



Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs
A CAPRA Accredited Agency

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gainesville Goes Medieval

For two weekends each year, the clear blast of trumpets mingles with the laughter of children as the kingdom of Hoggetowne opens its gates. Performers in period garb sing and dance in the streets, while knights joust on horseback and magicians captivate the crowds. Tucked away in the enchanted forest of the Alachua County Fairgrounds in Gainesville, Florida, this medieval marketplace comes to life Jan. 28-29 and Feb. 3-5.

Hoggetowne is home to more than 160 talented artisans from across the country who journey to the Faire to sell and demonstrate their wares, offering medieval crafts such as weaving, blacksmithing, leatherworking, wood carving and glass blowing. Fairgoers can browse through a selection of delicate medieval jewelry or glimpse into their future with a mystical fortune teller.

“Visitors should arrive early to take full advantage of the exciting medieval magic,” said Linda Piper, faire coordinator. “Each morning all the entertainers greet the Hoggetowne guests as the city gates open to this enchanted kingdom.”

The sound of applause echoes from the Faire’s nine stages, where the forgotten skills of full-flight falconry, gripping aerial acrobatics and old-world magic come to life. Jugglers, knife throwers and gypsy dancers add to the excitement as they fill the streets of Hoggetowne.

“Visitors should plan to spend the entire day enjoying Hoggetowne’s enticing blend of artwork, period music and medieval traditions,” Piper said. “People wait all year for this highly anticipated event.”

One of the faire’s most popular attractions is the joust. The audience cheers on their champion as the armored knights charge across the field wielding lances or swords as they battle on horseback. Afterwards, children can meet the knights and their magnificent steeds.

This year’s theme is “Eleanor of Aquitaine, Queen of Hearts,” one of the greatest queens in history. Come see as she defies the social constraints of her time and forges her own legend!

Visitors can also engage in traditional medieval games of chance and skill. They can shoot arrows or hurl battle axes at targets, or they can navigate their way through a winding maze. Thrilling, human-powered push rides, as well as camel and pony rides, attract eager children and adventurous adults.

Children can also enjoy “Discount Friday” Friday, Feb. 3, in which thousands of students from Florida journey to Hoggetowne for a day of face painting, hair braiding and medieval crafts. General admission tickets are reduced and larger discounts are available to school groups that register in advance.

“It’s so great to be able to provide this educational opportunity to children who are learning about medieval times in their schools,” Piper said. “This is a chance for students to see the Middle Ages come to life.”

After roaming the streets of Hoggetowne and working up an appetite, both adults and children can enjoy a feast fit for a king at the food court. The tempting aromas of freshly baked pastries, blooming onions, sweet potato fries, giant turkey legs and succulent ribs attract scores of lords and ladies.

Produced by the City of Gainesville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department, the Hoggetowne Medieval Faire draws more than 53,000 guests each year. On Saturdays and Sundays, the faire is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and tickets cost \$17 for adults and \$7 for youth ages 5 to 17. The faire is free for children under 5. Discount Friday (Feb. 3,) is open from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., and admission is \$8 for adults and \$3.50 for youth. Pets are not permitted. The Alachua County Fairgrounds is located east of Gainesville at 3100 NE 39th Ave., adjacent to Gainesville Regional Airport. Tickets may be purchased at the gate or avoid waiting in line and experience the convenience of purchasing tickets in advance online at www.HoggetowneFaire.com, at any Domino’s Pizza in Gainesville or in person at the Thomas Center. For more information, call 352-334-ARTS or visit www.HoggetowneFaire.com.