

Ribs, bibs, bloomin' onions back for this weekend's Ribfest

Dwayne Gretzky and April Wine are set to headline this year's Aurora Ribfest, but they're just a flavour of all that the Town's tastiest annual event has in store.

Running from Friday, August 25 through Sunday, August 27, back once again will be the ribs, bloomin' onions, and all the other tasty treats that draw people out to Machell Park year after year, but this year will also feature a midway, family-friendly activities, and a live music stage that will barely get cold!

?We're hopeful our headliners are a strong focal point, but I think similar to last year it's the supporting acts throughout the day that are almost equitably as strong,? says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. ?We're opening up on Friday with Bernadette Connors, who is on such a high with her musical career, so having her open at Ribfest with her massive range of vocals and unmatchable energy, I can't visualize a better way to kick off the weekend.?

Additional bands on the opening day include Green River Revival, a Tribute to CCR, Desire: A Tribute to U2, which Ms. Ware says is back by popular demand, and new to Aurora this year will be a tribute to the music of Joan Jett.

Ysi Cattle and the Kowboys, a band fronted by former Aurora Teen Idol Ysabel Cattle, is also on the roster.

?Since they performed last year, they have launched a new album and their musical career is really taking off,? says Ware. ?It's really a privilege for us to be able to snag them and be able to book them in for this weekend. Just when you think you've finished dancing for the weekend, I think Sunday is really strong. We're fortunate to have our 2023 Aurora Teen Idol, Katelyn Shulver come and give us a show before she moves off to university. Then we move into the tribute to Shania Twain with Donna Huber, who always hits a home run. And it has been a few years and long overdue to have Marshall Dane in the house, which we're excited about. Given the elements this year and the sadness surrounding Gordon Lightfoot, I think it is really quite poetic to close off Ribfest this year with Classic Lightfoot Live, a tribute to Gordon Lightfoot, and I am really excited to see the sun start to set Sunday night on a big weekend, listening to the sounds of Gordon.?

As music fills the air, other kinds of fun will be very close by.

Ware says a midway will be a returning feature for all three Ribfest days this year and a free children's activity zone, running from 2 ? 5 p.m., will be a popular feature on Saturday and Sunday featuring mini-golf, face painting, crafts and more.

?We've got a laser tag light up inflatable to work with and a few other activities, which will add a bit more excitement for families, and these games and activities are something even I can't wait to dive into, so I am hoping it will appeal to all ages,? she says.

?And we all know that Ribfest is about the ?ribs, bibs and sauce,' but I personally can't wait to dive into the first fire-roasted yam of the weekend and the outstanding roasted corn on the cob. We have bloomin' onions, which is always the annual treat to have, and then there will be fresh churros and Beavertails on site ? and we have new vegan food vendors this time around. It's going to be good for all appetites.?

For more on Ribfest and this year's lineup of food, music and activities, visit aurora.ca/ribfest.

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