



2026 Balloon Stampede FAQ

Updated: May 5, 2026

Real-time updates via the Walla Walla Balloon Stampede Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/wwballoonstampede>

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 way to stay up-to-date on what's happening/if balloons are flying?

Real-time updates can be tracked through the Walla Walla Balloon Stampede Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/wwballoonstampede>

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 50th 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.

Is there a way to stay up-to-date on what's happening/if balloons are flying?



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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:

Nite Glow Shuttle				
Friday				
Leave	→			Arrive
Transfer Center	Balloon Stampede	Transfer Center	Balloon Stampede	Transfer Center
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	9:20*	9:30

* Last Shuttle leaving Nite Glow



What happens if there's too much wind?

If it's too windy for the balloons to be inflated at Nite Glow, they shift to a "candlestick" presentation. This means the baskets are brought into a circle and the burners are ignited, but balloons are not inflated. All other activities will remain the same – music, food trucks, dancing, etc.

Is there a way to stay up-to-date on what's happening/if balloons are inflating/flying?

Real-time updates can be tracked through the Walla Walla Balloon Stampede Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/wwballoonstampede>

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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