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## African American Music Festivals Make for Cool Summer Nights in Virginia

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**RICHMOND, Va.** – Visitors longing for a cool way to spend hot summer evenings are finding solace in Virginia’s rich and spirited African American music festivals. Nationally known musicians perform throughout the summer at beautiful destinations from the Atlantic Ocean to the Blue Ridge Mountains, making these festivals the perfect getaway for music lovers.

The **Hampton Jazz Festival**, June 22-24 at the Hampton Coliseum, is the largest music festival on the east coast with big names to match. Music lovers enjoy all the jazz, R & B and blues they can handle from artists like Patti LaBelle, Maze featuring Frankie Beverly, the Dizzy Gillespie All-Star Big Band, and Jill Scott. This legendary festival is in its 40<sup>th</sup> year and is a must for jazz fans.

For music lovers who are ready to party non-stop, check out the **Afrikan American Festival** June 22-23 in Hampton at Mill Point Park. Rap pioneer Curtis “Kurtis Blow” Walker will headline the musical entertainment portion of this festival. This family-oriented event features more than 60 vendors who will display authentic and original black art, artifacts and handmade crafts. Visitors will also find plenty of down-home cooking to satisfy their appetite for great food.

The **Umoja Festival** held August 3-5 will take place at the NTELOS Pavilion in Portsmouth, one of the best places to enjoy the waterfront in the city renowned for historic homes. This African American celebration includes national recording artists, African dancers and heritage and trolley tours.

Just blocks away from historic Jackson Ward in Richmond, experience a celebration of African-American folk life at the **Down Home Family Reunion**, held August 17-18 at Abner Clay Park. This celebration of dancing, storytelling, soul food, music and children’s activities are what friends and family wait for all year long. In commemoration of America’s 400th anniversary, Richmond is encouraging and promoting homecomings and reunions throughout the region in 2007.

Get a taste of soul food and live music at the **African-American Heritage Day** August 18 at Chippokes Plantation State Park in Surry County. Reconnect with family roots by celebrating African-American history and culture. Enjoy artisan displays, live music, educational programs and food that ushers in memories of grandma’s house on a Sunday afternoon.

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## NEWS

Visitors allow the sand to tickle their toes while jamming to sweet sounds at the **Soul Music Beachfest**, August 24-25 on Virginia Beach. Enjoy diversified music genres of soft rock, jazz, Latin, and R & B against the rhythmic background of the Atlantic Ocean at this two-day event.

Surrounded by the Blue Ridge Mountains and deeply rooted in blues music is Staunton's **African American Heritage Festival**, held September 15-16 in Gypsy Hill Park. The food doesn't get any better and the music is sure to relax the soul. Vendors from all over the nation will be on hand with authentic African fabric, clothing, handmade jewelry and artwork. Many area churches will close their doors and join festival participants in the park for Sunday morning service. The event wraps with a gospel extravaganza.

For more information about Virginia's music festivals and to start planning a trip to Virginia, visit [www.Virginia.org](http://www.Virginia.org) or call 1-800-932-5827.

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