

Toronto Caribbean Carnival Comes to Windsor as WIDAFEST 2026 Opens

Canada's largest Caribbean carnival joins WIDAFEST for a weekend of music, mas and carnival in Windsor, August 20–23.

WINDSOR, ON, CANADA, August 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Windsor International Diaspora African Festival](#) (WIDAFEST) opens this week in partnership with the Toronto Caribbean Carnival, bringing one of Canada's most recognised Caribbean cultural celebrations to Windsor for the first time. WIDAFEST runs August 20 to 23 and is anchored at Lanspeary Park, reaching across the city with an overnight J'Ouvert on the riverfront and a Grand Parade on Saturday.

The partnership adds full carnival programming to a festival that drew 5,235 attendees, more than 100 artists and 40 vendors across four days in 2025. Mas bands, costumes, steelpan and the traditions of J'Ouvert now sit alongside WIDAFEST's African diaspora programming, giving Windsor a carnival weekend of a scale the city has not hosted before.

For the Toronto Caribbean Carnival, the move extends its reach west for the first time, after decades in which its bands and traditions have been concentrated in the Greater Toronto Area. "Carnival belongs to everyone who claims it," said Chris Alexander, Chief Executive Officer of the Toronto Caribbean Carnival. "Windsor has built a diaspora community that has been showing up for years, and WIDAFEST has given it a home. Bringing our bands and our traditions down the 401 is not an export. It is a homecoming."

A festival built for both sides of the border

WIDAFEST sits ten minutes from downtown Detroit and its regional market of more than ten million people, which allows the festival to programme for audiences on both sides of the border at once. The 2025 edition was supported by the Government of Canada, the City of Windsor, TD and a range of local and diaspora-owned businesses.

Programming begins Friday, August 21 with the Drum Festival at Lanspeary Park, followed that evening by [Fête En Blanc](#) and, after midnight, [J'Ouvert After Dark](#) at Dieppe Gardens. Carnival Day and the Grand Parade take over Saturday from 1:00 PM, and the festival ends on Sunday, August 23 with a family Wrap Up Celebration at Lanspeary Park from 11:00 AM.

Programme

Friday, August 21 | 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Drum Festival

Master drummers from across Africa and the Caribbean, with live performances and interactive demonstrations.

Location: Lanspeary Park, 1250 Langlois Avenue

Friday, August 21 | 7:00 PM to 11:00 PM

Fête En Blanc

The all-white affair featuring live entertainment, Caribbean and international music and dancing. Ticketed.

Location: Lanspeary Park, 1250 Langlois Avenue

Friday, August 21 | 12:00 AM to 3:00 AM

J'Ouvert After Dark

The outdoor glow experience, with a t-shirt, rum punch and glow paraphernalia included. Ticketed.

Location: Dieppe Gardens, 78 Riverside Drive

Saturday, August 22 | From 1:00 PM

Carnival Day and the Grand Parade

Mas bands, costumes, steelpan, dancers and cultural groups take to the streets of Windsor.

Parade Route: Starts east on Ottawa Street, turns north on Langlois Avenue, turns west on Giles Boulevard East, and ends by entering Lanspeary Park at 1250 Langlois Avenue.

Sunday, August 23 | From 11:00 AM

Wrap Up Celebration

A family day featuring live entertainment, cultural performances, international cuisine and the vendor marketplace.

Location: Lanspeary Park, 1250 Langlois Avenue

Tickets, vendors and partners

Fête En Blanc and J'Ouvert After Dark are ticketed. Other festival programming is open to the public. Full festival details are at widafest.com.

Tickets: <https://tcc-control-tower.web.app/tickets>

Vendor spaces are available at \$300 for the three days, with applications at widafest.com/vendors-application and payment at widafest.com/vendor-payment. Partnership opportunities remain open and can be arranged through Zalent Creatives at info@zalentcreatives.com.

About WIDAFEST

The Windsor International Diaspora African Festival is an annual celebration of African and Caribbean culture in Windsor, Ontario, presenting music, dance, food and carnival each August. WIDAFEST connects communities across the Windsor and Detroit corridor and creates a

platform for diaspora artists, performers and cultural organisations on both sides of the border. The festival is produced by Zalent Creatives Group.

About Zalent Creatives Group

Zalent Creatives Group is a Windsor-based federal non-profit that develops and produces cultural programming across festivals, film and community development, including the Windsor International Diaspora African Festival. The organisation is based at 3244 Walker Road, Unit 3, Windsor, Ontario, and can be reached at info@zalentcreatives.com.

Interview requests with festival leadership, Toronto Caribbean Carnival representatives and performing artists can be arranged through BrandEQ Group. High-resolution images, the WIDAFEST logo and partner graphics are available on request.

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