Fourth fireworks: America's birthday at the beach

by Susan B. Barnes, Special for USA TODAY | Published on June 29, 2010

Summer is in full swing, and a lot of us are planning to celebrate the Fourth of July at beaches across the USA, whether on ocean, gulf, or lake beaches. Here's a look at beachside celebrations where fireworks shows will reflect in the waters below, adding to the beauty and grandeur of the Fourth of July holiday, which, as Ithaca, N.Y. Mayor Svante Myrick said, is "... one night where every family – no matter where you live, how much money you make, or what your political beliefs are – can come together and look up at the same shared night sky. It's a celebration of our country's independence, and a celebration of our entire community."

The West

Hawaii's largest Fourth of July Fireworks Spectacular features 15 minutes of fireworks – 2,000 will be launched from three platforms – accompanied by a soundtrack played on FM 92.3 KSSK. Approximately 55,000 people are expected to watch the show at Ala Moana Beach Park in Honolulu.

More than 200,000 people are expected to line the eight-mile late for Fireworks on the Lake in Big Bear, Calif. Close to 2,500 fireworks will be launched during the 45-minute show, synced with music from KBRR, and the grand finale features double-shot fireworks, unique to Big Bear's show.

Bordering both California and Nevada, South Lake Tahoe expects more than 100,000 spectators for its 25-minute Lights on the Lake Fireworks Show that will be launched from three offshore barges. The fireworks display has a bit of notoriety, too. It's ranked one of the top five fireworks displays in the USA by the American Pyrotechnics Association.

On the island of Coronado just outside San Diego, Fourth of July festivities drawing around 500,000 people will culminate with fireworks launching over Coroneta Bay across from the Hotel del Coronado for a 20-minute show.

Launching from a barge over the lake and City Beach, Fourth of July revelers can watch the fireworks show in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho from the beach, Tubbs Hill, or in the comfort of a boat right on the lake. Overhead, more than 1,000 fireworks will burst in the air over the course of 20 minutes or so.

The Midwest

In Hayward, Wis., 5,000 people will gather around Round Lake to enjoy a 30-minute fireworks show featuring 1,000 aerial rockets.

To begin the Fourth of July showcase in Grand Haven, Michigan, on the shores of Lake Michigan, a 15-minute fireworks show will be accompanied by the musical Fountain and the National Anthem. Afterwards, more than 8,000 fireworks will take off for the sky overhead during a 20-minute show, which 30,000 spectators are expected to attend.

Nearby, the Lake Michigan beach town of Ludington will welcome 20,000 people onto its lakeshore beaches to watch a 20-minute show with 1,500 fireworks bursting overhead and over the lake as part of its Fourth of July Freedom Festival.

The 18-minute Put-in-Bay Fireworks Show in Ohio will feature 3,500 shots, but it's the grand finale that will really catch the attention of the 10,000-15,000 people expected to be in attendance: 1,000 fireworks will go off within the span of 15 seconds.

The South

Fort Worth's Fourth in the Dallas-Fort Worth area is expected to attract 60,000 people to Panther Island Pavilion to watch 4,500 fireworks burst in the air during a 25-minute show.

A barge one mile off the Gulf Shores (Alabama) Public Beach in the Gulf of Mexico will launch a 15-minute Fourth of July Fireworks Spectacular, with patriotic music playing along on Sunny 105.7.

Fifteen thousand people are expected to gather on Miami Beach as 5,100 fireworks launch into the air from the North Shore Sandshell (73rd and Collins Avenue) throughout the 15-minute Fire on the Fourth fireworks show.

Clearwater Celebrates America is expecting to draw nearly 15,000 people to watch the 25-minute fireworks show over Clearwater Bay from Coachman Park, and many more on Clearwater Beach.