


# What to do around Seattle this week: Festival of Colors, St. Patrick's Day and more

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 **1 of 3** | The Festival of Colors involves throwing colored powder, or gulal, to celebrate the arrival of spring and represent unity. Many participants wear white, allowing the colors to pop. (Byron Dazey / Creative Flashes Photography)

By [Sarah-Mae McCullough](#)

*Seattle Times features producer*

## What's Happening March 17-23

Three, two, one and ... hundreds of people, many wearing white, hurl fistfuls of colorful powder into the air. Then it rains back down, covering the crowd with vibrant hues of purple, red, green and more.

“It’s nothing but just a dust of colors” over “an ocean of people,” artistic director Latha Sambamurti said, describing a typical scene at Redmond’s annual Festival of Colors at Marymoor Park, held this year on March 18 from noon to 5 p.m. The brightly colored powder is used to celebrate the arrival of spring and the theme of unity — as people are coated with color, they start to resemble each other more closely.

NorthWest Share, a Seattle-based nonprofit, organizes the Festival of Colors each year to create “cultural bridges in the community,” Sambamurti said. Although the event has roots in Holi, a Hindu holiday celebrating love and the triumph of good over evil, the Redmond festival welcomes community members of all backgrounds and denominations to sing, dance and eat together.

Approximately every 15-30 minutes, local officials and community leaders participate in “color countdowns” and create new bursts of color by throwing the powder from a stage. (The powder is vegetable-based and made without harsh chemicals — outside powders aren’t allowed in the festival.) Meanwhile, there is continuous dancing and music, as well as NorthWest Share food stalls selling everything from pizza and pop to pav bhaji (a veggie stew served with a dinner roll), pakoras (a crispy fritter), mango lassi and chai.

This year, several groups will perform and interact with the audience: Indian folk dancer Aakansha Maheshwari and her L.A.-based dance and fitness group BollyPop; Indian folk and improvisational dancer Malini Taneja; Beats of Redmond Dhol Tasha Pathak, a nonprofit dedicated to preserving Indian cultural heritage; and Portland’s DJ Anjali & The Incredible Kid, known for mixing Indian and Latin American sounds.

All of the performing groups plan to interact with the audience, whether leading workshops or teaching some dance moves. “Nobody moves away from the stage” because the back-to-back performances are so engaging, Sambamurti said. And when the festival ends at 5 p.m., “people don’t go away. They’re full of energy and joy — they don’t like leaving,” she added, laughing.

There’s also a color contest: Especially color-coated audience members will be called up on stage to receive gift certificates.

Sambamurti recommended wearing white to let the colorful powder pop, or any old clothes you don’t mind getting dirty such as jeans and a light-colored T-shirt. She also suggested a jacket to stay warm outside and sunglasses if you want to keep the powder away from your eyes.

NorthWest Share’s Festival of Colors runs noon-5 p.m. March 18 at Marymoor Park (6046 W. Lake Sammamish Parkway N.E., Redmond). The festival is free, but it’s recommended to [buy color packets \(\\$10\)](#) and, if you’d like, [order food in advance online](#). To register, visit: [st.news/festival-of-colors](https://www.st.news/festival-of-colors). To learn more about the Festival of Colors and other NorthWest Share events, visit: [nwshare.org/](https://www.nwshare.org/)

## St. Patrick’s Day Events

With the Irish holiday arriving quickly (March 17), here are several events in the Puget Sound area to celebrate with.

### St. Patrick’s Day Mass — March 17

While Seattle’s Irish Week officially began March 10, there’s still one more weekend of celebrations to catch. The Mass will include readings and prayers from the Mass of St. Patrick, as celebrated in Ireland, and an Irish choir leading the singing. Noon. *7916 First Ave. N.W., Seattle*; [st.news/IrishWeek](https://www.st.news/IrishWeek)

### Conor Byrne St. Patrick’s Day Music Festival — March 17

For its annual St. Patrick’s celebration, the Ballard-based Irish pub will bring in the Evergreen Irish Dancers and several musical artists to perform, including Sam Russell & The Harborsrats, who will play U2 covers, and the Celtic folk-rock group Belfast Bandits. Tickets for the 21-and-older event are \$15 at the door. Doors open at noon, and the entertainment runs from 12:30 p.m. to after 11:30 p.m. *5140 Ballard Ave. N.W., Seattle*; [conorbyrnepub.com/#/events](https://conorbyrnepub.com/#/events)

## St. Patrick's Day Celebration at Anderson School — March 17

Enjoy food and drink holiday specials, including Irish takes on sandwiches, fries, coffee and stout, and live music at this McMenamins event. Celtic and indie artists will take the stage; plus, there will be a roaming bagpiper. Live music plays 1-8 p.m. Admission is free; order food separately. *18607 Bothell Way N.E., Bothell*; [st.news/anderson-school-st-patricks](https://www.seattletimes.com/st-news/anderson-school-st-patricks)

## St. Patrick's Day with The Gothard Sisters — March 18

Join Edmonds Celtic folk group The Gothard Sisters for an evening of Irish ballads, step-dancing, fiddle tunes and stories. Buy tickets [online](#); \$15-\$30. 7:30-10 p.m. *410 Fourth Ave. N., Edmonds*; [st.news/gothardsisters](https://www.seattletimes.com/st-news/gothardsisters)

## Geoffrey Castle St. Patrick's Celebration — March 18

A live band and Irish dancers will join electric six-string violinist Geoffrey Castle on stage for this musical performance at the Auburn Performing Arts Center. Buy tickets [online](#); \$30/adult, \$25/senior or student. *702 Fourth St. N.E., Auburn*; [st.news/geoffrey-castle-st-patricks](https://www.seattletimes.com/st-news/geoffrey-castle-st-patricks)

## What else is happening

Here are some other events happening March 17-23 in the Puget Sound area. If you would like to submit an event for consideration, please email your event details to [weekend@seattletimes.com](mailto:weekend@seattletimes.com).

## INTONATIONS: Songs from the Violins of Hope — March 19

This Music of Remembrance concert — part of a program that remembers the Holocaust and honors through music the resilience of those persecuted — features Grammy-winning mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke. Spectrum Dance Theater dancers will also be performing Donald Byrd's choreography. 5 p.m. Buy tickets [online](#); \$50-\$65. *200 University St., Seattle*; [musicofremembrance.org/](https://musicofremembrance.org/)

## Poetry for Life: Celebrate World Poetry Day — March 21

Seattle Civic Poet Shin Yu Pai and local organizations La Sala and Seattle Escribe co-curated this virtual bilingual poetry night with local Spanish-speaking poets. Readers include Raul Sanchez, Claudia Castro Luna and Juan Carlos Reyes. 7 p.m. Register [online](#); free. The event is online only. [st.news/poetry-for-life](https://www.seattletimes.com/st-news/poetry-for-life)

## Future File

## Cherry Blossom Festival: Songs From the Violins of Hope — March 24-April 2

In its second year, this festival celebrates spring and the historic cherry blossom viewing in the University of Washington Quad and will feature more than 70 University District businesses selling cherry- and blossom-themed food and goods. *Pierce Lane, Seattle*; [udistrictseattle.com/cherryblossomfestival](http://udistrictseattle.com/cherryblossomfestival)

## Festival of Colors — March 25

If you missed NorthWest Share's Festival of Colors on March 18, all hope is not lost! This festival, organized by the Phinney Neighborhood Association, also includes music, dancing, food and color-throwing to celebrate spring and connection. 1-3 p.m. Buy tickets [online](#); \$7-\$12. 6615 Dayton Ave. N., Seattle; [phinneycenter.org/calendar/holi23/](http://phinneycenter.org/calendar/holi23/)

**Sarah-Mae McCullough:** [smccullough@seattletimes.com](mailto:smccullough@seattletimes.com); Sarah-Mae McCullough is the *Seattle Times* features producer

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