

What is Bele Chere?

Bele Chere is a street festival with a wide variety of arts, music, food, beverages, events, and children's activities.

When is the festival?

Bele Chere is always the last FULL weekend in July. For 2009, the dates and hours are:

Friday, July 24 Noon to 10 p.m.

Saturday, July 25 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Sunday, July 26 Noon to 6 p.m.

Where exactly is Bele Chere?

In Asheville's central downtown business area.

Who produces Bele Chere?

The City of Asheville, with the Bele Chere Board of Directors.

What does Bele Chere mean?

Bele Chere means "beautiful living" and comes from an ancient Scottish dialect.

How do I get there?

You have a couple of options. You can drive to the festival or you can ride the Bele Chere Shuttle. If you drive, be aware parking is at a premium during peak times, but all the parking decks in the downtown area are open for business. The two shuttle routes - one from the east and one from the west - run approximately every 20 minutes and the cost is \$2 roundtrip.

If I drive, where can I park?

The City's parking decks remain open during the festival, but your access may be a little different than usual. There are also a number of surface lots around the perimeter that sell parking. In both cases, be aware that special event rates apply. Free handicapped parking is available at any metered parking space outside the festival boundaries.

Where can I catch the shuttle?

We always encourage festivalgoers to use the festival shuttles. Each day, service begins one hour before the festival starts and runs until one hour past regular festival hours. Shuttles run approximately every 20 minutes. The cost is \$3 roundtrip.

East shuttle: Runs between 11AM and 11PM

West Shuttle: Runs between the same hours.

East will run from the back parking lot of the Asheville Mall. The Asheville Mall is located on Tunnel Road east of downtown. The west shuttle will run from the K-mart Plaza shopping center on Patton Ave.

What if I need help once I get there?

Festival Information Booths are located at key intersections of the festival. Also, look for our roving info-tendants. They'll be on street corners and in other high traffic areas, wearing official Bele Chere shirts. Also look for festival staff and volunteers wearing shirts that say Area Manager, Board, or Staff.

Where are diaper changing stations?

Located in the Asheville Civic Center

What about my pet?

Pets are strictly prohibited inside of the festival boundaries. This is in the best interest of both the animal and the crowd. July temperatures and thousands of people can be a bit overwhelming for our furry friends. This year we are partnering with Chain Free Asheville to offer the Doggy Jail. The Doggy Jail is a cool, clean, and friendly place to house your pet for a nominal fee while you attend the festival. Festival organizers will enforce the no animal policy as necessary so be prepared to either leave your pooch at

home or to make a trip to the Doggy Jail where the nice folks from Chain Free Asheville will help you out. Doggy Jail will be located at 70 Court Plaza- in front of City Hall.

First Aid tents are located at Pritchard Park, the Children's Area (inside the Civic Center), and on Lexington near College Street.

Where can I get some extra cash?

ATMs are located at the following downtown locations:

Asheville Savings Bank - Patton Avenue at Arts Park

Bank of America - 162 College Street & 68 Patton Avenue

BB&T - 1 West Pack Square

First Citizens Bank - 108 Patton Avenue

Premier Credit Union - Haywood Street at the Civic Center

Wachovia - 1 Haywood Street

How can I find out what streets are going to be closed?

We'll post a Bele Chere Traffic Control Map on this website as soon as it's confirmed.

Can I buy beer at Bele Chere?

Yes, but you must have a wristband to carry alcohol on the streets during Bele Chere. Be prepared to show your picture ID when buying alcohol as the wristband itself is not proof of age. Wristband colors change every day.

NOTE: Consumption of alcoholic beverages on the street is prohibited after 10 p.m. Friday & Saturday.

SUNDAY IS ALCOHOL-FREE.

How do I get the wristband?

Wristbands can be purchased for \$2 at booths located adjacent to beverage stations or from participating merchants. A wristband is not required to drink in Asheville's downtown pubs - only while drinking on the streets. And of course, a valid picture ID is required.

Can I bring my own cooler?

No, coolers are not allowed inside the festival area.

How long has Bele Chere been around?

Bele Chere started in 1979 and was located on a whopping three blocks of downtown Asheville. It was the brainstorm of a handful of downtown Asheville merchants and business people with the vision of revitalizing our downtown business district, which was largely abandoned as retail businesses & residents moved to the outskirts. Now, downtown Asheville is home to restaurants, galleries, retail businesses, theatres, art exhibits, and a growing number of residents who call downtown "home."

How many people attend Bele Chere?

Our most recent estimate is about 300,000 to 350,000 people over the three days of the festival.