

A Brief and Incomplete History of Comic Cons (It's more than just San Diego and New York)

By Steve Sternberg



I just attended the New York Comic Con, along with roughly 250,000 other folks from all over the world (at last year's convention, I had this photo taken with Krysten Ritter, aka Jessica Jones). So I thought this a good time to write about how these types of gatherings have grown from their humble beginnings to the large-scale, multi-media, multi-genre, mega events they are today.

Comic cons have come a long way since the first "official" comic book convention took place in New York City in 1964 with roughly 100 attendees in a hotel conference room sitting on folding chairs. Today, there are well over 1,000 Comic Cons across the country (and around the world) throughout the year, ranging from giant national multi-day events attracting 100,000+ attendees, to smaller, regional and local conventions drawing 5,000 or less.

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Originally, these conventions focused primarily on comic books and the surrounding culture, where comic book fans could spend a few hours meeting creators, artists, experts, and one another to discuss story arcs, cover art, and buy and sell back issues. Today, they're comic conventions in name only. While you can still buy old comic books (many quite expensive), most comic cons have grown into multi-day events that include numerous pop-culture and entertainment elements, including collectibles of every stripe, comic books, sci-fi, fantasy, horror, anime, manga, toys, animation art, trading cards, video games, graphic novels, professional wrestling, and cosplay (costume

play, where fans dress up as fictional characters from movies, TV shows, comic books, or video games). Celebrity photo ops, autographs, and book signings are also available at the larger conventions, as are movie and television series previews, screenings, and panel discussions.



It was during late 1990s and early-to-mid 2000s, that comic cons really started to grow and expand into broader pop-culture events, helped by the rise of blockbuster sci-fi and superhero movies. The first [X-Men](#) (2000) and [Spider-Man](#) (2002) films, and the rise of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, which began with the 2008 release of [Iron Man](#), and the 2012 [Avengers](#), brought comic-book superheroes into the mainstream.



In addition to the superhero genre, the early-to-mid 2000s saw the [Star Wars](#) prequels generate tremendous publicity, with comic cons that featured production details and previews getting a surge in attendance. During the 2000s, comic cons experienced a period of explosive growth.



At the same time, edgier original ad-supported scripted cable series (such as *Sons of Anarchy*, *Breaking Bad*, and *The Walking Dead*), and premium cable hits (such as *True Blood*, *Dexter*, and *Game of Thrones*) also contributed to igniting fan interest. In the 2010s and 2020s, the emergence of streaming platforms (with shows like *Stranger Things*, along with several new *Star Trek* and Marvel series, created even more anticipation and excitement.



Movie and TV studios, which had long ignored comic cons, started to take notice, and realized large fan gatherings could be used to promote (and get additional press) for upcoming projects. Major stars and casts started showing up in exclusive panel discussions designed to generate buzz and get fans talking. Studios started providing sneak peaks of highly anticipated upcoming projects. With the advent of social media platforms, the reach and influences of these events was amplified even further.



The most well-known and influential conventions in the U.S. are the San Diego Comic Con (SDCC) in July and the New York Comic Con (NYCC) in October, both four-day events. In addition to being a marketplace to buy and sell comic books and other pop-culture items, these have also become major multi-media marketing events – TV and movie stars join panels, pose for photo ops, and sign autographs. Fans often see exclusive trailers of new movies and TV series as well.

Anything related to superheroes or sci-fi tend to have a significant presence at these events. On the TV front, anything sci-fi, fantasy, horror, or even peripherally pop-culture related, on broadcast, ad-supported and premium cable, or streaming platforms, have been represented at these conventions

– although notably, [Star Wars](#) and Netflix have mostly skipped recent comic cons (they have their own fan events – Lucasfilm’s *Star Wars Celebration* and Netflix’s *Tudum*).

Here’s a look at the San Diego and New York Comic Cons:



San Diego Comic Con, doing business as Comic Con International, is a public-benefit non-profit organization. It was founded in 1970 as The Golden State Comic Book Convention, initially drawing around 300 people. By 1973, it was officially re-named the San Diego Comic Con. In 1979, it had just 6,000 attendees, and few (if anyone) realized how big it would eventually become. In 1989, there were still only about 11,000 attendees. There were numerous other annual conventions that were contained in their own universes – *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *Dr. Who*,

etc. – which initially limited the growth of the San Diego show.

Originally a convention designed to showcase comic books and sci-fi/fantasy, studios did not see it as having any value for marketing their upcoming projects. But that began to change during the late 1990s and early 2000s. In 1992, attendance broke 20,000 for the first time, and by 1997, it reached 40,000. Thereafter, it started a real growth spurt, hitting 50,000 in 2001, 60,000 in 2002, 70,000 in 2003, 95,000 in 2004, 103,000 in 2005, 123,000 in 2006, and 130,000+ in 2010.

In 2015, the year the highly anticipated film, [Star Wars: The Force Awakens](#), debuted, SDCC drew its highest attendance ever, at 170,000. Since then, most counts place its annual attendance at 135,000+, which is the maximum capacity of its current venue (the San Diego Convention Center).

SDCC remains the most publicized and influential event of its kind, although no longer the largest.

The 2020 and 2021 conventions were canceled due to the pandemic, and a digital streaming event was held in its place. A smaller in-person “San Diego Comic Con Special Edition” was held in November 2021 (which was quite controversial). Proof of vaccination was required and masks were mandatory. The regular convention returned in July 2022.

The 2023 event took place in the midst of WGA and SAG-AFTRA strikes, and was a more subdued affair with far fewer panels and less major studio participation and celebrity appearances than usual. SAG-AFTRA members were prohibited from participating in promoting their projects, so they couldn’t be involved in most panels.

It was back to full force in 2024. The 2026 convention reportedly drew more than 200,000 people to off-site events and activities. The SDDC’s contract with the city runs through 2026, and there have been rumors that the organizers might consider moving it to other cities (with venues that can hold even larger crowds).

Here’s a look at the major TV show-related panels and presentations at this year’s San Diego Comic Con. While the production studios typically host these events, I’m listing them based on the network or streaming service that airs them.

San Diego Comic Con 2026 TV Panels

ABC	The Rookie
CBS	Ghosts, Eternally Yours (new)
FOX	Bob's Burgers, The Simpsons, American Dad, Family Guy
Adult Swim	My Adventures With Superman season 3, Rick and Morty season 9
AMC/AMC+	The Walking Dead: Dead City season 3, The Vampire Lestat, Yaga (new)
HBO	Euphoria
Apple TV+	Widow's Bay, Dark Matter, Silo season 3
Disney+	Adventure Time: Side Quests, X-Men '97 season 2
HBO Max	Stuart Fails to Save the Universe (new), Lanterns (new, House of the Dragon season 3)
Hulu	Paradise, Adventure Time: Side Quests, King of the Hill, Futurama
Paramount+	Avatar Aang: The Last Airbender (new), Star Trek 60 th Anniversary, Star Tre: Strange New Worlds
Prime Video	Spider-Noir, The Boys, Batman: Caped Crusader season 2, The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power, Blade Runner 2099 (new), Reacher, Neagley (new), Carrie (new), Fallout
Tubi	Breaking Bear (new)



The New York Comic Con (NYCC), produced and managed by ReedPop, started in 2006, and was initially much smaller than the San Diego convention (and took place in February). It was located in the main exhibition hall of the Jacob Javits Center, with a capacity of 10,000. Many more attendees than anticipated showed up (roughly 33,000), and fire marshals had to lock down admissions until enough people left to make space for new folks. I was there, and it was a real mess. Over the next few years, the event took over more space in the Javits Center, moved to October, and attendance started to grow. It would be several more years before it began to rival the San Diego Comic Con.

In 2013, when single-day passes for Thursday (the first day of the four-day event) were available for the first time, attendance topped 130,000, putting it on par with the San Diego show (in attendance, but not yet in influence or the number of all-star panels). In 2014, attendance hit 151,000, making it

the largest show in North America. It grew to 180,000 in 2017, and reached a high of more than 250,000 in 2018 and 2019. The 2020 show was canceled due to COVID. As was the case with the SDCC, a virtual event was held. It returned in a somewhat subdued in-person convention in 2021. All attendees over the age of 12 were required to show proof of vaccination. Attendance was estimated at 200,000 in 2022-24, and reportedly surpassed 250,000 in 2025.

Since the SDCC takes place in California, it traditionally had a much larger presence of Hollywood studios and all-star panels. But that has been gradually changing. While the SDCC is in July, the NYCC is in October, just as the fall TV season is getting underway, and right before any holiday theatrical movies are released.

Here's a list of the major TV show related panels at this year's New York Comic Con.

New York Comic Con 2026 TV Panels

ABC	The Rookie
CBS	NCIS: New York (new), Einstein (new), Ghosts, Eternally Yours (new)
Fox	Bob's Burgers
NBC	Brooklyn Nine-Nine retrospective, Saturday Night Live
CW	Across the Arrowverse, 25 Years of Smallville
AMC/AMC+	Kill Jackie (new), YAGA (new), Anne Rice's Mayfair Witches, The Walking Dead: Daryl Dixon
FX	American Horror Story
HBO	A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms, every Game of Thrones spin-off
Disney+	Marvel Television and Marvel Animation upcoming series, Daredevil: Born Again, Percy Jackson and the Olympians
Hulu	Futurama
Paramount+/SHO	Dexter: Resurrection, 60 Years of Star Trek, Star Trek: Starfleet Academy
Peacock	Crystal Lake (new)
Prime Video	Helluva Boss, Blade Runner 2099 (new), Bloodaxe (new)
Tubi	Terror on Tubi Hub (new)
Crunchyroll	Crunchyroll Showcase, One Piece, ShangriLa Frontier

Other Notable U.S. Comic Cons

There are many other annual comic con style events throughout the U.S. and Canada. Most include comic books, graphic novels, manga, anime, tabletop and video games, sci-fi/fantasy, horror, professional wrestling, webcomics, movies, and television. There are also often opportunities for photos and autographs with actors and artists.

Here are some of the larger comic / pop culture conventions.



Fan Expo is a group of pop-culture conventions operated by Fan Expo HQ, a unit of Informa plc. Most of its events are run under the Fan Expo banner.

In 2021, Informa Acquired Wizard Entertainment's conventions, widely known as **Wizard World**, which produced between 15 and 20 smaller conventions across North America since 1996. The highly popular *Wizard* magazine was founded in 1991. Wizard purchased the Chicago Comic Con in 1997 and re-branded it *Wizard World Chicago*, as it expanded from its core publishing business into comic-book conventions. In 2002, Wizard World expanded to Philadelphia, and then rapidly added other cities to the mix. By 2011, the company discontinued its print division to focus exclusively on its convention business.

The Wizard World events were really a new type of convention, expanding the focus beyond just comic books, to other elements of pop culture and collectibles. While attendance figures are hard to come by, they generally drew anywhere from 10,000 to 80,000+ attendees – the largest one being the Chicago event in August (which attracted 70,000 fans in 2009 and 80,000 in 2013). All the Wizard World comic cons combined, generated between 200,000 and 750,000+ attendees annually,

depending on how many conventions were held in a particular year – it had a high of 25 conventions in 2015, which dropped to 19 in 2016 (when they started losing money), 13 in 2018, and just 6 in 2021, before the business was sold. The six conventions, in Chicago, Cleveland, New Orleans, St. Louis, Philadelphia, and Portland, were re-branded as Fan Expo.

In 2027, Fan Expo events in the North America will include, New Orleans (Jan.), Portland (Jan.), Vancouver (Feb.). Cleveland (Mar.), Philadelphia (May), Dallas (June.), Denver (July), Chicago (Aug.), Canada (Aug.), Boston (Sept.), and Edmonton (Sept.), as well as Megacon Orlando (May), Toronto Comicon (Mar.), and the Calgary Expo (April).

Here are descriptions of the Fan Expo comic cons in order based on number of attendees:



MegaCon Orlando is the second largest comic convention in North America (behind only NYCC). Over the years, the convention has had a number of iterations, owners, and combinations of smaller conventions. It was a much smaller regional convention known as **OrlandoCon** from 1974-1994. **MegaCon** debuted in 1995. It was acquired by Informa in 2015, becoming part of Fan Expo. In 2016 it drew around 100,000 attendees, and grew to more than 160,000 in 2025 and a record-setting 200,000 in 2026. The four-day event is usually held in February or March, but is scheduled for May in 2027.



Fan Expo Canada is the largest pop-culture convention in Canada, and is either the third or fourth largest in North America (behind NYCC, Megacon, Orlando and roughly even with SDCC). The four-day event, which was founded in 1995, typically takes place Toronto in August, the week before Labor Day. It grew from drawing just 1,500 fans in 1995, to about 36,000 in 2005, 128,000 in 2015, and an estimated 135,000+ in 2026.



Fan Expo Denver (formerly **Denver Pop Culture Con**), was acquired by Informa / Fan Expo in 2021 and is the largest Fan Expo branded comic con in the U.S., attracting more than 110,000 attendees over four days in May, June, or July.



Calgary Comic and Entertainment Expo is an annual four-day convention held in Calgary, Alberta. It began as a comic book convention in 2006, with about 3,400 attendees. It got a major boost in credibility and attendance in 2012 when it reunited the cast of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* for its 25th anniversary (roughly 45,000 attended), and two years later when it reunited nearly the entire cast of *Aliens*. It has since grown to be Canada's second largest fan convention, drawing more than 100,000 attendees. The convention was purchased by Informa / Fan Expo in 2017.



Fan Expo Chicago (formerly **Wizard World Chicago**) is one of the larger comic cons in the U.S., with more than 80,000 attendees over three days in August 2026.



Fan Expo Dallas (formerly **Dallas Comic Con**) is a three-day event that takes place in May/June. It was acquired by Informa / Fan Expo in 2014. In 2026, it drew more than 65,000 fans.



Fan Expo Boston (formerly **Boston Comic Con**) was acquired by Informa / Fan Expo in 2016 and typically draws more than 60,000 attendees over three days in August.



Fan Expo Philadelphia (formerly **Wizard World Philadelphia**) is generally held for three days in May and attracts more than 50,000 fans annually.



Canada's **Toronto Comicon** (Mar.) and **Fan Expo Vancouver** (Feb.) typically draw more than 40,000 attendees, **Fan Expo New Orleans** (Jan.), **Portland** (Jan.), and **Cleveland** (Mar.) each draw more than 30,000 per show (and were formerly **Wizard World** events).

The largest U.S. comic cons, consistently drawing **more than 100,000** fans include:



Phoenix Fan Fusion (formerly **Phoenix Comic Con**) is a three-day event held in downtown Phoenix in May or June (most often on Memorial Day weekend). It was founded in 2002 as the **Phoenix Cactus Comicon**, with only a few hundred fans in attendance. By 2016 it had more than 100,000. Attendance declined to 80,000 in 2017 and fell to 57,000 in 2018. But it has since rebounded, with a record-setting attendance of more than 130,000 in 2024 and 2025. Organizers projected up to 150,000 in 2026, but at this writing, actual numbers are not available.



L.A. Comic Con is one of the largest independent comic cons in the U.S. Initially founded as **Comikaze Expo** in 2011 by Regina Carpinelli and her two younger brothers as an event to showcase local Los Angeles talent, the show has gone through several re-brandings – first to *Stan Lee's Comikaze Expo*, then *Stan Lee's L.A. Comic Con*,

and finally just *L.A. Comic Con*. The three-day event (in September or October) has grown substantially, going from 35,000 attendees in 2011 to 123,000 in 2019, and a record 131,000 in 2025.



D23 (formerly the **D23 Expo**) is a three-day event that takes place in even-numbered years. Organized for members of *D23: The Official Disney Fan Club*, it is usually held in August or September. D23 was founded in 2009 (D stands for Disney, and 23 is for 1923, the year Walt Disney founded the company). It started out with a booth at the San Diego Comic Con in 2009, before the first official D23 Expo in 2013 (which drew about 65,000 fans). It includes exclusive first looks at upcoming Disney projects (including anything [Star Wars](#), Pixar, and Marvel, as well as series premiering on Disney+), other special announcements, as well as celebrity appearances, memorabilia trading, exclusive merchandise, and various fan contests. Disney does not release attendance figures for this event, but it has been estimated at well over 100,000 per year.



FanX Salt Lake Comic Convention, inaugurated in 2013 as **Salt Lake Comic Con**, with more than 70,000 attendees. It's Utah's most attended convention, and one of the biggest in the country. According to organizers, it typically draws more than 100,000 attendees during its three days, which have traditionally taken place in September (although it's scheduled for March in 2027).



Chicago Comic & Entertainment Expo (C2E2), run by ReedPop, takes place in March or April, and is the largest pop-culture convention in the Midwest. It has been known for some unique big events, such as when they auctioned off items from the Captain America, Iron Man, and Thor movies. The three-day convention drew 27,500 people to its first show in 2010, but has since grown significantly – estimates place attendance at 75,000 in 2023,

85,000 in 2024, and a record 100,000 in 2025 (which might have been fueled by its *Lord of the Rings* reunion). It stayed at about 100,000 in 2026.



Rhode Island Comic Con was founded in 2012 and is New England's largest pop-culture convention. The three-day November event has grown substantially over the years, and has changed venues a few times to accommodate the larger crowds. It drew about 15,000 attendees in its first year, but grew to an estimated 80,000 in 2016, and 100,000 in 2023 and 2024. Numbers for 2025 are not yet available.

Major comic cons typically getting **between 70,000 and 100,000** fans, include:



Emerald City ComicCon, in Seattle, Washington, began in 2003, as a one-day event with about 3,000 people in attendance. ReedPop, the same folks who organize the New York Comic Con, acquired the event in 2015. The now four-day convention, usually taking place in March or April, has grown to be the largest comic con in the Pacific Northwest (and second largest on the West Coast). It had a record high attendance of 98,000 in 2019, but declined during the pandemic and next few years. It has since rebounded, drawing 90,000 attendees in both 2025 and 2026.



Dragon Con was founded in 1987 with 1,400 fans in attendance. It takes place every year over Labor Day weekend, encompassing five hotels in downtown Atlanta, Georgia. Originally a sci-fi and gaming convention, it added a Comics Expo in 1990 and robotic competition ("Robot Battles") in 1991. Dragon Con also hosted the *International*

Starfleet Conference, and in 1999 introduced the first *Miss Klingon Empire Beauty Pageant*. Since 2002, it also hosted Atlanta's largest annual parade. As of 2017, it became a five-day event, starting the Thursday before Labor Day. Attendance peaked in 2019, when it drew more than 85,000 fans. Attendance declined sharply post-pandemic to just 42,000 in 2021, but rose back up to 72,000 in 2024 and 75,000 in 2025 and 2026



Planet Comicon Kansas City (formerly **Planet Comicon**) in Kansas City, Missouri, is the region's largest pop-culture and comic book event, held over three days in March. The locally-owned and independently operated event started in 1999 with 1,200 attendees and just one celebrity guest (the original R2D2). It drew an estimated 50,000 people in 2018, which grew to 70,000 in 2025.

The next tier of comic cons, with **between 50,000 and 70,000** attendees include:



WonderCon is a three-day comic book, sci-fi, and film convention that was originally held in the San Francisco Bay area (1987-2011) before moving to Anaheim. In 2001, the convention was taken over by Comic-Con International, the company that runs the San Diego Comic Con. It takes place in March or April, and has grown from about 39,000 attendees in 2010 to an estimated 60-70,000 in 2026.



Awesome Con debuted in 2013 with just 7,000 attendees. The three-day Washington, D.C. convention has grown to be one of the larger conventions on the East Coast, attracting about 60,000 people in 2024 and 2025. It typically takes place in March or April.



Rose City Comic Con was founded by Ron and Paula Brister, who got the idea while on a road trip to the San Diego Comic Con in 2011. The first Portland, Oregon convention was held in 2012 with about 4,000 attendees. The following year, it was co-funded and co-organized by Emerald City Comic Con and attracted 18,000 people. The three-day September event steadily grew and now attracts upward of 50,000 fans each year



Motor City Comic Con is held in Novi, Michigan. The three-day event, usually taking place in May, was founded in 1989 by comics retailer, Michael Goldman (with the first show attracting 2,500 fans). Attendance has steadily grown through the years – there were 18,000 attendees in 2012, 30,000 in 2013, 40,000 in 2014, 50,000 in 2015, 60,000 in 2018, and topped out at 70,000 for the 30th anniversary event in 2019. In 2021, they added an October/November edition. They reportedly now draw around 50-55,000 people annually.



The *Supercon* trademark now only applies to **Florida Supercon**, which occurs in July in Miami. It was sold to ReedPop in 2019, and is now the premier pop-culture convention in South Florida, reportedly drawing 50,000+ fans annually.



Albuquerque Comic Con is the largest and longest running convention in New Mexico. The three-day event takes place in January, and has consistently attracted 50,000 or so visitors each year.

The next group of comic cons, with **between 25,000 and 50,000** attendees include:



Comicpalooza debuted in July 2008 in Houston, Texas, to coincide with the release of *The Dark Knight*. The inaugural event was a one-day affair with just 500 attendees. It has since been re-invented a number of times and grown substantially, going from just over 10,000 attendees in 2013 to more than 45,000 in 2025. It takes place over three days in May, June, or July.



Big Texas Comic Con was first held in San Antonio, Texas in 2019, when several staff members of the **Alamo City Comic Con** (which had been around since 2013) decided to break away and form their own event. In its heyday (2014-15), the Alamo City Comic Con reportedly drew more than 70,000 attendees. The Big Texas Comic Con, which takes place over three days in October, is estimated to draw around 40,000-50,000 attendees.



HeroesCon was established in 1982 and takes place in June in Charlotte, North Carolina. It's organized by the *Heroes Aren't Hard to Find* comic book store, and continues to maintain a primary focus on comic books, with an emphasis on artists, writers, and the creative process. It attracts about 40,000-50,000 attendees annually.



GalaxyCon (formerly known as **Super Conventions** or **Supercon**) is run by GalaxyCon, LLC, a privately owned company based in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. It organizes comic book and anime conventions throughout the country, which it refers to as "3-day Festivals of Fandom." GalaxyCon events typically draw between 30,000 and 50,000 fans. In 2027, markets will include, Richmond (Mar.), Oklahoma

City (May), Nashville (June), Raleigh (July), San Jose (Aug.), Des Moines (Sept.), St. Louis (Oct.), and Columbus (Dec.).

GalaxyCon also has several smaller themed events, such as Animate! Raleigh (Jan.), Animate! Orlando (Aug.), Animate! Philadelphia (Oct.), and Nightmare Weekend Raleigh (Oct.).

GalaxyCon is big on marketing autographed celebrity photos and merchandise online, and during the pandemic expanded to include virtual events so fans could meet and chat with celebrities, and get personalized autographs without needing to travel. They continue to provide virtual events throughout the year.



record 50,000 in 2026.

Indiana Comic Convention takes place over three days (usually in March, was in June in 2026). It started in 2014 with about 20,000 attendees, which grew to roughly 30,000 in 2024, 45,000 in 2025, and a



Puerto Rico Comic Con is a three-day event, which It has been held in San Juan, Puerto Rico since 2002 – it was initially called the **Caribbean Sci-Fi Expo**, and took place at a local YMCA. The first convention drew just 1,000 attendees. It was re-branded and moved to a larger location in 2007. Today, it draws roughly 40,000-50,000 visitors each year, and is now the largest pop-culture convention in the Caribbean. The 2026 convention in April reportedly drew more than 50,000 fans.



Twin Cities Con was created by Ben Penrod in 2021, who had also founded comic cons in several other cities, including Awesome Con in Washington, DC. It takes place in Minneapolis over three days in November, and has grown significantly since it debuted with just 2,000 attendees. It reportedly drew 30,000 fans in 2023, 35,000 in 2024, and 40,000 in 2025.



Colorado Springs Comic Con is a three-day August event from Altered Reality Entertainment, the East Coast convention operator behind the Rhode Island Comic Con. The inaugural event was in 2016, and drew more than 10,000 fans. It reportedly now draws about 30,000 attendees each year.



Grand Rapids Comic-Con launched in 2013 as a one-day event, attracting roughly 10,000 attendees. High demand resulted in expanding the event to three days in 2014. Attendance reached 22,000 in 2015. Since 2023, attendance for the November event has reportedly been between 25,000 and 30,000. There is also has an April event known as the Kalamazoo Comic-Con, which draws about 9,000 fans.

There are also numerous medium and smaller sized local conventions across the country every year that draw anywhere from **5,000 to 25,000+** fans. These smaller shows don't get the same media attention as SDCC or NYCC, but they do have loyal followings. They tend to focus more heavily on comic books, with an emphasis on creators (artists and writers). They have a more intimate feel and are often significantly less expensive to attend than some of the larger comic cons.

Here's just a few of them:



SC (Soda City) Comicon is South Carolina's largest comic and pop-culture convention, with a two-day event in April and a single-day fall edition in October. The main spring convention draws 20,000 – 25,000 attendees, while the fall edition gets between 5,000 and 8,000.



South Texas Comic Con was founded in 2014 by Ramsey Ramirez, owner of Kaboom Comics and Kaboom Games. The three-day event takes place in McAllen, Texas in April, and typically draws about 20,000 people.



Tucson Comic Con was founded in 2008 as a single-day convention drawing just 500 attendees. It expanded to a three-day event in 2015 when it attracted 10,000. It currently gets between 20,000 and 25,000 fans.



Baltimore Comic Con started out as a one-day show in 2000, focusing primarily on comic books, extended to two days in 2002, and due to demand from attendees and exhibitors, went to three days in 2014, as it continued to grow in size and popularity. It takes place in September or October, and typically draws 15,000+ fans.



Steel City Con, in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, was founded in 1994 as the **Pittsburgh Comicon**, and was acquired by Wizard World in 2015, before being succeeded by Steel City Con in 2020. The three-day event is generally held three times a year (April, August, and December) and regularly draws 14,000+ attendees.



Big Lick Comic Con was created in 2017 by JD Sutphin, owner of Big Lick Comics in Roanoke, Virginia. The initial two-day event drew 2,000 people.

Since then, it has become a biannual event, held in February and August, currently drawing around 12,000 people. In addition to the Roanoke conventions, it has held events in other Virginia locations and Greensboro, North Carolina.



Nickel City Comic Con is Western New York's largest pop-culture and comic book convention. It began in 2016 and attracts more than 10,000 fans to Buffalo for its summer and fall editions.



Big Apple Comic Con is the longest-running comic-book / pop-culture convention in New York City, having started by retailer Michael Carbonaro in March 1996 in the basement of a church, with 4,000 attendees. During its heyday (2001-2008) it featured multiple shows a year, with its big one in November. The show was acquired by Wizard Entertainment from 2009-13, but re-acquired by Carbonaro/Big Apple CC Corp (BACC) in 2014. The single-day event held in the fall typically draws 8,000-10,000 fans.



Hall of Heroes Comic Con in Elkhart Indiana attracted 6,400 attendees to its inaugural event in 2017. The annual two-day convention is a fundraiser for the Hall of Heroes Superhero Museum, which is the only museum dedicated to the 80-plus year history of superheroes. More recent attendance figures are not publicly available, but estimates place it between 5,000 and 10,000.



Central Florida Comic Con is smaller than other cons in the region, and has been around since 2018. The two-day event reportedly draws about 7,000 attendees, and is primarily focused on comic books and related merchandise.



Great Lakes Comic Con started in 2010 in Southeastern Michigan, with fewer than 100 attendees. The three-day event has since gradually grown, drawing about 3,000 people in 2015, 5,000 in 2020, and 7,000 in 2024 (figures for 2025 and 2026 are not available).



Garden State Comic Fest began in 2014 and has multiple events in New Jersey throughout the year. There's a summer version in West Orange in June, a "Winter Fest" takes place in Sussex County in January, and a November convention in Vineland. The events reportedly draw 5,000+ fans.



Central Carolina Comic Con had its inaugural two-day event in South Carolina in January 2025, with a reported 5,000+ attendees. Figures for the 2026 event are not yet available, but are likely similar.



Arctic Comic Con is a two-day April event in Anchorage, Alaska, which began in 2018. There is no publicly available attendance data, but it probably draws 5,000+ people each year.

Comic cons are not confined to the U.S., as numerous events, large and small, take place throughout the world. Here are some of the biggest – the first four can arguably claim to currently be the largest global comic / pop-culture conventions:



Japan's **Comiket**, was at one time the undisputed world champion of pop-culture events, having grown from fewer than 10,000 in 1982 to over half a million in the mid-2000s (with a reported record 750,000 in 2019). The twice a year Tokyo convention (winter and summer) ran for four days pre-pandemic and switched to two days post-pandemic. The summer 2025 event reportedly had more than 250,000 attendees, with winter 2025 drawing 300,000 and summer 2026 getting 260,000.



BilibiliWorld (BW Comic Con) in Shanghai is one of China's largest ACG (anima, comics, gaming) expos. It attracted around 250,000 visitors in 2024, 300,000 in 2025, and a record 400,000 in 2026 (the first time tickets were reportedly sold to international fans outside mainland China).



Lucca Comics and Games Festival has traditionally been Europe's largest comics and gaming event, second globally to Comiket (although now comparable, with attendance reportedly hitting 280,000 in 2025). The five-day event in Lucca, Italy takes place at the end of October, in conjunction with All Saints Day.

The logo for CCXP (Comic Con Experience) is displayed on a yellow rectangular background. The letters 'CCXP' are in a bold, purple, sans-serif font.

CCXP (Comic Con Experience) is a four-day event in São Paulo, Brazil, that reportedly drew about 280,000 attendees in 2023 and 2025 (and 350,000 in 2024).



Angoulême International Comics Festival in France takes place over four days on the last weekend of January and attracts roughly 200,000 attendees (although controversial counting methods make many think the actual number is significantly lower). The festival also awards several prestigious prizes for cartooning. The festival's organizers reportedly faced considerable backlash from comic creators and publisher unions, over its management practices, resulting in a large boycott. After losing its funding, the 2026 event was canceled. A new group has been awarded a five-year contract, and the new festival is slated to return in 2027.



MCM London Comic Con draws more than 100,000 fans to its twice-a year event (which takes place over three days on the last weekend in May and October). It drew 130,000 in 2024, and a record 150,000 in 2025.