

The New York Times

Free Concerts, Festivals and Events in New York This Summer

In need of good times that don't cost a dime? You're in luck: As the weather heats up, the opportunities to have free fun are everywhere in the city. Here are some of our favorites.



By Danielle Dowling

May 15, 2026, 5:01 a.m. ET



The United States Coast Guard Cutter Eagle will lead the Parade of Tall Ships in New York Harbor on July 4. [Sail4th 250](#)

Battery Park City Summer

Through Aug. 28 at Robert F. Wagner Jr. Park, Rockefeller Park and other locations in Lower Manhattan; bpca.ny.gov.

The green spaces in Battery Park City provide a magnificent setting for concerts and celebrations of all kinds — Juneteenth, the Swedish Midsummer Festival, the River & Blues series, the City of Water Day — with their views of the Hudson River and the Statue of Liberty. Those vistas also make the neighborhood’s parks the place to be for this year’s U.S. Semiquincentennial events, like the Sail 4th 250 Parade of Tall Ships on July 4 and Battery Dance’s “America 250: Moving Together” on July 25. Ailey II closes out the summer programming at Wagner Park with a performance followed by a movement workshop.

River to River Festival

June 19-Sept. 27 on Governors Island and Robert F. Wagner Jr. Park, Manhattan; lmcc.net/river-to-river-2026.

Now in its 25th year, this festival established in the aftermath of Sept. 11 honors the city’s resilience and creativity with a few months of cultural programming. This year, at Governors Island Arts Center, the lineup will include Okwui Okpokwasili and Peter Born’s movement piece “[my tongue is a blade](#)” on June 19 and 20 and the 5th of July Weekend Spectacular from the Catch performance series. At Wagner Park, there will be a concert from Esperanza Spalding on Aug. 8 and a commissioned work from the choreographer Bill T. Jones on Sept. 10, 12 and 13. Back at the Arts Center, Leslie Wayne’s landscape paintings of melting icebergs and multimedia pieces on climate science will be on view from July 24 to Sept. 27.



Members of Battery Dance at last year's Battery Dance Festival. The event is at Robert F. Wagner Jr. Park from Aug. 10 to 16. Claudio Rodriguez

Battery Dance Festival

Aug. 10-16 at Robert F. Wagner Jr. Park, Manhattan; batterydance.org.

For five nights in August, starting at 7, New York's longest-running free dance festival presents troupes with local and global roots on a stage at the edge of Manhattan, with the setting sun as a backdrop. This year's lineup includes companies such as Soles of Duende, Bodysonnet, Jon Lehrer Dance Company, Estúdio Movimento em Foco and, of course, Battery Dance.