

# PRESS RELEASE

Umea, [DATE - fill in when the permit is confirmed and the release goes out]

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any English-language press.

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## **Riverfest 2026: Umea celebrates its river - swim it, float it, or cheer from the bank on 25 July**

**On Saturday 25 July 2026, Riverfest fills the Umealven with swimmers, floaters and a festival crowd. Participants travel roughly 5 kilometres downstream from Baggbole down to Bolesholmarna, where the day finishes with a celebration on the bank - sauna, food truck, music and an awards draw. Entry on land is free and everyone is welcome, whether they want to get in the water or simply enjoy the day by the river. This is the festival's second year, growing from a swim-only race into a folk festival for all of Umea.** [PENDING PERMIT CONFIRMATION - the event runs subject to permits being granted; until then signup is an expression of interest.]

Riverfest exists to reconnect Umea with its river. The Umealven is one of the city's greatest natural assets and one of its least celebrated - Riverfest turns it into a shared celebration. Participants swim or float the roughly five-kilometre stretch from Baggbole down to Bolesholmarna, Umea Kallbad's site on the river, where the rest of the day unfolds. The current does some of the work, carrying people downstream to the finish.

On the bank at Bolesholmarna the festival opens for everyone: sauna, food truck, music, and a short drift in the supervised swim lane for first-timers and families who want to try being in the water. You do not need to swim a metre to take part - the festival on land is free and open to all ages.

The tone is deliberately welcoming rather than competitive. It is not about being fast: in 2025 about half the participants were first-timers, and swimmers and floaters shared the river side by side - a mix that last year's survey called the most beautiful part of the day.

The first edition in 2025 was small but landed strongly: participants gave it an average of 96 out of 100 for how likely they were to recommend it, 94 out of 100 for safety and support, and 95 percent felt the finish was a celebration. 2026 leans into exactly that - less race, more festival - and aims to grow from around thirty people on the water to as many as eighty, plus a wider crowd on land.

Riverfest is run as a collaboration between local associations, with each part of the day hosted by a club: Umealvens Simklubb (the swim and the float), Umea Kanotklubb (kayak safety and a members' tour), Umea Kallbad (the sauna, swim lane and festival site), Rewilding Sweden (nature connection at the finish) and Van i Umea (a guided river walk), with Visit Umea as a promotion partner. In the longer run the festival is also a way to grow these partnerships toward a future kallbadhus and better access to the river in central Umea.

Swimming or floating the full route is pay-what-you-can - a sliding scale starting at 200 kronor, give more if you like. It all goes to safety and running the day, and the fee is paid via Open Collective after signup. The Drift welcomes children with an accompanying adult; the Swim is for ages 15 and up (under-18s bring a parent's signature to check-in). The festival on land is free. Signup and all the details are at [riverfest.se](http://riverfest.se).

Quotes:

“The Umealven runs right through the city and yet it is rarely used by most people. Riverfest is about jumping in, celebrating the river together, and remembering what an asset we have.”

- Kasimir Suter Winter, organiser, Riverfest

“The best thing about Riverfest is that you don’t have to be a strong swimmer to take part. If you just want to sit by the sauna and watch people come in to the finish, it’s just as much your day.” - Josephine, Van i Umea

## Fact box

- **What:** Riverfest - a river festival in Umea. Swim or float 5k, or celebrate on the bank.
- **When:** Saturday 25 July 2026 (fallback days 26-27 July if weather/water are unsafe for the water part).
- **Times:** Briefing 13:00, start 14:00, finish approx 16:30, raffle and awards approx 18:00.
- **Where:** Festival site at Bolesholmarna (Umea Kallbad), central Umea.
- **Route:** approx 5 km downstream, Baggböle to Bolesholmarna.
- **Price:** Swim or float - pay-what-you-can from 200 SEK. The festival on land is free.
- **Age:** The Drift: children with an accompanying adult. The Swim: 15+ (under-18s need a parent’s signature at check-in). The swim lane at the festival site is open to all ages, supervised.
- **2025 in numbers:** 96/100 would recommend, 94/100 for safety and support, 95% felt the finish was a celebration, about 32 people on the water.
- **Web:** riverfest.se
- **On the water:** [TO CONFIRM - food trucks, music act and motorised safety craft are confirmed closer to the date; names not yet fixed.]

## About Riverfest

Riverfest (Riverfest Umea) is a river festival in Umea on the Umealven. People swim or float a roughly five-kilometre stretch from Baggböle down to Bolesholmarna, where the day finishes with a celebration on the bank: a food truck, music, sauna and a relaxed festival atmosphere. You do not have to get in the water to take part - the festival is for everyone. It is run as a collaboration between local associations and, over time, grows those partnerships toward better access to the river in central Umea. 2026 is the second edition. The float activity keeps its original name: the Drift.

## Press contact

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## Notes to the editor

- Press are welcome on site during the day. Get in touch in advance and we will meet you and show you around.
- Organisers and partner representatives are available for interview, in person or by phone, before and during the event.
- High-resolution photos from 2025 are available to download at riverfest.se/press (photo: Fredrik Larsson, free for editorial use with the byline shown).
- Festival and partner-association logos are available.

- [PENDING PERMIT CONFIRMATION] The event runs subject to permits and police sign-off. Until then, signup is an expression of interest. This release is to be sent only once the event is confirmed to go ahead.
- Details such as food trucks, a possible live act and the motorised safety craft are finalised closer to the date [TO CONFIRM].