

100 Culture Days Activity Ideas



Here are some ideas to help inspire you as you plan your Culture Days activities. These examples have been drawn from the almost 7,000 activities presented over the first five years of Culture Days in Ontario! Please note that while we've organized the activity ideas by discipline for ease of reference, many activity ideas apply to various disciplines or can be easily adapted to a different art form.

Literature, Libraries and Spoken Word

- Six-word story contest
- Book debates with local authors (Canada Reads style)
- Human library – check out people instead of books! Events can be themed i.e., cultural workers, local history makers, etc.
- Genealogy and family tree activities – make use of library resources, archives, and online tools.
- 3-D Printing workshops
- Poetry slams
- Writing workshops (memoir, poetry, plays)
- Multilingual storytelling
- Poetry walls
- Readings by local authors
- Workshops for emerging authors – i.e., how to get published
- Guided tours of locations written about in books with readings of relevant passages
- 'Adults read things they wrote as kids' events
- Postcard projects – collect and display memories and moments from a special place or the Culture Days weekend!



Theatre

- Make a prop workshop – use the props in an upcoming production!
- Try on costumes – combine with a photo booth
- Back-of-house tours – tour props and wardrobe shops, dressing rooms, rehearsal halls, etc.
- Improv workshops/Theatre sports
- Play readings
- Open rehearsal or workshopping new pieces – consider live streaming or adding a tweet chat to engage those who can't attend in person
- Q & A with directors, actors, producers, etc.
- Tech workshops and demos – set design, lighting, audio
- Workshops for aspiring actors – i.e., audition prep
- 'Actor for a Day' – let members of the public try out a role in a scene from a signature or upcoming show
- Stage combat workshop
- Sneak peek of your forthcoming season

Dance

- Flash mob!
- Classes for different ages and levels of experience
- Dance sampler – try out different styles
- Explore the history of dance – how, where and why did your dance discipline develop? How does it relate to other dance forms?
- Q & A with choreographer, artistic director, etc.
- Creative movement/improvisational movement workshops
- Collaborative choreography – create a new work with the public
- Open rehearsal or workshopping new pieces – consider live streaming or adding a tweet chat to engage those who can't attend in person
- Guided tour of the history of your company – include archival dance footage, costumes, posters and a Q&A with your Artistic Director
- Take it to the streets! Develop site-specific work in a unique setting
- Sneak peek of your upcoming show or season

Museums and Heritage

- Artifact preservation workshop – ask the public to bring their artifacts from home and show them how to preserve their pieces



- Antiques Roadshow style event
- Artifact-handling opportunities
- Historic food, crafts, and games
- Collaborative pop-up museum – ask the public to bring their artifacts and share their stories
- Walking tours of historic neighbourhoods, historic plaques
- Back-of-house tours (opening ‘the vaults’)
- Active participation in exhibit development
- Social media posts from local historical figures or statues – engage the public in a discussion on local history
- Collect oral histories

Visual Arts and Craft

- Show your process – how do you stretch canvas? Make your paints? etc.
- Create collaborative works with the public
- Demos of techniques
- Classes for different ages and skill levels
- Artist talks
- Matting & framing workshops
- Makers fairs
- ‘Make & Take’ art swap
- Studio tours
- Knit-ins and yarn bombing
- Walking or bike tours of public art
- ‘Plein Air’ workshops
- Explore traditional art forms and techniques

Music

- Conduct Us! – Invite the public to conduct your choir, orchestra or symphony
- Instrument petting zoos
- Open rehearsals
- Sing-a-longs / sing-ins
- Master classes
- Webcast concert and hold a tweet chat with conductor, composer, etc.
- Open mics
- Jam sessions
- Song writing workshops
- Recording sessions, sound engineering demos



Film and Video

- Hands-on technique workshops i.e., stop-action, claymation
- Silent film screening with live music
- Special FX workshop or demo
- Interactive green screen shoot
- Screenings with Q&A's by directors, actors, etc.
- Set or studio tour
- Exhibit vintage film and video equipment, processes etc.
- Storyboarding workshop
- Screen rare works
- Outdoor/public space screenings
- 'Make a film in a day' workshops

Culinary Arts

- Tastings – wine, cheese, olive oil, etc.
- Demos – crepe making, pasta making, etc.
- Cooking, baking, or preserving workshops
- Plating and presentation techniques
- Decorative fruit and vegetable carving
- Cupcake, cake or cookie decorating
- Farm, brewery, or vineyard tours
- Explore traditional food cultures – i.e., Chinese tea culture
- Harvest festivals

Multidiscipline

- Offer workshops in the different aspects of your practice – i.e., for an introduction to capoeira, offer classes in movement, music, history and Portuguese
- Collaborate!
 - Have a musician interpret the work of a visual artist and vice versa – explore different musical and visual art styles
 - Have a writing group collaborate with a hiking group – poets compose site-specific poetry to be recited on a hike during Culture Days
 - Host a short story workshop with a writers' group, then have the stories dramatized by a performing arts group
 - Provide theatre or historical costumes for volunteers to model for a life drawing class



- Hold an 'action photography' workshop with a dance class as the subject – post the photos online so dancers can have a memento of their class
- Choose a theme or story nub and have it interpreted differently by artists of different artistic mediums
- Have a dance class to live music – create entry points so the public can learn and participate in both the music making and the dancing
- Consider a community art project that allows everyone to get involved no matter their skill level or artistic discipline – for example 'Communitrees' invited everyone in Huron County to make unique works of art using living trees as their canvas. Together, they created a large-scale outdoor public art gallery!

Activity ideas selected from Ontario Culture Days registration data. Tip sheet submitted by Catherine McLeod of Ontario Culture Days, 2015

