



# Best Easter Parades Across The US

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It's been often said that everyone loves a parade and Easter parades are certainly no exception. An annual rite of spring that dates back to 19th century New York, the Easter Parade has long been a very popular cultural event and many other cities across the country and throughout the world [host](#) an assortment of Easter parades that come in all shapes and sizes. While the New York version should always receive top billing amongst the best Easter Parades in the U.S., there are many others that deserve merit. In addition to the oldest and most famous, here is a look at just five of the very best Easter Parades in the U.S.

## Easter On Parade, Richmond

A Richmond tradition for nearly 50 years, [Easter on Parade](#) is one of signature events in Virginia's [capital city](#) and among the country's longest running Easter parades. Drawing more than 25,000 annually, the crowd-pleasing event features a large number of participants that will parade up and down four blocks of the city's famed Monument Avenue amid its many stately homes and historic statues. Most parade participants and many of their family pets will be dressed in festive, sometimes inventive Easter-themed attire, in addition to a dashing display of colorful Easter bonnets, but even curious onlookers will arrive in their Sunday best. Hosted by Venture Richmond, this daylong event is admission free and requires Monument Avenue to be closed to vehicular traffic on Easter Sunday between 1-5 p.m. Easter on Parade will also feature several family-friendly activities and attractions, such as local arts and crafts, great food, live music and an assortment of children's activities including a petting zoo and balloon artistry. Among the leading highlights of this popular annual event are the Pet Bonnet and People Bonnet Showcases – two distinct Easter bonnet contests that will be held on the Zayde R. Dotts Main Stage at Allen Avenue. Located in the Fan-shaped District of Richmond, [Monument Avenue](#) is a National Historic District and managed by the National Parks Service (NPS). Among the top recommendations for hotel accommodations are the [Hilton Richmond](#), the [Westin Richmond](#) and the magnificent [Jefferson Hotel](#).

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## New Orleans Historic French Quarter Easter Parade

In a city that hosts more than 70 parades for its world famous Mardi Gras celebrations, it should come as no surprise to discover that there is also more than one Easter Parade in [New Orleans](#), which just so happens to be celebrating its [Tricentennial](#) this year. The first of three parades held on Easter Sunday is the [Historic French Quarter Easter Parade](#), which will feature colorfully dressed participants, who much like the enormous Mardi Gras parades, will pass out trinkets while riding in vintage convertibles and horse or mule-drawn carriages. The event begins at 9:45 a.m. in front of the renowned Antoine's Restaurant, then will wind its way through the Vieux Carre (oldest) section of the city before arriving at St. Louis Cathedral, America's oldest

cathedral in continuous use. The parade will then pause for an 11 a.m. Mass at the cathedral, then resume at noon in Jackson Square. Also not to be missed is the 35th Annual [Chris Owens French Quarter Easter Parade](#) at 1 p.m., led by NOLA celebrity performer Chris Owens. Also on the agenda for Easter Sunday in “the Big Easy” is the popular [Gay Easter Parade](#) and the annual Easter Bonnet Contest at Good Friends Bar off of Bourbon Street. Among the suggested hotel accommodations near or along the parade routes are legendary spots like [Roosevelt New Orleans](#), [Hotel Monteleone](#), [Royal Sonesta New Orleans](#) and the recently reopened [Jung Hotel and Residences](#). After the parades or for Easter brunch, visitors might want to dine at one of the many outstanding restaurants in the French Quarter, in particular [Brennan’s](#), specializing in superb Creole cuisine and the creator of the iconic Bananas Foster and [Arnaud’s Restaurant](#), one of the famous Grand Dames of Creole Dining, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, in addition to the highly recommended, James Beard Award-winning [Commander’s Palace](#) in the Garden District.

### **New York City Easter Parade**

The grandest, the oldest and certainly the most famous Easter Parade of all is the [New York City Easter Parade](#) along Fifth Avenue. A New York City tradition that dates back to the 1870s, this lively event is not nearly as organized or as large as the city’s best known parades, such as the St. Patrick’s Day Parade and the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade., and it’s not even as large as it once was. But coupled with its Easter Bonnet Festival, New York’s Easter Parade is still a major crowd pleaser and everyone is invited to join in on the festivities along one of the world’s most famous streets. Inspired by Irving Berlin’s 1933 song “Easter Parade” and its subsequent namesake 1948 film starring Judy Garland and Fred Astaire, the Easter Parade and Easter Bonnet festival is marked by a procession of people wearing their Sunday best and the most colorful and most elaborate Easter bonnet that even fans of Carmen Miranda’s colorful fruit hats would love. With the road closed to vehicular traffic between 10 a.m.- 4 p.m., the Easter Parade allows participants a rare opportunity to stroll along one of the city’s most famous roadways while taking in what is expected to be a lovely, spring-like day. The parade will begin near St. Patrick’s Cathedral around 49th Street then proceed up to 57th Street and the subways are sure to be filled with more interesting characters than normal. Suggested hotels near the parade route include the [Gotham Hotel](#), [Lotte New York Palace](#), [Hotel Elysee](#) and [Loews Regency](#).

### **Philadelphia Easter Promenade**

With a Super Bowl victory still fresh on everyone’s minds, the [Philadelphia Easter Promenade](#) takes an extra special meaning this year in the [City of Brotherly Love](#). Now in its 87th year, the annual Easter Promenade continues to be led by longtime MC, colorful local celebrity and jeweler Henri David, and will again travel along the city’s famous South Street beginning at 12:30 p.m., while allowing anyone to join in on the day’s festivities. Everyone is encouraged to wear rabbit ear headbands and their Easter best, as celebrity judges will also be on hand to select the best dressed in several categories, including Best Dressed Little Boy and Girl, Best Dressed Woman, Best Dressed Man, Best Dressed Family, Best Easter Bonnet and even Best Dressed Pet. Attendees can also enjoy special appearances from Mr. and Mrs. Peter Cottontail, live music from bands like the Bunny Hop and the Philadelphia Freedom Band. Easter brunches and special events will also be held at several of the South Street area’s most popular restaurants, including Brauhaus Schmitz, Pizzeria Stella, The Twisted Tail and Whetstone Tavern. Several outstanding hotels are located not far from the Easter

Promenade, including the [Hilton Philadelphia](#) at Penn's Landing, [Rittenhouse Hotel](#) and [Hotel Monaco Philadelphia](#).

### **San Francisco Union Street Easter Parade & Spring Celebration**

A single day event that celebrates and showcases [San Francisco's](#) diverse community, the [Union Street Easter Parade and Spring Celebration](#) is now in its 27th year. For the past 24 years, the event has hosted a small yet very lively Easter Parade along the City's vibrant Union Street, best known for its exceptional collection of boutique shops and upscale restaurants. Known as the "Biggest Little Parade in San Francisco", the informal Easter Parade starts at 2 p.m.. and will feature classic and vintage convertibles, local marching bands and dance troupes, a motorized San Francisco cable car and an assemblage of participants dressed in Easter-themed attire including people wearing Easter bonnets and simple bunny ears, and bunny costumes. Prior to the Easter Parade, the event's Spring [Celebration](#) will begin at 10 a.m. along five blocks of Union Street between Gough and Fillmore Streets and will host a variety of children's and family-friendly attractions and activities throughout the day, such as kid's rides, games, gourmet food and an Easter Bonnet Competition on the Main Stage. Suggested hotel accommodations in San Francisco include upscale boutiques like the [Argonaut Hotel](#), [Hotel Zephyr](#) and [Hotel Zoe](#) in the Fisherman's Wharf area, the [luxury Hotel Vitale](#) along the scenic Embarcadero and the recently renovated luxury [boutique Galleria Park Hotel](#) near Union Square.