

Desi Comedy Fest Comes to Chicago with a Star-Studded Night of South Asian Stand-Up Comedy

The nationally acclaimed comedy festival brings its biggest Midwest showcase yet to The Den Theatre for one unforgettable night of culture, comedy, and chaos.

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, May 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- CHICAGO, IL — One of America’s greatest comedy cities is about to get a fresh new comedic perspective. Desi Comedy Fest, North America’s premier South Asian comedy festival, is bringing its acclaimed showcase to Chicago on Sunday, May 31 at The Den Theatre with a powerhouse lineup of comedians seen on Netflix, Amazon Prime, HBO, Comedy Central, and major comedy festivals across the country.



DCF Chicago Flyer

Founded in 2014 by comedians Samson Koletkar and Abhay Nadkarni, Desi Comedy Fest has spent over a decade building a national platform for South Asian comedic voices while entertaining audiences with smart, fearless, and culturally resonant stand-up comedy.

Democracy, hypocrisy, American life, desi strife, identity crises, Scorpios, Pisces — nothing is off limits. Expect sharp observations, fearless storytelling, cultural chaos, and big laughs from comedians tackling modern life from every possible angle.

“Chicago has one of the richest comedy traditions anywhere in the world,” said co-founder Abhay Nadkarni. “From improv legends to stand-up icons, this city knows comedy — and we’re excited to bring a lineup that reflects the next evolution of diverse American comedy.”

“Desi Comedy Fest has always been about creating space for unique voices while delivering huge laughs for everyone in the room,” added co-founder Samson Koletkar. “Chicago audiences are smart, energetic, and comedy-savvy — exactly the kind of crowd we love performing for.”

The Chicago performance is presented in partnership with The Den Theatre, one of the city’s premier independent live performance venues known for championing cutting-edge comedy, theater, and emerging artistic voices.

Over the years, Desi Comedy Fest has expanded from its Bay Area roots into a touring comedy brand with performances in Los Angeles, Seattle, Toronto, New York, Boston, Washington, DC, and India.

The Chicago lineup features:

- **SAMSON KOLETGAR:** Co-founder of Desi Comedy Fest and the world’s only Indian Jewish stand-up comedian, known for his wit, warmth and clean humor. Named one of Silicon India’s “10 Indian Comedians Who Found Success in the U.S.,” he has been featured on NPR, NBC, CBS, NDTV, The Times of India, Ha’aretz, and jWeekly, and was a semi-finalist in the Seattle International Comedy Competition.
- **ABHAY NADKARNI:** Co-founder of the festival, born in Delhi and raised in Doha and Bangalore. A nationally touring comedian with an Amazon Prime special, *Brown Jesus*, he has appeared at Montreal Just For Laughs and the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, bringing a globally shaped perspective to audiences across the country.
- **Atul Patel** is a Minneapolis-based Indian-American comedian known for his clever, observational humor that blends the wit of Jerry Seinfeld, the absurdity of Mitch Hedberg, and the nerdy charm of Demetri Martin. Originally from Cleveland, Atul mines comedy from his life as a middle-aged, multicultural vegetarian navigating the Midwest. With a laid-back delivery and sharp writing, he delivers jokes that are both thoughtful and laugh-out-loud funny. A two-time 4th place finisher in the ACME Funniest Person Contest, Atul has performed internationally from Reykjavik to Tokyo and has headlined and produced shows across the Midwest. Atul Patel: wiser than he looks, funnier than you’d expect.



- Diya Basrai is a Chicago-based stand-up comedian and neuroscientist whose comedy blends sharp intellect with offbeat humor. Originally from San Diego, he has performed at festivals including the Seattle International Comedy Competition and Red Clay Comedy Festival, and is a contributor to The Onion.
- Elizabeth Aziz is a Pakistani-American stand-up comedian, actress, and writer from Chicago. Her bold, introspective comedy explores identity, class, trauma, and spirituality with honesty and edge. She has performed at top venues including The Laugh Factory and Zanies, and has appeared in festivals such as the Limestone Comedy Festival and Chicago Women's Funny Festival.
- Prateek Srivastava is a nationally touring Indian-American stand-up comedian, writer, and actor based in Chicago. His debut comedy album Nick and Sheila's Kid debuted #1 on both the iTunes and Amazon comedy charts. A StandUp NBC finalist who has performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Prateek is known for blending personal storytelling, immigrant family dynamics, and neurotic charm into sharp, relatable comedy.
- Vik Pandya is a Chicago-based Indian-American stand-up comedian known for his self-deprecating humor, sharp observations on dating and everyday life, and engaging crowd work. A nationally touring comic, his album Friends With 401(k) Benefits debuted #1 on iTunes and reached the Billboard Top 10, and his Dry Bar Comedy special No Refunds has been a fan favorite. He has opened for Roy Wood Jr., Michelle Wolf, and Trevor Wallace, and performs regularly at top clubs across the country.

EVENT DETAILS

Desi Comedy Fest — Chicago
Sunday, May 31, 2026
The Den Theatre
Chicago, Illinois

Tickets and information available at:
www.DesiComedyFest.com

MEDIA CONTACT

Desi Comedy Fest
www.DesiComedyFest.com

Samson Koletkar
Desi Comedy Fest
+ +1 415-676-1371

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/913261347>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.