaps, sachets, etc.)

Additional Spaces:

- Imaginary Figures on Parade: interactive “make-and-take” craft activities
- Mediterranean Tent: featuring food demonstrations
- Street Décor Walkway
- Flower Carpet

Catalonia Program Sensory Information (separated by sense):

SOUND:

- All of the **Stages** with amplified sound may be loud throughout the day. Check the schedule to find out when events and concerts are happening on various stages.
- The **Plaça Major** will feature larger scale performances and demonstrations. On Saturday, June 30 at 5 PM, there will be a pyrotechnics display preceding the procession / parade.
- Some of the **Craft/Artisan Tents** may be loud at times depending on the craft

SMELL:

- **Concessions and Dining Areas** will have food smells throughout the day
- The **Plaça Major** may have smells of burning in association to fireworks and torch demonstrations (mainly in the late afternoon / evenings on selected days)
- The **Pyrenees Tent** and the area surrounding it will have a strong scent of natural herbs.
- The **Flower Carpet** might have strong floral smells
- The **Mediterranean Tent** will have food smells associated with cooking—particularly those of fish or baking bread
- The **Iron / Wicker Tent** will have a fire burning throughout the day

SIGHT:

- The **Plaça Major** may have lots of people, color, movement, and large scale figures such as puppets, masks, stilt-walkers, and the “big heads.”
- The **Flower Carpet** will be made up different flowers of many colors.
- The **Street Decorations Walkway** will feature colorful decorations created by visitors using plastic water bottles.
- The **Imaginary Figures on Parade** tent will have large puppet heads and other types of traditional Catalonian celebratory figures on display.

- The **Human Towers** will be built in the center plot of the National Mall during the second weekend of the Festival (July 6, 7, and 8). These teams sometimes have as many as 150 people working together!
- Every evening at 5 PM, there will be a **Procession** beginning at **Plaza Major** and proceeding throughout the Festival site.

TOUCH:

- Many of the **Craft / Artisan Tents and Areas** will feature tactile objects with a wide range of textures including fabric, stone, ceramics, rope, flowers/plants

Additional Festival Information:

- The **Festival Mainstage** will feature nightly evening concerts beginning at 6:30 PM. These events may be quite loud and crowded. To self-regulate and reduce sensory input, we recommend sitting further away from the stage (towards the Washington Monument). Even if seated a few blocks back on the National Mall, you will still be able to hear the concert clearly.
- The **Festival Marketplace** is located just north of the Armenia Program area directly in front of the National Museum of American History. The Marketplace features a wide range of artisan crafts and is highly visual, and also features occasional demonstrations on a small stage area toward the back of the space. The Marketplace is air-conditioned. Generally the Marketplace will be quieter during the morning and on weekdays.
- Should you need to take a short break, there are several areas in close distance to the Festival site.
 - Moving east of the Festival site (towards the US Capitol), particularly on the south side, you will most likely encounter less crowds and noise.
 - The Smithsonian Castle tends to be a quieter museum space. It is air-conditioned, and has restrooms, and a café.
 - Behind the Smithsonian Castle is the Smithsonian Gardens and has many seating areas where you can rest among a more natural setting.
 - The Freer | Sackler Gallery also tends to be a quieter museum space.

We hope that this information is useful to you as you prepare to visit the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Should you need any further information, please call us at 202-633-6483.

We look forward to your visit to the Festival!