BRAND USA

NEWS RELEASE

Christmas in the USA

November 12, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (November 12, 2024) — From the world-famous tree at New York's Rockefeller Center to Surfing Santas, Christmas boat parades and a town called Santa Claus, there's nothing like Christmas in the USA.

"Whether you're looking for a cozy winter getaway, fabulous shopping, cultural attractions like concerts or 'The Nutcracker,' or a warm, sunny Christmas, we've got it," said Fred Dixon, president and CEO of Brand USA, the nation's destination marketing organization.

NORTHEAST AND MID-ATLANTIC

The towering tree at Rockefeller Center is a must for any holiday visit to New York. Other city favorites include magical window displays at department stores like Macy's, Saks Fifth Avenue and Bergdorf Goodman; the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Neapolitan baroque creche; New York City Ballet's "Nutcracker," and Radio City Rockettes' "Christmas Spectacular." Shop at unique holiday markets in Bryant Park, Union Square and Grand Central. To celebrate Hanukkah, a massive menorah will be lit at Fifth Avenue and 59th Street for eight nights beginning Dec. 25.

Washington, D.C., attractions include the National Christmas Tree and the National Menorah on the White House Ellipse; the U.S. Capitol tree on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol; ZooLights at the National Zoo, and the U.S. Botanic Garden, which hosts a model train show, thousands of poinsettia plants and more. For shopping, check out the DowntownDC Holiday Market outside the Smithsonian American Art Museum and Dupont Circle's DC Holiday Market.

At Virginia's Colonial Williamsburg, you'll find tours, street theater, concerts, craft workshops and special menus, all themed on the history of Christmas in early America. Nearby, Busch Gardens Christmas Town offers one of the largest lighting displays in North America, along with Christmas shows, Santa's Fireside Feast and holiday shopping.

For a charming winter-themed getaway, consider picturesque Vermont towns like Woodstock, Manchester, Grafton or Stowe, or start your adventures from the state's biggest city, Burlington. Try downhill or cross-country skiing; go sleigh-riding, snowshoeing or snowmobiling, or just curl up by a fireplace with a cup of hot chocolate.

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, founded on Christmas Eve in 1741, is nicknamed "Christmas City." Tour the historic district with a costumed guide; view the city's famed mountaintop star, 91 feet tall, on a Bethlehem by Night bus ride; and shop at Christkindlmarkt and Christmas City Village. Don't miss the unique Live Advent Calendar, featuring music, stories, treats and more.

MIDWEST

In the Indiana town of Santa Claus, you can roast chestnuts on an open fire at Santa's Candy Castle, shop at Santa Claus Christmas store, decorate Christmas cookies and experience Christmas dinner with Santa. Indianapolis, meanwhile, offers the massive Newfields' Winterlights display, WinterFaire at the world's largest children's museum, and the Athenaeum Christkindlmarkt for shopping.

In Columbus, Ohio, German Village offers a European-style holiday marketplace complete with cobblestone streets, cafes and Christmas decor, while visitors to Steubenville's Nutcracker Village will see 215 life-sized, handcrafted nutcrackers and a collection of 400 crèches from around the world. In Cleveland, visit the house where "A Christmas Story" was filmed.

In Chicago, Illinois, go shopping along the iconic Magnificent Mile or visit the downtown Christkindlmarkt. Glide along the Skating Ribbon in Maggie Daley Park with views of the skyline and Lake Michigan; see 50 decorated trees honoring holidays around the world at the Griffin Museum of Science and Industry, and check out lighting displays at the zoo, Botanic Garden and Morton Arboretum. Theater fans will want to catch "A Christmas Carol" and a live version of "It's A Wonderful Life."

In Minnesota, Minneapolis' Holidazzle festival runs Dec. 18-22, with interactive light displays, pop-up markets, live music and more. At the nearby Mall of America — the country's largest shopping mall — you can shop til you drop, meet elves and Santa, enjoy lavish decorations and visit the Candy Cane Institute. In Duluth, nicknamed "Christmas City of the North," go dogsledding, see the incredible Bentleyville "Tour of Lights," and look for the Northern Lights.

THE SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST

In New Orleans, Louisiana, the NOLA ChristmasFest, Dec. 20-30, offers a skating rink, gingerbread village and carnival rides, while restaurants around the city host Reveillon, a Creole holiday feast. Enjoy the 25-acre light display in New Orleans City Park, free concerts at St. Louis Cathedral, caroling in Jackson Square and bonfires along the Mississippi River.

Parts of artsy Asheville, North Carolina, were hurt by recent floods, but many attractions are welcoming tourists again, and Christmas at Asheville's famous Biltmore Estate promises to be as charming as ever. Candlelight Christmas Evenings reimagine Biltmore's first-ever Christmas in 1895, complete with live music, glittering decorations and cozy fireplaces. Stay at an onsite hotel, tour the main house and grounds, and see the spectacular Chihuly at Biltmore exhibition.

In Florida, check out St. Augustine's Nights of Lights, Pensacola's Winterfest, and in Miami, the Luminosa festival and Santa's Enchanted Forest. Holiday boat parades take place Dec. 14 in Fort Lauderdale and Dec. 7 in Jupiter, while Surfing Santas arrive in Cocoa Beach at 7:30 a.m. on Dec. 24. Disney World hosts Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party and Epcot's International Festival of the Holidays, while Universal Orlando hosts Grinchmas. The tiny town of Christmas, near Orlando, is home to a Santa statue, streets named for Santa's reindeer and a post office where mail is postmarked "Christmas."

THE WEST, NORTHWEST AND SOUTHWEST

In Colorado, Denver'sspectacular Mile High Drone Show lights up the sky for 40 nights beginning Nov. 22, while other glittering light displays can be found at the Denver Botanic Gardens, Denver Zoo, Elitch Gardens, Cherry Creek North and around downtown. Shows include Cleo Parker Robinson's "Granny Dances to a Holiday Drum," and cool Christmas concerts at the Dazzle jazz club.

In nearby Golden, The Polar Express Train Ride — themed on the children's book and film — includes caroling and a visit with Santa. Take the train from Denver's Union Station straight to the Winter Park ski resort, or go skiing at Breckenridge, about 80 miles away (130 kilometers), where a Christmas parade of Bernese mountain dogs takes place Dec. 7.

In New Mexico, Albuquerque's Luminaria Tour shows off the local tradition of paper lanterns lining plazas and pathways. Shop at Santa Fe's Winter Spanish Market; take a boat ride to see Carlsbad's Pecos River glittering with millions of lights; and visit a native community like Taos Pueblo, which marks Christmas Eve with bonfires, the Procession of the Virgin and rifle salutes from ancient adobe dwellings.

Christmas in California includes the Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade, Dec. 18-22, and the Festival of Lights at Riverside's historic Mission Inn. In the Los Angeles area, see the tree at The Grove, holiday lights on Rodeo Drive, Pershing Square's ice rink, and the Dec. 1 Hollywood Christmas Parade. Bob Baker Marionette Theater has been staging "The Nutcracker" with puppets since 1969, while Walt Disney Concert Hall hosts holiday concerts, a singalong and screenings of the movie "Home Alone" accompanied by a live orchestra.

Universal Studios Hollywood theme park offers holiday fun at The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, Super Nintendo World, and of course, Grinchmas at Whoville. Disneyland hosts a Christmas Fantasy Parade, icicles on the Sleeping Beauty Castle and spectacular holiday lights at "It's a Small World."

For Christmas fun in Oregon, try Portland's Holiday Brew Fest for beer lovers; Victorian Christmas Open Houses in Florence; and Bend's waterway parade of decorated kayaks, canoes and paddleboards. Outdoor winter adventures include truffle-hunting, snowshoeing and eagle-watching.

The bright lights of Las Vegas, Nevada, get a holiday makeover for Christmas. The Las Vegas Motor Speedway hosts a Glittering Lights show; Enchant Las Vegas features a light maze and holiday scavenger hunt, and M Resort in nearby Henderson hosts Candy Rush, a drive-through animated light show. The Bellagio Conservatory reimagines its floral displays for winter while its famous fountains dance to Christmas music, and the Fontainebleau turns its pool deck into an ice rink.

Hawai'i puts a tropical spin on Christmas with holiday luaus and hula shows, Santa arriving by outrigger canoe, and beach resorts decked out for the season. It's also a great time of year for whale-watching.

PUERTO RICO

Puerto Rico has the USA's longest holiday season, starting with Christmas light displays in town squares across the island and churches holding special Misa de Aguinaldo services, Dec. 16-24. Festivities continue with Three Kings Day, Jan. 6, and the San Sebastian Festival, Jan. 16-20.

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About Brand USA
Brand USA is the nation's destination marketing organization, dedicated to attracting legitimate international inbound travel to strengthen the U.S. economy, increase exports, create quality jobs, and promote community prosperity. By running data-driven campaigns and unifying messaging across industry and government, Brand USA positions the United States as a top global destination while providing current visa and entry information.

Over the past 13 years Brand USA has driven 11.3 million additional international visitors who spent $38.1 billion in the United States, leading to $82.9 billion in total economic impact and sustaining an average of more than 40,000 jobs each year. These efforts have generated nearly $11 billion in attributable tax receipts at the federal, state, and local levels.

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