

Heritage Syrup Festival - November 8, 2025

“The Sweetest Festival in Texas” -- East Texas’ Only Folk Life Festival 35th Annual

Back when Stephen F. Austin brought settlers to Texas and Europeans began spreading through the region, colonials had to find substitutes for a lot of things from their old homes – like sugar and molasses and maple syrup. Families and communities maintained their own syrup pans and each year would cook batches of ribbon cane or sorghum syrup to carry them through the year. As commercial producers and supermarkets began to move in, those family syrup traditions began to die.

In Henderson, Texas we keep that tradition alive with the Heritage Syrup Festival, the second Saturday of each November. 2025 marks the 36th annual festival and everyone is invited to come shop, eat, play, learn about traditional homestead skills and crafts, and be entertained. Festivities are spread across two sites – the Depot Museum and the downtown historic district.

Depot Museum: 514 N. High Street

The highlight of the only folk life festival in East Texas is the syrup making demonstration on the Depot Museum grounds. Experienced syrup makers will operate the museum’s antique mule-powered equipment to produce old fashioned cane syrup. While the syrup cooks, folk artists demonstrate the techniques of lace making, rope making, basket making, blacksmithing, wood carving, quilting, and other old-time survival skills. Visit the recreated print and sawmill for demonstrations or the antique tract display. Sit in the shade and enjoy food and drink from local civic organizations while enjoying some excellent musical entertainment.

Hayride shuttles provide rustic transportation between the Depot Museum and the Downtown Heritage Square.

Historic Downtown:

The festivities spread across an 11-square-block area around Heritage Square located in the National Register Historic District. Visitors may browse 250+ booths featuring handcrafted arts & crafts, retail product and promotional booths. Come with hearty appetites and enjoy the many food booths. Enjoy the sounds of rock n’ roll and country music on Stage 1, the main bandstand. Visit the car show featuring over 150 antique and classic cars around the Rusk County Historical Courthouse. Stage 2 showcases local dancers, clogging, and other entertainment. Several blocks are set aside just for children’s activities, so even the youngest family members will have a fun-filled day. The Howard Dickinson House Museum will be open for tours throughout the day.

Make plans now to attend the 36th Annual Heritage Syrup Festival on November 8, 2025 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information on Downtown activities, contact the Tourism Department for the City of Henderson toll free 866-650-5529, email at tourism@hendersontx.us or visit the tourism website at www.visithendersontx.com.

For more information on Depot Museum activities, call 903-657-4303, email depot@depotmuseum.com or visit their website at www.depotmuseum.com.