

A GROWN-UP'S GUIDE TO LOLLAPALOOZA

One of America's biggest music fests, held in Chicago's Grant Park, isn't just for crowd-surfing 20-somethings.

INSIDER TIPS

SCORING TICKETS Chicago investment banker Kurt Sunderman, 40, has seen tickets sell out much faster since he first attended in 2009. He and his friends now use multiple computers and smartphones to snag theirs. Mary Van Heukelom, 45, a personal trainer from Iowa, skips the rush and buys tickets later on a secondary ticket site like Stubhub.

NAVIGATING CROWDS By late afternoon, fans pack the park. So Kurt and his friends claim a spot near a main stage by around 2 p.m. "We'll put out a blanket and have someone in our group hold the spot," he says.

CHOOSING BANDS Kurt starts his list with favorites he knows and checks out other acts on Spotify, but he leaves room for discovery, too. "I used to plan every hour," he says. "Now, I'll have a few things I have to see, and then we'll wander around and see how it goes."

CHILLING OUT One sweet spot in the festival's 115 acres is a shady hawthorn grove near the north entrance. You can stretch within earshot of the Petrillo stage, which is often booked with breakout acts. It's also a short walk to the tasty eats at Lollapalooza's Chow Town.

FITTING IN Does age matter at Lolla? Nah. "I enjoy the music," Mary says. "I'm going to continue to be in that minority demographic, and that's just fine. I can't wait to bring my teenage and young-adult kids."

Electronic artists M83 headlined in 2016. This year's event is August 3-6.

Greg Kot, music critic for the *Chicago Tribune*, has done the circuit of the nation's largest music festivals. And that means he's slept on the ground, stood in endless lines and braved restrooms he'd rather not recall. After those experiences, he has learned to distinguish an expertly organized music event from one only a 19-year-old could love.

That's why he celebrated when Chicago opened downtown's Grant Park in 2005 to the touring alternative rock festival Lollapalooza. "It was great to see an accessible festival that didn't take a half a day to get into and out of, located right in the middle of Chicago's most beautiful stretch of property," he says.

Last summer, 400,000 people saw Lolla's 170-plus acts over four days. If you watched fans streaming into the park, you might assume the vibe's not right for anyone over 35—but then you'd miss some of the world's best alt-rock, pop, indie and hip-hop acts in an unusually scenic venue. Ready to wade in? Longtime fans have you covered. *Ann Hinga Klein*