



**The inside  
scoop on what  
Katyites can  
expect to see  
this year at  
the Houston  
Livestock  
Show and  
Rodeo**

*Written by Kirsten Cornell  
Photography courtesy of HLSR*

# RODEO TIME





If you've never been a guest of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo (HLSR), it's been a while, or even if you're an unofficial bronco rider with perfect attendance - it's always a sight to see. NRG Park magically transforms with carnival rides, competing cowboys and cowgirls, animal adventures, vendors, and best of all, award-winning culinary options.

Even guests who attend annually can find something that is either new to the Show or new to them. "There are more than 300 shopping and dining vendors feature exciting, on-trend merchandise, and yummy food concoctions guests are sure to enjoy," says Sarah Poole, manager of advertising and media for HLSR. Dust off your boots, clean off your spurs, and prepare yourself for the event of the year.



## AG ADVENTURES

Offering a one-of-a-kind experience where there is truly something for everyone, patrons will find family-friendly, educational exhibits, thrilling carnival rides, and action-packed rodeo performances. "Make sure to stop by AGVENTURE and the birthing center where children and adults have the opportunity to learn about agriculture in a hands-on environment," adds Poole.

Little ones will surely enjoy taking a tour of Fun on the Farm located in The Junction. Fun on the Farm is a farm-to-market exhibit that gives youngsters the chance to experience agriculture from the ground up by milking a cow, harvesting crops, and selling the fruits of their labor at market.

In the birthing center, visitors will be able to welcome baby animals, witness their first steps, and see how their mothers nurture them. You can also mosey around the Breed Row Barn where you'll get an up-close look at several breeds of swine, cattle, sheep, and goats. While you're there, don't forget about the fishery, honey bees, milking parlor, and the rabbits.

## ANIMAL OVERLOAD

Who doesn't love a petting zoo? Climb right in with a variety of exotic and farm animals ready to sniff your kneecaps. You'll have the goats eating out of the palm of your hand in no time. Make sure you head over to the We're Small Y'all Barn. You don't need little ones to gush over these pint-sized favorites. Miniature, but fully grown cattle, pigs, and goats roam around and are available for photos.

Did you know that the rodeo also offers a live carousel? No wooden ponies for this bunch. Saddle up and ride Welsh ponies as they walk carousel-style carrying young riders. Cost is only \$7 per ride and professional photos are available upon request. Camel rides offer small riders a great view of the carnival and are also available at The Junction.

Have you ever cheered on a racing piglet? "After the gate is opened, piglets shoot forward like guided missiles in front of a cheering, standing-room-only crowd," says Poole. The pigs race around a 150-foot track in only a few seconds, all dashing for sweets waiting at the finish line.

For buckaroos between the ages of 5 and 6 years old, there are mutton bustin' competitions throughout the day at The Junction. To participate, riders must not weigh more than 55 pounds. Champion wranglers head to the main arena to compete before the adoring crowd.

## LET'S RODEO

In addition to hands-on, family-friendly entertainment, cowhands from across the map gather to kick up dust and show off their skills. Ropers and their steeds go from standstill to full-tilt gallop in seconds while in pursuit of a runaway calf during the tie-down roping competition. Steer wrestling pairs a cowboy's strength and skill against a runaway steer, typically at least twice his size and weight.



Kiddos can participate in mutton bustin' competitions at The Junction



Find rides and games for all ages at the carnival



The object is for the steer wrestler to bring the 500-pound animal to a halt and flip him.

During the all-women's barrel racing event, you will witness incredible displays of horsemanship as riders and their horses maneuver through a course racing against the clock. "Timing is truly everything in barrel racing as a contestant's run is measured in hundredths of a second," adds Poole.

And of course one of the most high-intensity events at the Show, bull riding. Often considered the most dangerous sport in rodeo, riders grip the bull rope and muster every ounce of strength they have to stay on the bucking beast for eight seconds. However, time isn't the only factor that goes into their score. "The bull's bucking efforts account for half of the rider's points," says Poole. "Each bull is unpredictable, dangerous, and specific in its own bucking fashion."

You are sure to get your fill of rip-roaring action with additional events like bareback riding, team roping, saddle bronc riding, chuck wagon races, and the calf scramble.

## FOOD & FUN

There are very few places you can walk into and find shrimp diablo, bacon chili cheeseburgers, fried brownie balls, and turkey legs the size of your forearm all in one marketplace. Welcome to that place. HLSR boasts all kinds of culinary creations from alligator on a stick and pulled pork sundaes to deep-fried Oreos and Twinkies.

Spectators are encouraged to try award-winning dishes determined by the Gold Buckle Foodie Contest. Try all eight of the winning dishes and you will become an official Gold Buckle Foodie and receive prizes at the Social Station.

Afterward, grab a funnel cake and make your way to the bright lights of the carnival. The 1,700-foot gondola Sky Ride lends a bird's-eye view of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Better yet, take a spin on the Western Hemisphere's largest portable Ferris wheel - La Grande Wheel. Tickets are valid for both rides and games and can be purchased at the carnival for 50 cents each. Most rides require four to 20 tickets.

The Junction Carnival is a special area dedicated for children. You'll find kid-friendly rides and games at every turn offering colorful prizes to skilled buckaroos. Don't forget to stop by the Stars Over Texas Stage which offers sing-alongs, animal acts, and more.

## STAR ENTERTAINMENT

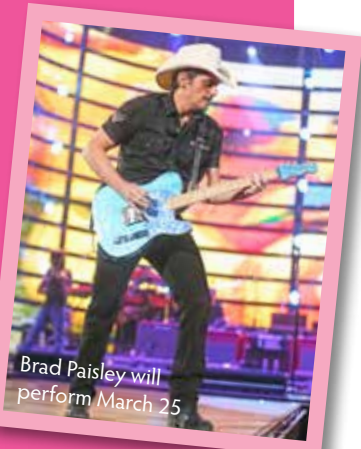
After the winners have taken their victory lap and you're in a cotton candy coma, the lights go down and the rotating stage comes out. It's concert time! "The 2017 entertainment lineup is one of the most awarded in RodeoHouston history, with 209 music industry accolades, three hall of fame inductees, and three Grand Ole Opry members," says Poole.

Choose from country western staples like Alan Jackson, Willie Nelson, Dierks Bentley, and Brad Paisley. You'll also get a little rock with your country from artists like Meghan Trainor, ZZ Top, Alicia Keys, and Blink 182. Tickets can range from \$30 to \$100. And if you'd really like the VIP treatment, spring for the chute seats, which range from \$300 to \$350.

Regardless of when you decide to go, rodeo fans will experience world-class rodeo competitions along with live entertainment from some top-ranked superstars. It's the one place you can experience a fair, festival, carnival, rodeo, and concert, right in your backyard. **KM**

## THE 2017 CONCERT LINE-UP

March 7 - Aaron Watson  
 March 8 - Old Dominion  
 March 9 - Chris Stapleton  
 March 10 - Alicia Keys  
 March 11 - Alan Jackson  
 March 12 - The Chainsmokers  
 March 13 - Sam Hunt  
 March 14 - Demi Lovato  
 March 15 - Thomas Rhett  
 March 16 - Luke Bryan  
 March 17 - Fifth Harmony  
 March 18 - Willie Nelson  
 March 19 - Banda El Recodo and Siggno  
 March 20 - Florida Georgia Line  
 March 21 - ZZ Top  
 March 22 - Chris Young  
 March 23 - Blink 182  
 March 24 - Dierks Bentley  
 March 25 - Brad Paisley  
 March 26 - Zac Brown Band



Brad Paisley will perform March 25

### Special Days

First Responders Day  
 March 7

Armed Forces Appreciation Day  
 March 8

Black Heritage Day  
 March 10

Go Tejano Day  
 March 19

VISIT [RODEOHOUSTON.COM](http://RODEOHOUSTON.COM)



KIRSTEN CORNELL is the lead associate editor for Katy Magazine. Her first-ever rodeo experience was in the Houston Astrodome watching Clay Walker in concert.





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