

Cambridge Festival 2025: an unforgettable 17 days of exploration and discovery for all the family



Photo credit: Cambridge Festival/Domininkas Zalys

The Cambridge Festival 2025 is set to captivate children and families with an exciting 17-day programme of hands-on activities, educational workshops, performances, and interactive events.

From March 19 to April 4, the festival will showcase hundreds of specially curated events, offering an unforgettable experience for young minds and families. The festival promises to inspire curiosity, foster creativity, and ignite a passion for learning, with two action-packed weekends dedicated to families. Almost all the events are free.

One of the standout events will be the appearance of Michael Rosen, one of Britain's most beloved children's authors and performance poets. On March 29, Rosen, the author of classics like *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, *Chocolate Cake*, *The Sad Book*, and *A Great Big Cuddle*, will take the stage to share poems, stories, and memories from across his celebrated career. As a former Children's Laureate, Michael's performance will be a special treat for families with children of all ages.

Another highly anticipated event is Dr Peter Wothers' *Free Range Chemistry: No Added Chemicals* demonstration, which returns to the festival on March 22. Wothers, known for his engaging chemistry lectures, will perform explosive demonstrations using chemicals found in nature to illustrate the concept that our entire world is made of chemicals. Expect flashes, bangs, and plenty of excitement, making this event ideal for children aged 8+.

On the same day, CHaOS (Cambridge Hands-On Science) will take over one of the University of Cambridge's chemistry labs for the *Crash, Bang, Squelch!* event. This interactive, hands-on science extravaganza will feature more than 50 exciting experiments, each led by friendly student volunteers. Kids can experiment with everything from chemical reactions to building their own robots, with thrilling talks and demonstrations scheduled throughout the day.

In addition to these exciting events, Dr Letizia Diamante will host an interactive workshop, *Open Wide! Jaw-Dropping Jaws*, on March 22. This fun and educational session will take children on a journey inside the mouths of humans and animals, exploring how and why animals have different types of jaws. Participants will discover the fascinating and sometimes bizarre ways animals use their teeth, from sharks to mosquitoes.

The festival also offers a thrilling artistic experience with the *Magma Rising: A Journey to the Centre of Icelandic Volcanoes* exhibition, which will be open from February 26 through April 22. This immersive exhibition takes visitors on a journey up and into an Icelandic volcano, inspired by Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. A perfect combination of art and science, this experience invites families to explore the power of nature in an engaging and accessible way.

Throughout the two weekends, various University of Cambridge departments, schools, and museums will open their doors for hands-on events and exhibitions. Families can enjoy activities such as the *Atomic Arcade*, a fun-filled exploration of nuclear science through arcade-style games, and *Crystal Adventures*, which combines dazzling visualisations, interactive activities, and even a few tasty experiments. For budding engineers, *Floodfighters* will challenge kids to design buildings and flood defences using origami and engineering tricks to protect a town from a simulated flood.

Other weekend events include *Pirates' Treasure Hunts*, *Escape Rooms*, magical performances, and family activities such as *Cloud Factory* and the *Great Alien Hunt*. Families can also engage in thought-provoking workshops, like the *Universal Childhoods?* exhibition on what it means to be a child in the Colombian Amazon, and *Exploring Family Traits*, a fun DNA workshop that explores genetics in creative ways.

On March 29, families can join *Alice in Psychland: Eat Me! Drink Me!*, a whimsical exploration of synaesthesia, where participants can experience how some people perceive colours as sounds, or feel shapes as tastes. Psychexcite will guide visitors through a Mad Hatter's Tea Party-style experiment, demonstrating how our senses can sometimes overlap in unusual ways.

The festival also brings a taste of Antarctica to Cambridge with *Antarctic Adventure: Explore the Frozen Frontier* on March 29. Led by polar scientist Professor Kate Hendry and marine biologist Dr. Helen Scales, this talk will take families on a virtual journey to one of Earth's most remote and challenging environments. Along the way, they'll learn about Antarctica's unique wildlife, its critical role in global ecosystems, and how scientists conduct research in such extreme conditions.

As part of the festival's focus on technology and innovation, *Navigating the Physical World: The Essential Role of Robots* on March 29 will introduce participants to the exciting world of bio-inspired robots. Dr. Chapa Sirithunge and a team of researchers will lead children aged 12–18 and their parents through a hands-on workshop where they can experiment with soft robotics and learn about the future of robots in everyday life.

Other must-see events include *Blast Off!* with the Cambridge Museum of Technology on March 29-30, where families can create and launch their own mini-rockets, and *Seeing is Believing? The Secrets of Visual Illusions Unveiled* on March 30, where cognitive neuroscientist Professor Paul Bays will reveal the science behind optical illusions and how our brains sometimes deceive us.

The family weekends close on Sunday March 30 with *Sensing Change: Live Performance*, an innovative collaboration between the Museum of Zoology and the Cambridge School of Visual and Performing Arts (CSVPA). This performance will highlight the effects of environmental change through a sensory lens, offering families a unique opportunity to experience the intersection of art, science, and conservation.

For children with a budding interest in genetics, *Exploring Family Traits: A Creative Workshop for Kids* will be held on March 30 at the Old Cavendish Laboratory, where children can dive into the world of DNA and explore what makes them unique by building their own DNA models and learning about family traits.

“The Cambridge Festival is all about bringing together families to engage with cutting-edge research in a fun and accessible way,” said Jennifer Williams, the Families Programme Coordinator for the festival. “With so many interactive activities and expert-led workshops, it’s the perfect opportunity for children to explore the wonders of our world in an engaging and hands-on way.”

“We’re thrilled to offer so many opportunities for hands-on learning and creativity, and we can’t wait for families to experience all the incredible events we have in store this year.”

The Cambridge Festival is an annual celebration of the University of Cambridge’s research, innovation, and creativity. With activities designed to engage audiences of all ages, the festival aims to make knowledge accessible, spark conversations, and inspire the next generation of thinkers, innovators, and explorers.

For more information about the Cambridge Festival 2025, and to book tickets, visit www.festival.cam.ac.uk

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