

GO!

GET ACTIVE

# Choose your own hiking trail adventure

Twin Valley Trail Challenge set for Sept. 25.

By **Debbie Juniewicz**  
Contributing Writer

Wooded footpaths and scenic meadows, dirt trails and paved paths, challenging hilly terrain and easy flat straightaways – the Twin Valley Trail has it all.

After a year hiatus, the Twin Valley Trail Challenge is back – a challenge of each hiker's own design. The event, usually held in June, is slated for Sept. 25.

“One of my favorite things about the TVT Challenge is that you get to choose the distance you want to challenge yourself to hike,” said Angie Sheldon, Five Rivers MetroParks outdoor recreation coordinator. “We will have six different routes marked where you can choose your own adventure of one, 10, 12, 14, 22 or the full 28.7 miles.”

The free MetroParks event is being sponsored by the Dayton Hikers, the group that originated the event in 2013.

“We're thrilled to have the TVT Challenge back,” said Andy Niekamp, Dayton Hikers founder. “It's such a great event for beginners, experienced hikers and anyone in between.”

While the complete trail totals 28.7 miles – winding through Germantown and Twin Creek MetroParks as well as the connector trail – hikers can trek as little or as long as they would like. This year's TVT Challenge



The Twin Valley Trail Challenge is about meeting your personal goal. CONTRIBUTED

includes the new 2.3-mile extension of the Germantown MetroPark's orange trail.

“And if you don't quite make it as far as you were hoping, we'll have shuttles available to get you back to the start,” Sheldon said. “We will also have four water and aid stations along the route to help you stay fueled for the challenge.”

Holding the event in September adds an additional challenge to the already challenging hike.

“With less daylight, there's a good chance you'll be starting or finishing your hike in the dark,” Sheldon said. “We are recommending that everyone bring a headlamp.”

Day-of registration is open

**'It's an incredibly rewarding experience when you challenge yourself and achieve it.'**

Andy Niekamp  
Dayton Hikers founder

from 5:30 a.m. until noon at the Twin Valley Welcome Center in Germantown MetroPark. Niekamp suggests getting started early.

“A fast hiker could finish in eight hours, but a more typical time is between 10 and 12 hours,” he said.

The fun doesn't end with the hike, as there will be a post-challenge cookout on Saturday. Free camping at Germantown MetroPark is also an option both Friday and Saturday night. Online registration for camping can be found at [metroparks.org/tvtchallenge](http://metroparks.org/tvtchallenge).

“After having to cancel last year and then delaying earlier this year, it will be awesome to get people out together, hiking in the beautiful Twin Valley,” Sheldon said.

And whether it's a mile or the full 28.7 miles, the challenge is up to you.

“It's an incredibly rewarding experience when you challenge yourself and achieve it,” Niekamp said.



The annual Italian Fall Festa features signature foods like pizza, pasta and Italian sandwiches.

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TOM GILLIAM

## Italian

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and a spaghetti and meatballs dinner will be served from noon to 8 p.m. on Sunday. Lunch will also be served from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. today.

The Meatball Madness 5K Run will take place on Sunday with the participants setting off at 11 a.m. on the grounds of the Bella Villa Hall at the John Pirelli Lodge in Kettering. Participants can register for the race at [www.italianfallfesta.com](http://www.italianfallfesta.com) under the Activities tab. Each participant will pay \$25 to run in the race.

Festival parking is located at the Reynolds and Reynolds Parking lot at the corner of Research Boulevard

### HOW TO GO

**What:** Italian Fall Festa

**Where:** 2625 County Line Road, Kettering

**When:** Today, Sept. 10, through Sunday, Sept. 12

**More info:** [www.italianfallfesta.com](http://www.italianfallfesta.com) or [www.facebook.com/ItalianFallFesta](https://www.facebook.com/ItalianFallFesta)

and County Line Road, with free shuttle service provided.

More information about the Italian Fall Festa can be found by visiting [www.italianfallfesta.com](http://www.italianfallfesta.com) or the event's Facebook page.

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## Greek

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of gyros and Souvlaki dinners. Customers must place pre-orders for this cuisine at the Greek Festival's website at [www.daytongreekfestival.com](http://www.daytongreekfestival.com). Orders can be picked up during specified hours at the festival. As of press time, today at 11 a.m. and noon are full. Walk-ups are not permitted.

Typically, the Dayton Greek Festival is a large-scale celebration of all things Greek, with food and live entertainment. But, because of the pandemic, organizers hosted a drive-thru version of the Dayton Greek Festival in 2020 and decided to do

the same this year.

“The decision to have a drive-through festival this year was not easy for us,” organizers posted on the Dayton Greek Festival Facebook page. “We too, love our festival. An undertaking of this magnitude is a year-long process. Although the state of Ohio has opened up, in this post-pandemic world there are various obstacles to organizing an event such as this, including disruption in supply chains and labor.”

More information about the Greek Fest Express can be found at [www.daytongreekfestival.com](http://www.daytongreekfestival.com) or on the group's Facebook page.

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