

## Top 5 Things To Do This Weekend in Sarasota-Bradenton-Venice: Jan. 17-19



Embracing Our Differences is an outdoor art exhibition consisting of 50 billboard-sized works of art, each accompanied by an inspirational quote, displayed at Sarasota's Bayfront Park starting Saturday. [Herald-Tribune archive]

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### Fun events this holiday weekend in Sarasota and Manatee counties including free, family-friendly activities.

*Our guide to the best events taking place Friday, Saturday or Sunday in Sarasota and Manatee counties.*

#### **1. Manatee County Fair**

Adrenaline rush amusement rides, delightfully decadent food and country music stars are some of the main attractions at the 104th [Manatee County Fair](#). Restless Heart — which had No. 1 country hits in the 1980s and '90s with songs like “Tell Me What You Dream,” “When She Cries,” and “I’ll Still Be Loving You” — performs today at 7:30 p.m. and there’s no additional charge for the concert with paid admission. Daily through Jan. 26; Manatee County Fairgrounds, 1303 17th St. W., Palmetto; \$6-\$10; 941-722-1639; [manateecountyfair.com](http://manateecountyfair.com)

#### **2. Sarasota Seafood & Music Festival**

For the fifth year now, the winning pairing of (mostly) local bands and local seafood returns to downtown Sarasota. In addition to seafood and other tasty eats, vendors

offer beer and other beverages as well as arts and crafts. As for the music, the outstanding lineup of Sarasota-Bradenton based acts is augmented by national-touring blues act JP Soars & The Red Hots, from Boca Raton, performing at 6:30 p.m. today. 4-10 p.m. today, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m.- 6 p.m. Sunday; J.D. Hamel Park, 199 Bayfront Drive, Sarasota; free admission; 941-487-8061; [seafoodfestivals.com](http://seafoodfestivals.com)

### **3. MLK Parade and Multicultural Festival**

Celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day weekend with Palmetto's 28th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Parade, which begins at 11:30 a.m. Saturday. The parade will head south along Second Avenue West, west on 10th Street West, north on Eighth Avenue West, and east along 17th Street West. Then at 2 p.m., Lincoln Park (501 17 St. E., Palmetto) will be the site of the Multicultural Festival featuring carnival rides, food and craft vendors and a 4:30 p.m. performance by R&B star Ginuwine, who had a No. 1 hit in 1996 with "Pony." Saturday's festivities end at 6 p.m. For more information, call 941-723-4988.

### **4. Sarasota Winter Carnival**

The Sarasota Winter Carnival returns to The Mall at University Town Center with carnival rides for the entire family (single tickets \$1.50; unlimited ride wristbands for \$30), fair foods, games, and more including the Beer & Burger Throwdown from noon to 6 p.m. on Saturday. The Throwdown includes 30-plus different burgers from local restaurants/food trucks and craft beer sampling from several local breweries. 5-11 p.m. today; 12-11 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, and 12-9 p.m. Monday; The Mall at University Town Center, 140 University Town Center Drive, Sarasota; 941-552-7000; [mallatutc.com](http://mallatutc.com)

### **5. Embracing Our Differences**

Embracing Our Differences, which has been using art and prose to promote diversity since 2004, is an annual, juried international outdoor art exhibition consisting of 50 billboard-sized works of art, each accompanied by an inspirational quote. Opening Saturday, this free attraction is displayed at Sarasota's Bayfront Park right by top waterfront restaurants [O'Leary's Tiki Bar and Grill](#) and [Marina Jack](#). This year's Embracing Our Differences exhibit garnered a record 16,118 entries from 127 countries and 50 states with students from nearly 400 schools around the world submitting artwork or quotes to the juried exhibit. Saturday-April 5, Bayfront Park, 5 Bayfront Drive, Sarasota; 941-404-5710; [embracingourdifferences.org](http://embracingourdifferences.org)