NEWS RELEASE – Lexington, N.C.

42nd Annual Lexington Barbecue Festival
Lexington, NC

Celebrating One Style of Barbecue…Lexington Style!
Time: 8:30 AM – 5:30 PM
Saturday, October 24, 2026
Main Street, Lexington, NC
Free Admission

More than 100,000 visitors are expected to gather in Uptown Lexington, NC, on Saturday, October 24, 2026, for the 42nd Annual Lexington Barbecue Festival, one of America's premier food festivals and a celebration of the world-famous Lexington-style barbecue tradition. This year's festival is expected to provide an important economic boost for Uptown Lexington, supporting local merchants and welcoming visitors from across the region to experience one of North Carolina's signature events.

The family-friendly festival spans nine blocks of Uptown Lexington and features three official Lexington-style barbecue tents, more than 300 vendors offering crafts, art, pottery, jewelry, specialty foods, and much more. Festival attractions include car shows, BMX stunt shows, a Kid Zone, six stages of live entertainment, a 50-ton pig-themed sand sculpture, a dinosaur exhibit, and street performers. Admission is free!

Visitors can also enjoy the Cork & Craft Hospitality Garden on East Third Avenue at Breeden Amphitheater, featuring regional wines, craft beverages, and live entertainment. The Hospitality Garden will be open from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Additional details and ticket information are available at www.TheBarbecueFestival.com.

Unlike many barbecue festivals across the country, the Lexington Barbecue Festival celebrates and serves only one style of barbecue—world-famous Lexington-style barbecue. Authentic barbecue will be served from three official festival tents located at the Historic Square and at the north and south ends of Main Street, giving visitors multiple opportunities to experience the authentic flavor that has made Lexington world-famous.

"The Barbecue Festival represents some of the greatest things about our Lexington community; a rich history of "Lexington-style" pit-cooked pork shoulders dating back to the early 1900s, top-quality live entertainment in our Uptown Lexington/Breeden Amphitheatre, great southern hospitality, and something for everyone to enjoy," said City of Lexington Mayor, Jason Hayes. "We are so grateful to the festival organizers, BBQ restaurants, and our City staff to be celebrating the 42nd Lexington Barbecue Festival which brings tremendous excitement and immediate positive impact to our local economy!"

“We are incredibly grateful to the City of Lexington for being such wonderful hosts, to our sponsors whose generous support makes this free-admission festival possible, and to our local barbecue restaurants that prepare and serve the world’s best Lexington-style barbecue. We’re especially excited to celebrate America’s 250th anniversary this year. It’s been so much fun bringing our patriotic theme to life through Captain Q, Lexington’s Rocket Man, and carrying that spirit throughout our festival artwork, merchandise, and promotional materials. We hope visitors will enjoy everything the festival has to offer while also exploring and supporting our Uptown Lexington merchants. We’re proud to continue this wonderful tradition and can’t wait to welcome everyone on October 24!”

The official Barbecue Wall of Fame Ceremony will be held on Monday, October 19 at 2 PM at the Barbecue Wall of Fame at City Hall at 28 West Center.

The American Red Cross will again host a festival blood drive at the J. Smith Young YMCA on Third Avenue from 10am-3:30pm. Appointments can be scheduled at www.RedCrossBlood.org using the keyword BBQ.

Transportation:

Complimentary parking and shuttle service will be available at Childress Vineyards from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., sponsored by Watch For Me NC.

Amtrak will once again make its special, once-a-year stop in Lexington for the Barbecue Festival, with eight scheduled train stops offering convenient rail service for visitors traveling from Charlotte, Raleigh, and points in between. Tickets are on sale now! Visit www.ncbytrain.org for train schedules and ticket information.

Free admission is made possible through the generous support of the festival's sponsors, led by Presenting Sponsors EGGER and Truist.

The full schedule of events and entertainment lineup for the 42nd Annual Lexington Barbecue Festival is now available at www.TheBarbecueFestival.com. Visitors are encouraged to visit the website for the latest festival news, performance schedules, transportation updates, and event information as we prepare for Saturday, October 24, 2026.

Founded in 1983 and first held in 1984, the Lexington Barbecue Festival has earned regional, statewide, and national recognition, including being named one of America's Top Ten Food Festivals by *Travel + Leisure*, a Top Ten Great Place to Celebrate Food by *USA TODAY*, and a Top 20 October Event by the Southeast Tourism Society. The festival was also included in the Library of Congress Local Legacies Project and has received more than 50 awards from the North Carolina Association of Festivals & Events.