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# CHECK OUT HAMTRAMCK LABOR DAY FESTIVAL!

BY: MELANIE GRINNELL | AUGUST 29, 2022



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Back in 1980, the Dodge Main Plant in Hamtramck closed. Many residents lost jobs and the city lost millions in revenue. But in the face of the greatest crisis the city had ever faced...they decided to party. And the [Hamtramck Labor Day Festival](#) was born.

Now, 42 years later, in the same area as the old Dodge plant on the Detroit-Hamtramck border, GM's 4.5 million square foot [Factory ZERO](#) is ramping up to begin production of electric vehicles like the new [Chevrolet Silverado EV](#) (available fall 2023). And the people of Hamtramck are still throwing the best Labor Day party in Detroit.

### The Hamtramck Labor Day Festival has a special sparkle

You will find your typical festival stuff at the festival, of course. There are rides and games for the kiddos, you can listen to a great band, buy art or clothes, and have some drinks. You can stuff your face with elephant ears and corn dogs well past the point of regret. You can go on an assortment of fun rides that will spin you all around and make you further lament your choices. In standard festival offerings, Hamtramck delivers. But it also brings a little something extra to the table. There's something sparkling in the city's working-class grit. While perhaps less polished than certain other Labor Day festivals, that's part of its charm. And it's free!

With the festival's Polish roots, you can expect to find a Polish platter that is straight-up Grandma-level. And, you can expect to do at least one or two Jell-o shots. Being that the city is known for being Detroit's melting pot, you can also expect a day of being stirred right up in the city's diversity. And, of course, you

can experience a fabulous selection of foods from other cultures, including options from a Halal food truck, East African delights from [Baobab Fare](#), Doner Kebab and Balkan delicacies from [Balkan House](#), Asian street food, the aforementioned offerings from [Polish Village Café](#), and more.

### **Good times, Hamtramck-style!**

[Third Man Records](#) will have a truck there on Saturday. And [Detroit City FC](#) will have a booth where they will offer discounted tickets for their game Saturday. If you go, (it's right down the street) and then return to the festival, you can show your ticket for a discounted drink.

[International Big Time Wrestling](#) will have a ring right in the middle of the festival Sunday and Monday. Festival-goers will be treated to some outrageous antics and real wrestling matches (of course it's real!), complete with costumes and professional smack-talking

On Monday at noon, you can partake in a grand festival tradition. Staff and patrons of Hamtramck's bars have built little boat-shaped carts, or "canoes" for the Hamtramck Yacht Club Canoe Races. The carts have wheels and one person rides in the cart while the other person pushes. Teams race through downtown with spectators crowded in on either side of the street, pelting the racers with water balloons. The winning team wins a wooden captain's wheel which will be inscribed with the winning bar's name. It's wet and it's wild and it's super fun! You'd think it might be the most Hamtramck thing you'd see all weekend, but you might have to give it some more thought.

The Polish Parade, traditionally held Monday afternoon, marched off to Warren where a lot of Hamtramck's Polish population has moved over the years. But the good people of Hamtramck are starting a new parade. Since many of the town's residents march to the beat of their own drummer, it's likely that this parade is going to be a marvelous spectacle that will truly encapsulate everything that is so wonderfully quirky and unique about the city.

### **Get ready to bust a move**

Hamtramck is a music town and the festival showcases some of the best talent in Detroit. There are two stages—the North Stage and the Pleasantrees (South) Stage. Bands start in the early afternoon and go well into the evening. Sunday night typically has a bit of a reunion vibe as festival stalwarts The Polish Muslims get the crowd rocking with their polka-fied versions of pop and rock hits.

Expect potholes on Joseph Campeau on Tuesday because Monday night is going to shake the pavement with all the dancing. Detroit's own ADULT. will bring their shadowy electro-punk beats to the main stage at 8. New York's ESG will wrap up the festival as the final act on Monday night with their bass-driven, hand-clappin' jams. Formed in the late 70s by sisters in the Bronx, ESG's stripped-down, funky punk has been sampled in rap and hip hop over and over. Their sound is what you might get if James Brown and Joey Ramone got married and adopted a family of teen-aged girls. If your booty ain't shakin' on Labor Day, it must be broke.

### **A city charging into the future**

Oh, and it's also Hamtramck's 100 year anniversary. How fitting to see the city on the cusp of turning out electric vehicles for the next generations. It seems that the town leaders were right in the '80s. In the face of adversity, just hike up your bootstraps, put a smile on your face, hand out some beers, and dance. It'll all turn out okay.

This one did well on the Chevy "In the D" Facebook page and got a nice comment about the writing from a complete stranger:

**Chevy In The D's Post**

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