

## **39<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL YIASOU GREEK FESTIVAL BRINGS THE CULTURE OF GREECE TO CHARLOTTE**

CHARLOTTE, NC - The Yiasou Greek Festival returns to Charlotte with its 39<sup>th</sup> annual event on Sept. 8, 9, 10, and 11. One of Charlotte's most highly anticipated cultural events, it is hosted by the parishioners of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral and takes place on the church grounds at 600 East Blvd. The family friendly weekend features authentic Greek cuisine, homemade pastries, live traditional music and dancing as well as shopping and cultural exhibits.

The Yiasou Greek Festival received Charlotte Magazine's BOB (Best of the Best) Voters' Pick Award for Best Festival in 2013.

"The Greek festival has become a Charlotte tradition. Every year the festival provides an opportunity for Charlotte to experience the art, music, and food of Greece." says John Mahairas, Chairman of the 2016 Yiasou Festival.

Visitors can sample a variety of delicious Greek specialties, from gyros and spanakopita to roasted lamb and pastichio. Dessert alone is worth the trip; patrons can sip frappe or try homemade baklava and loukoumades, the popular honey-drizzled doughnuts. A drive-thru menu is accessible via Winthrop Avenue. Kid friendly menu options are also available. New for 2016, some of the best Greek cooks in the community will host live cooking demonstrations, during which they will share secrets of their beloved family recipes.

Live entertainment is the centerpiece of the festival atmosphere and takes place on one indoor and two outdoor stages. The main tent is filled with the sounds of the mandolin-like bouzouki, and dance performances are scheduled throughout the weekend. New this year is the addition of a second live band, which will stroll the indoor and East Blvd stages as well as accompany folk dance performances. Traditional Greek folk dancing is presented by Holy Trinity's youth, ages 5 to 25, who dance, sing, and play the instruments of their ancestral villages. Members of Thylos, Holy Trinity's award winning adult dance troupe, will lead folk dance classes on the main stages.

In addition to browsing a wide variety of specialty vendors selling everything from Greek art to jewelry and imported groceries, festival patrons can also enjoy Greek wine tasting or mingle with Spartan warriors in full armor. Members of the reenactment group "The Warriors of Greece" will be patrolling the festival grounds and are happy to pose for a souvenir photo. Chris Pangalos of The Warriors of Greece will also offer entertaining talks on the military tradition of ancient Greece. Back this year by popular demand, the Evzones will make daily reenactments (Friday – Sunday) of the ceremonial Athenian changing of the guard.

Visitors who prefer to get away from the outdoor festival buzz can step into the Cathedral for a choir performance (2:30, 3:00 and 3:30 Saturday only) or for a guided tour of its stunning Byzantine frescos and architecture. Built in 1954, the Cathedral is the vibrant center of the Holy Trinity community's religious life.

Younger patrons will enjoy the enhanced Children's Playland with rides, face painting and concessions.

Festival admission is \$3. Children 12 and under are free when accompanied by a parent or guardian. Visitors who ride the Lynx or CATS to the festival will receive free admission when they show their same-day stamped ticket. School groups and senior citizen groups can also make arrangements for free admission by contacting the church office between 10:00p.m. and 6:00 p.m. at 704-334-4771 by September 1.

For more information and a full list of festival attractions, schedules and menus, visit [www.yiasoufestival.org](http://www.yiasoufestival.org).