



## 2026 Balloon Stampede FAQ

Updated: May 4, 2026

### **General Event Questions**

#### **When is the Walla Walla Balloon Stampede?**

The Walla Walla Balloon Stampede takes place the Thursday before the second weekend in May and ends on Sunday, Mother's Day.

#### **Where is the Balloon Stampede?**

It takes place at Howard Tietan Park, 616 E. Tietan Street, in Walla Walla.

#### **What is the schedule of events?**

The event takes place over four (4) days:

- Thursday, May 7 @ 6am: Kids Day
- Friday, May 8 @ 5-9pm: Nite Glow
- Friday – Sunday, May 8-10: Fly Days – balloons launch between 5:30-6am, weather permitting

#### **When do the balloons take off?**

Balloons generally launch between 6:30 and 6:45am (weather conditions permitting).

#### **How many balloons are there?**

There are usually around 30 balloons that participate in the event.

#### **How can I get a balloon ride? [Update as of May 4, 2026]**

For 2026, there is no longer space available for passengers in hot air balloon flights launching directly from the official Balloon Stampede field at Tietan Park.

#### **Where do the balloons fly?**

All balloons launch from Tietan Park. They fly to wherever the wind takes them that morning.

#### **Are the balloons guaranteed to fly all four days?**

All balloon flights are subject to weather conditions – they do not fly when there's too much wind or moisture in the area.

#### **When is the go/no go decision made to fly?**

The go/no go decision is made at the pilot briefing which starts at 6am and lasts for approximately 15 minutes. If it's a "no go" decision, the stage announcer will let attendees know.

#### **Is there a cost to attend?**

The event is free for all spectators.

#### **Is there food or vendors on-site?**



Each morning, Blue Mountain Coffee Co. will be on-site as well as Kerry's Trinidadian Cuisine. And Friday night, there will be 10 food trucks on-site along with the Walla Walla Rural Library.

### **Who organizes the event?**

Laurie Spencer, a 30+ year veteran of piloting balloons, has been organizing the Walla Walla Balloon Stampede since 2014. Numerous staff and volunteers help put on the event.

### **How long has this event been held?**

2026 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> year the event has been held.

### **Where can I find up-to-date information during the event?**

For real-time updates surrounding weather conditions and flights, go to the event's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/wwballoonstampede>

### **Are dogs allowed at the Balloon Stampede?**

While leashed pets are allowed in Howard Tietan Park, it is not recommended to bring them. Here's why:

As the propane goes through the preheat coils of the burner, a high pitch is emitted that is inaudible to human ears but hurts the ears of dogs.

If you do bring your pet, don't be a party pooper – be sure to scoop their poop! With balloons (before they are inflated) and people picnicking on the grass, let's keep things tidy for everyone's enjoyment!

### **Kids Day**

#### **When is Kids Day?**

For 2026, Kids Day is Thursday, May 7 @ 6am.

#### **Is this event free?**

Yes, there is no charge to participate in Kids Day.

#### **How do the kids' flights work?**

Balloons will be inflated, and kids can experience going up in the hot air balloons while staying safely tethered – meaning there is a rope from the basket to the team on the ground – so they remain within the safety of the park.

#### **How high do the balloons go?**

The kids' flights are tethered so the balloons lift approximately 20-25 feet.

#### **Can parents join the kids for the flight?**

Sorry, no parents! To ensure as many kids can have the experience of going up the hot air balloon and the limited size of the baskets, riders are limited to kids only.

### **Nite Glow**



**When is the Nite Glow event?**

For 2026, Nite Glow takes place on the evening of Friday, May 9 – with activities starting around 5pm and the balloons firing up around dusk (approximately 8pm).

**What happens during Nite Glow?**

There are food trucks and music, and around dusk the balloons light up and music plays. There will be eight (8) balloons inflated for Nite Glow.

**What food trucks will be there?**

Yes, there will be 10 food trucks at the park, including:

- Blues Bites
- Kerry's Trinidadian Cuisine
- Nothing Bundt Cakes
- Stay A-Round Donuts
- Streetz Hibachi
- Tacos La Monarca
- Vieyra's Mac & More
- Where There's Food Eat It
- Whitman Acres Lemonade
- Wine Country Culinary Institute

**What entertainment will be there?**

Yes, there will be live music before the Nite Glow. For the kids there will be face painting, balloon animals and a fire truck.

**Is there parking at the park?**

There is limited street parking by Howard Tietan Park, so attendees are encouraged to walk, bike, carpool or take the free Valley Transit Shuttle from downtown.

**Is there transportation to/from Howard Tietan Park?**

Yes, Valley Transit runs free shuttles from the Downtown Walla Walla Transit Center, located at 108 W. Main Street. The schedule is available:

<b>Nite Glow Shuttle</b>				
<b>Friday</b>				
Leave	→			Arrive
<b>Transfer Center</b>	<b>Balloon Stampede</b>	<b>Transfer Center</b>	<b>Balloon Stampede</b>	<b>Transfer Center</b>
5:30	5:40	5:50	6:00	6:10
6:10	6:20	6:30	6:40	6:50
6:50	7:00	7:10	7:20	7:30
7:30	7:40	7:50	8:00	8:10
8:10	8:20	8:30	8:40	8:50
8:50	9:00	9:10	<b>9:20*</b>	9:30

**\* Last Shuttle leaving Nite Glow**

**About Hot Air Ballooning**

**How big are the balloons?**

The balloons participating in the Stampede are, on average, 90,000 cubic feet.



### **How are balloons fueled?**

Balloons use propane as their fuel.

### **How high can balloons go?**

Balloons can go up to 15,000' before needing supplemental oxygen. The typical balloon flight is 1,000 – 2,000 feet above the ground.

### **How fast can balloons travel?**

Balloons travel as fast as the wind carries them. Pilots like to have some wind aloft speed and no wind on the ground for landing.

### **How does someone become a hot air balloon pilot?**

You contact a pilot and get their recommendation on a flight instructor or ground school. You'll need to study a balloon flying handbook, a weather book and get familiar with the Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs) that pertain to lighter-than-air aircraft. You'll take flight instructions and a written exam, and get a flight check to get certified

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