

The Festival Guy

adapted from an article by Katie Bain

- 1 Tucker Gumber, 34, has dedicated his life to music festivals. As of June 2018, Gumber has logged more than 460 festival days of dancing, camping, listening, eating and generally having the time of his life at shows across the country. And in the process, he's grown quite savvy.
- 2 Gumber is now focused on helping fellow attendees optimize their own festival experiences and elevating 'festival-ing' to a legitimate hobby. Gumber says: "I quit my job and learned how to be a pro who makes festivals better and creates tools for festival-goers." While his lifestyle may be non-traditional — Gumber doesn't have a house and spends most of the year on the road going to shows — as The Festival Guy he's continuing his family's legacy of turning hobbies into jobs. His grandfather was an avid golfer and his dad worked for the Division of Wildlife in Colorado. "My dad's entire job was to enforce the correct way to be an outdoorsman," Gumber says. "I was taught from a young age that there's a right way to do things."
- 3 Which is why what Gumber was seeing at festivals — litter, shoddy campsites, rude attendees, sleep deprivation, lost cars, keys, tents and friends — was so 28. He googled "guide to festival-going" and found there wasn't a comprehensive manual like those written for golfers, fishermen, hunters, snowboarders and hikers. There was no one he could pay to give him a lesson. So, he sought out festival veterans, the people with the comfortable chairs, organized campsites and good shoes, and soaked up all their knowledge.
- 4 He then led by example, finding efficient ways to instill order, and thus greater levels of enjoyment, into the often disorganized and sometimes sloppy festival culture. He developed an app, FestEvo, that helps fans discover new music, connect with friends and gather festival tips. Gumber knows what you should wear, how to pack your car and how to avoid post-fest depression.



- 5 All this information is in *The FestivalGoers Guide*, the book he has written, that should be required reading for any car full of 18-year-olds driving off to their first event. “I’ve been able to cover every angle of festivals because I’ve made all the mistakes there are and paid my dues,” Gumber says. “In my first year of festivals, there wasn’t one that I didn’t have a moment where I didn’t kind of feel like crying because my phone was dead or I’d lost my friends or I couldn’t find my tent.”
- 6 The crying days are long gone. Gumber is now the guy with the lights, the protein shakes and the earplugs. Sweet, funny and blessed with a huge and seemingly permanent smile, Gumber’s love for festival culture — and the music, community, nature and travel within it — is obvious. Like his father before him, Gumber is a hardcore conservationist. (“I was a four-year-old and picking up trash on hikes with my dad, so it hurts my heart to see the litter at festivals.”) He posts a selfie of his clean campsite after every show, organizes two-minute festival clean-ups on Facebook and travels with his own reusable utensils to cut down on waste.
- 7 Last weekend, Gumber shared his 32-1 with hundreds of attendees at Michigan’s Electric Forest. He says the best part of the festival was running into people who had benefited from his advice. One guy ran up and gave him a hug, saying he was able to get some sleep by following Gumber’s 32-2 of removing the rain fly from his tent to create airflow. Telling this story with the same enthusiasm one might use to recap a great day of fishing or particularly epic day on the slopes, it’s clear this hobbyist turned FestivalGoer has found his 32-3.

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