

San Jose Mercury News

Holi just one of many colorful springtime festivals

March 17, 2016





Sunita Raj performs during a celebration Holi at On Lok Lifeways' Peralta PACE Center in Fremont, Calif., on Thursday, March 16, 2017. The celebration put on by Raj, owner of Sun Bollywood dance studio, incorporates dance, fitness and exercise in an entertaining program. (Dan Honda/Bay Area News Group)

People love to celebrate. Whether it's a birthday, a wedding or the Fourth of July, we enjoy having a reason to kick back and have a good time. This is especially true for festivals that welcome spring and summer.

The rest of the world also likes to party. Here are some celebrations you may not know about.

Holi, the festival of colors, is an Indian holiday that celebrates the victory of good over evil. The early-spring day — this year it's March 13 — is spent outside eating, partying and watching dancers in brightly colored clothing. Participants "paint" one another with colored powder and get doused repeatedly with colored water. Wearing old clothes is a must.

People gather at a park in Zenica, Bosnia, each March to take part in Cimburijada, otherwise known as the Festival of Scrambled Eggs. The eggs are cooked in huge pots and served to residents and visitors alike to welcome spring. If you're allergic to eggs, stay away from this one!

Carabao is a water buffalo found in the Philippines, and the Carabao Festival is a day of dancing and revelry in May that celebrates the robust animal that plays such a vital role in Filipinos' farming economy. The animals are washed and scrubbed before a parade in which 20 or more of them — many decorated with paint and colorful ribbons — lumber through the streets.

Cooper's Hill is a steep, grassy knoll near Gloucester, England, that is longer than a football field. The Cooper's Hill cheese roll is a late May event in which participants race one another to beat a nine-pound cheese round to the bottom of the hill. The event attracts lots of contestants and spectators but is harder than it sounds. Lots of contestants bite the dust before they reach the finish line. The winner gets the cheese.

The Boryeong Mud Festival takes place each summer near Seoul, South Korea. Tons of mud are trucked from the Boryeong mud flats to a beach area near the event. People participate in lots of activities, including a mud pool, mud skiing and mudslides. By the time the celebration is over, anyone coated in goopy or dried mud can take a short walk to the beach for a quick bath.

La Tomatina is an organized tomato fight that takes place in Buñol, Spain, every August. The festival's origins are unclear, but that hasn't dampened anyone's enthusiasm. The battle lasts for about an hour, and participants have to throw squashed tomatoes to reduce the risk of injury. When the spectacle is done, both the people and the streets are covered with tomato guts. Firetrucks then begin the difficult task of hosing everything down.

If you've ever visited Thailand, you may have run into a monkey or two that tried to steal your lunch. The Monkey Buffet Festival in Lopburi celebrates how the local monkeys and humans coexist. In case you're starting to worry, the buffet is not about eating the monkeys! Rather, the sneaky simians are provided with mountains of food to gorge themselves. The creator of the event, which is held each November, is a businessman who saw it as a way to bring tourists to the area.

<http://www.mercurynews.com/2017/03/16/like-cheese-mud-or-monkeys-then-head-to-a-festival/>