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Holiday GUIDE 2025

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Holiday Happenings in The Wildwoods: Christmas 2025

The Wildwoods transform into a festive wonderland each holiday season, offering a lineup of family-friendly activities, dazzling lights, and holiday cheer.

From beach bonfires to Christmas parades, this coastal town offers a magical holiday experience for all ages. Whether you're a local or a visitor, you won't want to miss the charming festivities that make the Wildwoods the perfect winter destination.

Here's your guide to this year's holiday events in the Wildwoods, from the Holiday Shopping Village to Greater Wildwood Jaycees Christmas Parade to the Family Holiday Celebration and spectacular shows. Let the holiday magic begin!

Window Decorating Contest - FREE - December 2025 | Wildwoods Convention Center
Stroll or bike by the Wildwoods Convention Center to admire the creative and festive holiday window decorations painted by local students. The Elks Window Decorating Contest brings a charming and cheerful display of holiday spirit to the boardwalk, making it a must-see this season. For more details, visit WildwoodHoliday.com.

Wildwoods December Restaurant Week - November 28 - December 7, 2025
Dine at some of the island's best restaurants with three-course meals during Wildwoods Restaurant Week. Participating restaurants will offer pre-fixe menus for breakfast (\$10), lunch (\$15), and dinner (\$40). Visit WildwoodsRestaurantWeek.com for details and participating locations.

Family Holiday Beach Bonfire - Nov 28 | 2nd & Surf Ave., N. Wildwood | 4:30 - 8:30 PM
Kick off the holiday season with the North Wildwood Volunteer Fire Company for a cozy evening by the beach, complete with music and photo ops with Santa. Donations are \$10 for adults and \$2 for children under 12, with proceeds benefiting local causes. Rain date: November 29. For more information, visit WildwoodHoliday.com.

Christmas in North Wildwood - FREE - November 29-30, 2025
Enjoy outdoor firepits, hot chocolate, festive lights, a strolling Santa, scavenger hunts, holiday decorations, and live music while celebrating the holidays in North Wildwood. For more information, visit NW-BOA.com.

Wildwoods Holiday Shopping Village - Small Business Saturday - November 29, 2025 | Byrne Plaza & Downtown Wildwood | 10:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Pick up gifts for everyone on your list at the 6th Annual Wildwoods Holiday Shopping Village, where local artisans, boutique shops, handcrafted items, and baked goods come together. The event also supports the Lynch Who Stole Christmas From The Gr'nch Program, where you can drop off gifts for those in need. Follow the festive sounds of holiday music as you explore local vendors for unique gifts. www.gwcoc.org/wildwoods-holiday-shopping-village.

Holidays at HenVile: Shopping Village - FREE - November 30 & December 7, 14 & 21, 2025 | MudHen Brewing Company | 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Visit the annual Shopping Village at MudHen Brewing Co., featuring live music, hot cocoa, s'mores stations, and family entertainment. Secure your name on the nice list because Santa and Mrs. Claus will be making special appearances on select dates! For more details, visit mudhenbrew.com.

Wildwood Crest Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony - FREE - December 1, 2025 | Sunset Lake, Wildwood Crest | 5:00 PM

Spark that seasonal spirit at the annual Wildwood Crest Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony. This festive event will feature music, light refreshments, and a special visit from Santa Claus himself! Gather with the community to enjoy the holiday cheer by the scenic Sunset Lake as the Christmas tree lights up the night. For more details, visit WildwoodCrest.org.

Greater Wildwood Jaycees Christmas Parade - FREE - December 5, 2025 | 6:00 PM | North Wildwood and Wildwood

One of the highlights of the season, the parade starts at 16th Avenue and travels down Central and Pacific Avenues, ending with a tree lighting and awards ceremony at Byrne Plaza. Come see festive floats, marching bands, and more! www.dooww.com.

Wildwood Business Improvement District Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony - FREE - December 5, 2025 | Byrne Plaza, Downtown Wildwood | Approximately 8:00 PM
Watch as the Christmas tree illuminates Downtown Wildwood, marking the beginning of the holiday season. For more information, visit WildwoodHoliday.com.

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Holiday Happenings in The Wildwoods: Christmas 2025

Greater Wildwood Jaycees Downtown Wildwood Christmas in the Plaza - FREE - December 5-6, 2025 | Byrne Plaza, Downtown Wildwood
 After the parade, enjoy free carnival rides, vendors, and live music at Byrne Plaza. Friday night's activities run from 5:00 PM to 8:30 PM, with even more fun on Saturday from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. For more information, visit dooww.com.

North Wildwood Tree Lighting Ceremony - FREE - December 6, 2025 | Hereford Inlet Lighthouse Courtyard | 5:00 PM
 Join the community for the North Wildwood Tree Lighting Ceremony at the beautiful Hereford Inlet Lighthouse Courtyard. The event includes holiday music, light refreshments, and a special visit from Santa Claus. Don't forget to explore the lighthouse and its festive decorations! For more information, visit NorthWildwood.com.

Santa Paws - FREE - December 6, 2025 | North Wildwood Entertainment District
 Calling all dog lovers! Dress up your furry friends in festive outfits and join the fun at Santa Paws. This adorable event takes place in North Wildwood's Entertainment District, where you and your pets can enjoy doggie treats and photo ops along the route. Prizes will be awarded for the best-dressed pups, so get creative with those costumes! For more details, visit NWBOA.com.

Wildwood Holiday Spectacular - December 6 | Wildwood Convention Center | 7:00 PM
 The Bobby Rydell Foundation brings back the beloved Wildwood Holiday Spectacular, with performances from Brooklyn Bridge, Richie Santa tribute to Elvis, Tommy Cono, and Wildwood's Own Joey M. Sing along to classic hits and holiday favorites that will spark your holiday spirit. Tickets are available at thebobbyrydellfoundation.org.

Holiday Tree Jubilee - FREE - December 7 | Crest Arts Pavilion, Wildwood Crest | 12 - 2PM
 Vote on your favorite mini holiday trees at the Holiday Tree Jubilee, and decorate ornaments for the Crest beach tree. Enjoy hot chocolate, cookies, and a visit from Santa. And don't forget to bring an unwrapped gift for the Lunch With Lynch Toy Drive. For more information, call 609.522.0221 or email cac@wildwoodcrest.org. wildwoodcrest.org.

Wildwood's Winter Wonderland at Holly Beach Park - FREE - December 12-13 & 19-20 2025 | 123 E. Andrews Ave., Wildwood | 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Experience the festive lights at Wildwood's Winter Wonderland! Enjoy a half-hour light show running every half hour from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Complimentary hot chocolate, popcorn, and a letters-to-Santa station will be available, with a special appearance from Mr. & Mrs. Claus. The light displays will continue through mid-January. For more information, visit WildwoodNJ.org.

Family Holiday Celebration & Tree Lighting Ceremony - FREE - December 13, 2025 | Wildwoods Convention Center | 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
 Spend the day shopping at the Holiday Bazaar, where local crafters and vendors will offer unique holiday gifts. The day is packed with family-friendly activities like craft-making, face painting, and holiday movies. At 4:00 PM, join the crowd for the much-anticipated tree lighting ceremony, marking the official start of the holiday season in the Wildwoods. For more details, visit WildwoodHoliday.com.

Pinch the 'GrYnch' Boardwalk 5K Run - December 13 | Wildwoods Boardwalk | 10:00 AM
 Get in the holiday spirit with the Pinch the GrYnch Boardwalk 5K Run and 1-Mile Walk. Participants of all ages are encouraged to dress in festive holiday attire as they race down the scenic Wildwoods Boardwalk. This fun, family-friendly event also supports a great cause—registration fees are reduced if you bring a new, unwrapped toy for donation. Registration is \$30 per person, or \$20 with a toy donation. For more details, visit LynchToyDrive.com or call 609.849.8887.

12 Pubs of Christmas - December 13, 2025 | At Participating Establishments
 Raise your glass and toast to the holiday season at the 12 Pubs of Christmas! Celebrate with happy hour pricing, festive drinks, and holiday vibes at participating pubs across The Wildwoods. A free jitney will transport you around, making sure the holiday cheer keeps flowing! For more information, visit NW-BOA.com.

Holiday Light Walk - FREE - December 15, 2025 | Sunset Lake, Wildwood Crest | 5:30 PM
 Walk through the beautifully lit holiday displays along Sunset Lake and surrounding neighborhoods. This 30-minute walk is a wonderful way to enjoy the lights and get into the holiday spirit. wildwoodcrest.org

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Smithville is a Winter Wonderland!

When you get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the holidays, plan a day at Smithville to slow it down, enjoy your family and be reminded of the simpler pleasures of the holidays. Smithville in December is just what your holidays need!

Light Show on the Lake: Everyday in December 5:30-8:30

Over 120 Christmas Trees constructed from over 50,000 Christmas lights, magically float on Lake Meone in the center of Historic Smithville and the Village Greene. The moment darkness falls, an orchestrated show of lights and music is played out across the lake. The lights seem to dance and chase each other to the music all the while reflecting off the water's surface. This show can be seen from either side of the village as well as the bridge.



Dickens Fest: Saturday November 29, 1pm and 7pm. Sunday November 30, 1pm
 Riddlesbrood Touring Theatre Company brings the Spirit of Christmas to Historic Smithville, 615 E. Moss Mill Rd, Smithville, NJ 08205, with a two day outdoor "Dickens Fest" featuring an original, musical adaptation of "A Christmas Carol", Charles Dickens' heartwarming, classic tale of redemption and transformation. "Dickens Fest" is free to the public and parking is free.

Hospitality Night: Saturday, Dec. 6, 6pm-9pm

Each year the shoppes at Historic Smithville thank their loyal customers with a Hospitality Night of Discounts, Refreshments, Live Entertainment and Raffles.

Breakfast with Santa at Fred and Ethel's Lantern Light: Reservations needed, Sunday, December 7 and 14. *Reservations needed - Lantern Light 609-652-0544*

Girls Night Out: Thursday, Dec. 11, 6pm-9pm

December in Smithville has something for the Girls too! An evening for the ladies to shop and celebrate the Holiday season together. There will be wine and cheese, raffles, discounts and other benefits for evening shopping. Grab your best girl friend and come join us!

S'mores on the Greene: Each Friday, Saturday and Sunday in the month of December you can find us making s'mores around the camp fire on the Greene. For a small fee you will purchase your own s'mores packet and stick and make delicious yummy treats or just gather with us and enjoy. 5pm - 8pm weather permitting (high winds or rain are the only thing that will prevent this event)

The Magic Talking Christmas Tree: Friday Dec. 4th, 12th & 18th 4pm-8pm
 Saturday Dec. 5th, 12th & 19th from 12-8pm. Sunday Dec. 6th, 13th & 20th from 12-7pm (Free Event)

If you are having trouble locating Mrs. Claus, you can always ask the Magic Tree. You heard me right!! Next to the Smithville Train Station an over sized Christmas tree is brought in from Santa's private forest. This beautifully decorated Christmas tree awakens to talk with you and your children about the upcoming holidays and, well, anything you might want.

Right next to the Magic Talking Tree the **Smithville Train** has decorated it's tracks for the Holiday's. For \$3.00 per person, you take a 6 1/2 minute ride on the outskirts of Smithville on this fun, whimsical train. Both the train and carousel are open village hours weather permitting throughout the month of December.

Please contact The Colonial Inn 609-748-8999 for questions.



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Celebrate the official start of the holiday season in the Wildwoods this December by attending four unique and festive tree lighting ceremonies across the 5-mile island. The spirit of the season illuminates in Wildwood, Wildwood Crest, North Wildwood, and at the Wildwoods Convention Center. Visit each event for festive treats, holiday music, photos with Santa, and create lasting family memories!



Monday, December 1 - Wildwood Crest Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony. Visit Sunset Lake at Atlanta and New Jersey Avenues in Wildwood Crest at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, December 1, 2025. The tree lighting ceremony will kick off the Christmas season in the borough. Enjoy music, light refreshments, a visit from Santa Claus and more! The rain date is Tuesday, December 2, 2025. For more information call 609-523-0202 or visit www.wildwoodcrest.org.

Friday, December 5 - North Wildwood Tree Lighting. This festive ceremony will take place at the Hereford Inlet Lighthouse Courtyard, 1st and Central Avenues in North Wildwood, at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 6, 2025. The Christmas tree lighting event includes holiday music by Margaret Mace School Choir, refreshments, a self-guided tour of the lighthouse, and Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus! The Hereford Inlet Lighthouse Gardens and Courtyard will be decorated with Christmas lights for visitors to enjoy for free throughout the holiday season. For more information, call 609-522-2955 or visit www.NorthWildwood.com.

Saturday, December 13 - Wildwoods Convention Center Tree Lighting. The Wildwoods Tourism Authority will illuminate the Wildwoods Convention Center Christmas tree culminating the Family Holiday Celebration taking place from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 13, 2025. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be there to assist in the tree lighting ceremony, which begins at 4:00 p.m. in front of the Wildwoods Convention Center. For more information call 609-729-9000.

For more information about the Holidays in the Wildwoods, call 609-729-9000 or visit www.WildwoodHoliday.com. For info about the Wildwoods, visit www.WildwoodsNJ.com or call 800-992-9732.

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2025 Holiday Guide

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Michael Stark	Co-Publisher
Mike Breslin	Co-Publisher
Deana M. Kozlowski	Art Director
Jacquelyn Tocci	Production & Design Manager
Brian Baehrle	Graphic Designer
Bill & Lynn	Distribution
Steve & Keith	Distribution

Ridgewood Plaza #203 • 2327 New Rd., Northfield, NJ 08225
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Info at capemaymac.org/experience/christmas-in-cape-may/

What better place to get into the true spirit of Christmas than Victorian Cape May? This seaside town is transformed into a Dickens village for the holidays with garlands of fragrant greens and twinkling gaslights. Wrap yourself in the warmth of holiday spirit and sample a variety of fun tours and events.

CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHT HOUSE TOURS - Cape May MAC launched its first Christmas tour in 1974 and ever since this tour has been a beloved annual tradition and a highlight of the holiday season in America's only National Historic Landmark City. This self-guided walking tour celebrates the best of Cape May at Christmas, as you travel Cape May's gaslit streets, hear musicians and carolers, and visit homes, inns, B&Bs, churches and hotels where you'll step inside to see both Victorian and more modern interiors beautifully decorated for the holidays. Don't miss Cape May's longest running and most popular Christmas tour.

HOLIDAY INNS TOUR - For those looking for a festive daytime tour, the Holiday Inns Tour is your ticket to step inside several Cape May properties decorated for the holidays with garland, bows, trees and more! You'll get into the Christmas spirit as you tour these festively decorated Cape May landmark properties. This is a self-guided tour, so please bring your ticket to the Washington Street Mall Information Booth located at the junction of Washington and Ocean Streets and get a copy of the map. A trolley shuttle will make continuous loops during this self-guided afternoon tour.

HOLIDAY LIGHTS TROLLEY RIDES - Who can resist the twinkle of Cape May's beautiful Victorian homes decorated for Christmas? This trolley ride through the historic streets of Cape May is a delight. Listen to Christmas music and enjoy hearing about the history of many of the Christmas traditions of today. Victorian Cape May is outstanding at Christmas and this is a ride to share with friends and family to revel in Cape May's Christmas spirit. Trolleys are open-air. Blankets are recommended. Cape May MAC blankets are available for purchase at the Washington Street Mall Information Booth and the Physick Estate. Tour begins and ends at the trolley stop on Ocean Street.

LAMPLIGHTER CHRISTMAS WALKING TOUR - See inside a selection of Cape May bed & breakfast inns and private homes, specially decorated for the holidays on this self-guided evening walking tour that includes a visit to An Old-fashioned Christmas Exhibit in the Carroll Gallery at the Physick Estate Carriage House.

SANTA'S TROLLEY RIDES - Mrs. Claus comes direct from the North Pole to lead this tour! She tells stories and leads holiday songs on this jolly holiday trolley ride through town. Santa joins the fun at the Gazebo on the grounds of the 1879 Emlen Physick Estate. Begins and ends at the Physick Estate, 1048 Washington St. (with free parking available)

SPIRITED CAPE MAY CHRISTMAS TROLLEY RIDE - Step on board for this evening trolley ride during the Christmas season in historic Cape May! Hear tales of Christmases long, long ago and not so long ago, as you travel along lovely streets in the historic district. Hear about Santa arriving at this seaside town in odd and surprising ways, ghostly appearances in the 1879 Physick House museum experienced and recorded by staff during the holidays, ghostly shadow spirits out strolling on cold December nights, the weird and risky games Victorians played at Christmas, and more.

EVENING YULETIDE HOUSE TOUR - Take this guided, first-person living history holiday tour of first-floor rooms of the magnificent 1879 Physick Estate, Cape May's only Victorian house museum, decorated in authentic Victorian style for Christmas. Your guide portrays a member of the Physick family in the early 1900s and shares stories and traditions. The tour also includes a visit to the Carroll Gallery to see "An Old-fashioned Christmas" exhibit, featuring a huge Christmas tree, model trains, and an elaborate Dept. 56 Dickens village collection.

EMLÉN PHYSICK ESTATE HOUSE TOUR - See Cape May's Victorian House Museum, the 1879 Emlen Physick House, decorated in true Victorian style for Christmas on this holiday tour. Your guide will take you through the first and second floors of the 18-room mansion, voted "the most beautiful building in New Jersey," and explain its importance and the history of the family and staff who lived and worked here. Learn about Victorian Christmas traditions along the way. Afterwards, visit the Carroll Gallery in the estate's Carriage House to see "An Old-Fashioned Christmas" exhibit, with a marvelous Dept. 56 Dickens Village display.

CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHT HOUSE TOUR - A virtual experience - (Vimeo On Demand) From the comfort of your home, experience Cape May's Christmas Candlelight House Tour, a beloved annual tradition for nearly half a century, virtually! The trailer is available to watch online anytime <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/capemaychristmastour>.

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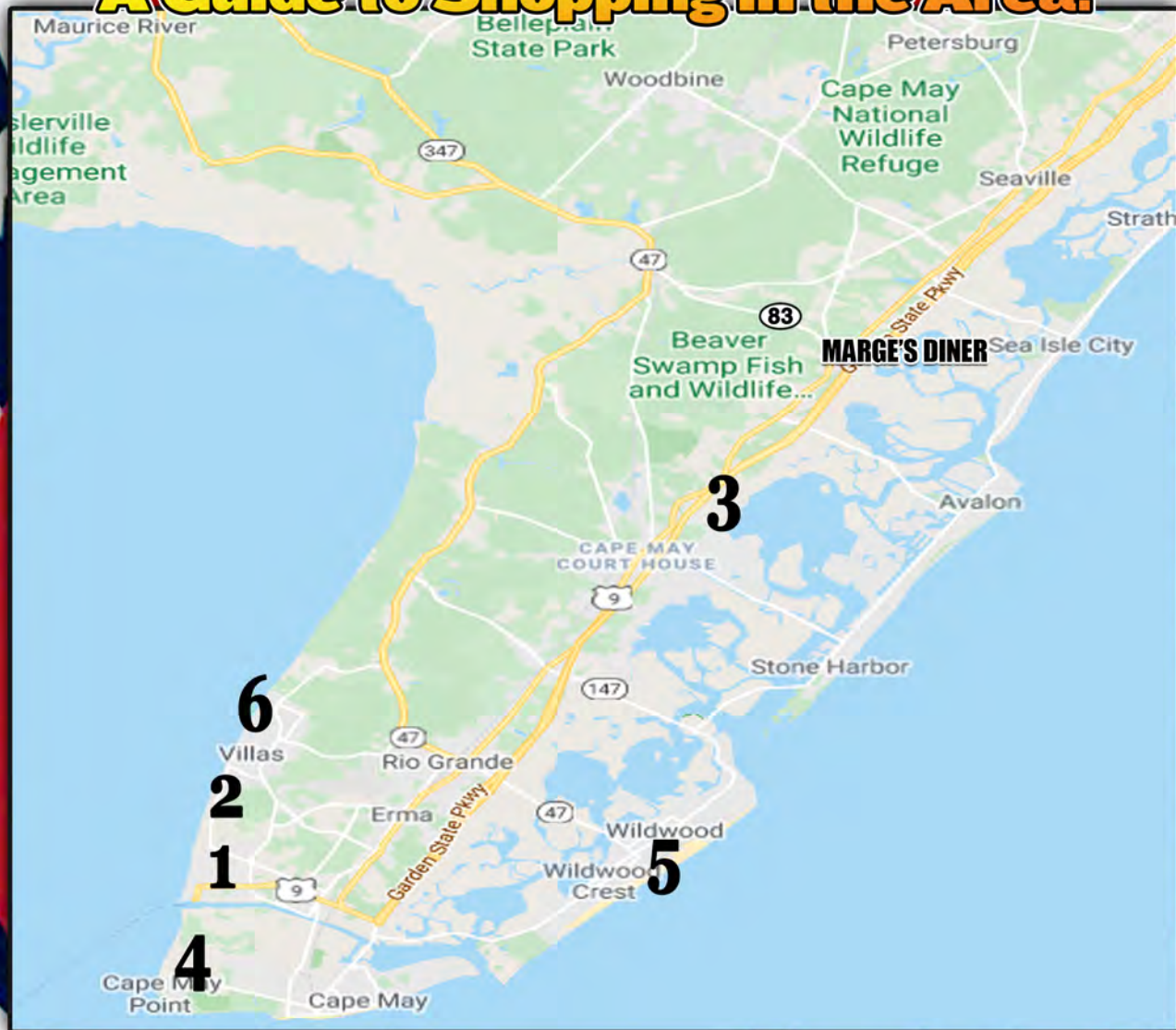
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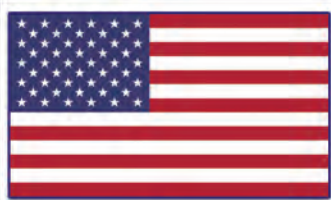
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"Adopt an Animal" from the Cape May County Zoo

Give the gift of something unique this Christmas with Cape May County Zoo's "Adopt An Animal" package! Delight your loved ones by symbolically adopting one of ten different zoo animals, including this year's special, Darwin, the ring-tailed lemur. Not only will you be spreading cheer, but your purchase also supports the Zoo and our conservation efforts. Find all the details at www.cmczoo.com

Not one, but two ring-tailed lemurs - Darwin and his mate Felana - lead a lively troop in the Cape May County Zoo's primate exhibit. Ring-tailed lemurs are endangered, with wild populations declining rapidly due to habitat destruction in Madagascar. The majority of lemurs in human care are found in zoos and research facilities, contributing to global breeding programs like the Species Survival Plan (SSP).



Both lemurs at the zoo are classic black-and-white striped beauties. Darwin is the easygoing leader of the two individuals. He comes across as having a relaxed, social personality. Felana has some more vibrant energy in her movements. She's a bit more active than Darwin and very attentive to their young. We've still managed to exhibit them daily, so stop by to check them out!

Darwin says, "I'm Darwin and I'm here to teach you about ring-tailed lemurs! We are primates. Most primates live in trees and undergo changes to adulthood. In fact, 'primate' means 'first' - we're highly intelligent with opposable thumbs and complex social lives. We live in matriarchal troops with up to 25 members, using our iconic striped tails for balance, communication, and even 'stink fights' to mark territory. Anyone, lemurs develop social bonds but, unlike most primates, we spend 40% of our time on the ground foraging for fruit, leaves, and insects. We're considered endangered, meaning we keep vital characteristics into adulthood. We're also able to form strong social ties, further helping us maintain our troop's structure!"

Package Options - Basic \$50 - Official adoption certificate, color photo of Darwin, fun fact sheet on ring-tailed lemurs, and a mention on the zoo's adoption board. Supports daily care and enrichment. Premium \$70 - Everything in Basic, plus a 12-inch plush lemur toy and personalized holiday greeting card. Funds habitat conservation efforts.

All adoptions are symbolic and valid for one year - perfect for gifting! 100% of proceeds go toward the zoo's veterinary care, exhibit improvements, and international conservation partnerships, including support for the Ring-tailed Lemur Species Survival Plan to protect wild populations in Madagascar. Customize your package online for holiday delivery. Swing into the holidays with Darwin - adopt today and help save his wild cousins!

Atlantic City Lights Up as Tinseltown: The Ultimate Seaside Holiday Destination in 2025

Christmas Magic Lights Up Atlantic City in 2025 - Atlantic City earns its place among the 25 Best Christmas Towns in the U.S. (Travel + Leisure) every year by transforming into a glittering seaside Tinseltown. Casinos deck the halls with over-the-top décor, free light shows dance to carols, pop-up bars serve candy-cane cocktails, and the Boardwalk glows against crashing winter waves - all with fewer crowds and lower hotel rates than summer.

Standout Holiday Lights & Tree Displays You Won't Want to Miss - Among the dozens of spectacular decorations across the resorts, a few spots rise above the rest for their sheer wow factor and perfect photo backdrops.

The Quarter at Tropicana Atlantic City launches the season on Friday, November 21 at 1 p.m. with a festive Tree Lighting Ceremony complete with live performances and complimentary treats. The star of the show is the soaring 35-foot Christmas tree that powers the free Holiday Musical Light Show - thousands of lights synchronized to classic carols every hour on the hour from noon until late, running daily through early January.



Jim Whelan Boardwalk Hall hosts one of the most heartwarming displays with Deck the Hall - Festival of Trees (December 1-31), where local organizations create uniquely themed trees that raise money for CASA for Children of Atlantic, Cape May, and Camden counties. Admission is free, and the creativity on display makes it a must-see.

Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa elevates holiday elegance in its Retail Piazza with towering evergreens, cascading garlands, and shimmering ornaments that feel straight out of a luxury magazine spread. Meanwhile, Ocean Casino Resort wraps the property in Holiday Magic at Ocean, surrounding guests with oversized ornaments, glowing arches, and surprise photo stations from mid-November onward.

Just minutes from the Boardwalk, Renault Winery & Resort's Vintner Wonderland delights with outdoor ice skating, seasonal wine tastings, and the glowing Wine Barrel Christmas Tree that has become an Instagram legend.

Some of the Season's Best Pop-Up Experiences & Bars - With holiday pop-ups appearing all over town, these favorites deliver the most memorable doses of cheer.

Santa's Hideaway Adventure (November 6-December 24) at The Shops at the Row inside Ocean Casino Resort remains one of the most magical attractions on the East Coast. Families step into Santa's Magical Elevator on the Boardwalk for a virtual flight to the North Pole, followed by a personal visit with Santa in his secret hideaway and shopping for treats afterward.



Ocean Casino Resort doubles down on grown-up fun with the day after Thanksgiving when the Jingle Bell Bar opens November 28 at 1927 Lounge. Expect holiday-themed cocktails, nostalgic décor, twinkling lights, and live entertainment just steps from the casino floor.

Resorts Casino Hotel counters with the over-the-top Candy Cane Lounge at Bar One (November 12-January 4), pouring Candy Cane Cosmos, North Pole Nightcaps, Frost Bite Margaritas, and Maple Old Fashioneds amid immersive décor, roaming holiday characters on weekends, and nightly events (trivia Mondays, karaoke Tuesdays & Thursdays, bingo Sundays).

For classic charm, The Irish Pub on St. James Place becomes a full-blown Christmas Spectacular from mid-November through the holidays - thousands of lights, ornaments everywhere, hearty holiday menus, world-famous Irish Coffee, Guinness on tap, free parking, and 24-hour merriment.

Can't-Miss Holiday Performances on the Big Stages - Dozens of shows light up casino theaters all month, but three spectacular productions stand out as true bucket-list experiences for 2025.

On Thursday, December 4 at 3:30pm, Tropicana Atlantic City Showroom presents Dance To The Holidays: A Holiday Extravaganza. Celebrity pros from Dancing with the Stars join finalists from So You Think You Can Dance, American Idol, The Voice, and America's Got Talent for high-energy choreography set to everyone's favorite seasonal songs. Tickets start at \$73 via tropicana.net.

Saturday, December 14 delivers an unforgettable double-header. At 4pm, Ocean Casino Resort's Ovation Hall thrills with Cirque Musica Holiday Wonderland, a brand-new production blending world-class acrobats, aerialists, and daredevils with beloved carols - perfect for all ages. Tickets from \$27 at theoceanac.com.

That same evening at 5pm, the Atlantic City Ballet performs its timeless The Nutcracker at Caesars Circus Maximus Theater. Follow Clara, the Sugar Plum Fairy, and the toy soldiers through the Land of Sweets in a cherished South Jersey tradition. Tickets \$35-\$75 at acballet.org.



Atlantic City Holiday Parade & Market - The twilight highlight arrives Saturday, December 13 at 4:30pm when the Atlantic City Holiday Parade & Market rolls down Atlantic Avenue. Glowing floats, marching bands, dancers, and Santa travel from South Carolina to Albany Avenue, ending at O'Donnell Memorial Park's cozy Holiday Market with local vendors, hot cocoa, treats, and live music - completely free and pure joy.

From the unique blend of salty ocean breezes and fresh pine to free spectaculars and dazzling casino glamour, Atlantic City offers a one-of-a-kind coastal Christmas that feels like a holiday getaway all its own. For the complete 2025 schedule, maps, hotel packages, and updates, visit ACTinseltown.com or visitatlanticcity.com. Plan your trip now and make new holiday memories by the sea!

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PECAN STUFFED MUSHROOMS



INGREDIENTS:

- 1 lb. cremini mushrooms
- 2 tbsp. salted butter
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium shallot, minced (about ¼ c)
- ½ c. finely chopped pecans
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 oz goat cheese
- ¼ c. minced fresh flat-leaf parsley
- ¼ c. Panko breadcrumbs
- ½ tsp. sea salt
- ¼ tsp. freshly cracked black pepper

Honeyed Pecans:

- 2 tbsp. honey
- 1 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 25 pecan halves
- Pinch of sea salt

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F with a rack in the center position.
2. Make the stuffed mushrooms. Carefully break off mushroom stems. Finely chop the stems, discarding the tough ends.
3. Heat the butter and olive oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Once the butter has melted, add the shallot, chopped pecans, mushroom stems, and garlic. Cook, stirring often, until everything has softened, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a medium bowl. Add the goat cheese, parsley, breadcrumbs, salt, and pepper and stir to combine.
4. Working with one mushroom at a time, brush the inside and outside with olive oil, then place it, cap side down, on a rimmed sheet pan. Stuff each mushroom with the filling, dividing evenly. Bake for about 20 minutes, or until the mushrooms are tender and the filling is lightly browned.
5. Meanwhile, make the honeyed pecans. Heat the honey and olive oil in a medium skillet over low heat. Once the honey is runny, add the pecan halves and salt and stir until evenly coated. Increase the heat to medium-low and cook until the pecans have darkened slightly, 3 to 4 minutes. Spread pecans onto a piece of parchment paper and let cool.
6. Top each of the stuffed mushrooms with one pecan. Sprinkle with additional parsley. Serve warm.

CHRISTMAS MOVIES 2025

STREAMING CHEAT SHEET



A Christmas Story (PG)
 A Cinderella Christmas (G)
 A Prince for Christmas (G)
 Candy Cane Lane (PG-13)
 Christmas Crush (PG)
 Christmas in Evergreen (G)
 Christmas in Mississippi (PG)
 Christmas in the Heartland (PG)
 Christmas in the Smokies (PG)
 Christmas Lodge (G)
 Christmas on Holly Lane (G)
 Christmas on the Bayou (PG)
 Christmas with the Kranks (PG)
 Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas (PG)
 Furry Little Christmas (PG)
 Holiday Inn (NR)
 It's a Wonderful Life (PG)
 Jingle All The Way (PG)
 Red One (PG-13)
 Scrooged (PG)
 Surviving Christmas (PG-13)
 The Grinch (U)
 The Holiday (PG-13)

NETFLIX

A California Christmas (PG)
 A California Christmas | City Lights (PG)
 A Christmas Prince (G)
 A Christmas Prince | The Royal Baby (G)
 A Christmas Prince | The Royal Wedding (G)
 Best. Christmas. Ever! (PG)
 Christmas Inheritance (PG)
 Christmas With You (G)
 Falling for Christmas (PG)
 Family Switch (PG)
 Holidate (R)
 Holiday in the Wild (PG)
 Jack Frost (PG)
 Klaus (G)
 Last Christmas (PG-13)
 Let It Snow (PG-13)
 Scrooge: A Christmas Carol (PG)
 Single All The Way (2021)
 The Christmas Chronicles (G)
 The Christmas Chronicles 2 (G)
 The Holiday Calendar (PG)
 The Princess Switch (PG)
 White Christmas (G)



12 Dates of Christmas (PG-13)
 Beauty and the Beast | The Enchanted Christmas (G)
 Christmas .. Again?! (G)
 Dashing Through The Snow (PG)
 Deck The Halls (PG)
 Die Hard (R)
 Disney's A Christmas Carol (PG)
 Godmothered (G)
 Home Alone (PG)
 Home Alone 2 (PG)
 Home Alone 3 (PG)
 Ice Age | A Mammoth Christmas (G)
 Jingle All The Way (PG)
 Mickey (various shows) (G)
 Miracle on 34th Street (PG)
 No Sleep 'Til Christmas (PG-13)
 Noelle (G)
 Prep & Landing (G)
 Prep & Landing | Naughty vs. Nice (G)
 Santa Paws (G)
 The Muppet Christmas Carol (G)
 The Naughty Nine (G)
 The Nutcracker and the Four Realms (PG)
 The Nightmare Before Christmas (PG)
 The Santa Clause (PG)
 The Santa Clause 2 (G)
 The Santa Clause 3 (G)
 The Search for Santa Paws (G)



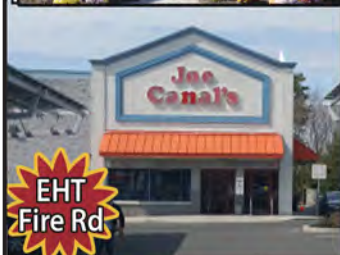
A Christmas Carol (PG)
 A Cinderella Christmas (G)
 A Christmas Movie Christmas (PG)
 A Country Christmas Story (PG)
 All I Want for Christmas (PG)
 Elf (PG)
 Fred Clause (PG) – Nov. 27
 Home Alone 3 (PG)
 Jack Frost (PG) – Nov. 27
 Miracle on 34th Street (PG)
 National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation (PG-13)
 Santa Games (PG)
 A Merry Christmas Wish (G)





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- > Make a donation to a teacher
- > Write a letter to your superintendent praising a teacher
- > Offer to babysit so a neighbor can go out
- > Take a younger neighbor out to eat so parents can relax
- > Make and freeze meals for an elderly neighbor
- > Take a neighbor's dog for a walk
- > Tape dollar bills to toy shelves at the dollar store
- > Volunteer to run errands for someone in need
- > Quietly pay for a couple's dinner at a restaurant
- > Buy breakfast for the person behind you in line
- > Notice one thing you appreciate about a family member or friend each day
- > Deliver balloons to a local nursery home
- > Start a neighborhood Secret Santa
- > Snowblow or shovel a neighbor's walk before they wake up
- > Volunteer to do holiday shopping or errands for someone without time or the ability
- > Leave a note in a loved one's lunchbag
- > Make a music mix for a friend
- > Take time to put away loose carts in the parking lot at the supermarket
- > Clean snow off a neighbor's car
- > Make an online photo album for a faraway friend
- > Write a letter to someone you've lost touch with
- > Leave quarters at the laundromat
- > Donate time to a local organization
- > Spend time at the animal shelter
- > Write a story about a neighborhood kid that's about them

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SPARKLING HOLIDAY PARTY PUNCH (NON-ALCOHOLIC)



INGREDIENTS:

- Cranberry juice cocktail – or cranberry juice blend (like cran-apple or cran-pomegranate). You can also use unsweetened cranberry juice for a less sweet punch. Pomegranate juice is a great substitute.
- Pineapple juice – if you have an aversion or allergy to pineapple juice, simply replace it with cranberry juice or OJ.
- Orange juice – you can swap this citrus for grapefruit, tangerine, or blood orange juices. The latter two are easier to find during the holiday / winter season.
- Aromatic garnishes – cinnamon sticks, star anise, fresh rosemary sprigs
- Sparkling apple cider – or sparkling apple or grape juice
- Ginger beer – this adds a lovely, spicy effervescence. If it's not for you, swap it for ginger ale or lemon-lime soda. To scale back on the sweetness, you can use club soda or a flavored sparkling water.
- Fresh garnishes – orange slices and fresh cranberries (or frozen). Pomegranate seeds also make for a festive garnish, whether or not you use that juice.

In a large pitcher or container that will fit in your refrigerator, combine the fruit juices with cinnamon sticks, star anise and rosemary. Chill for several hours or overnight. Just before serving, transfer the juice mixture and aromatics to a punch bowl or beverage dispenser. Pour in the sparkling cider and ginger beer, then float slices of orange and cranberries on top.



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HOLIDAY BEEF EMPANADAS



INGREDIENTS:

Empanada Dough::

- 2 ½ c. all purpose flour
- ½ tsp. sea salt
- ½ c. unsalted butter, ¼-inch cubes
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- ½ c. ice water

Beef Filling:

- 1 Russet potato, diced
- ¾ lb. ground beef
- ½ yellow onion, grated
- 1 carrot, grated
- 1 celery rib, minced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ tsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. sea salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- ½ c. frozen peas, thawed
- ¾ c. beef stock

1. Make the empanada dough. In a food processor, combine the flour and salt. Pulse until combined, about 5 times. Add the butter, 1 egg and the ice water. Pulse until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs with some larger butter pieces, about 20 pulses. If the dough seems too dry, add more ice water 1 tablespoon at a time, pulsing until the dough just comes together.
2. Turn the dough out onto a work surface and shape into a ball. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes. Meanwhile, bring a medium saucepan of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the diced potato and cook until just tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Drain.
3. Heat a large skillet set over medium-high heat. Add the ground beef, onion, carrots and celery. Cook, breaking up the meat with a wooden spoon, until the beef is browned and the vegetables are softened, 8 to 10 minutes.
4. Stir in the cooked potatoes, garlic, chili powder, cumin, cinnamon, salt, pepper, peas, and beef stock. Cook, stirring occasionally, until most of the liquid has been absorbed and the mixture holds together, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool slightly. Preheat the oven to 375°F with a rack in the center position. Line a rimmed sheet pan with parchment paper. Remove the dough from the refrigerator and divide it into 10 equal pieces (about 2.2-ounces each). On a lightly floured surface, roll each piece into a thin circle about 7-inches in diameter.
5. Place a heaping 1/3 cup of the beef filling on one half of each dough circle, leaving a ½-inch border. In a small bowl, beat the remaining egg with 1 tablespoon water to make an egg wash. Using a pastry brush, brush the exposed edge of the dough with egg wash. Fold the dough over the filling to create a half-moon shape. Using a fork, firmly press the edges to seal or crimp decoratively by hand. Arrange the empanadas on the prepared sheet pan. Brush the tops with the remaining egg wash. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, or until deep golden brown. Let cool for 5 minutes before serving.



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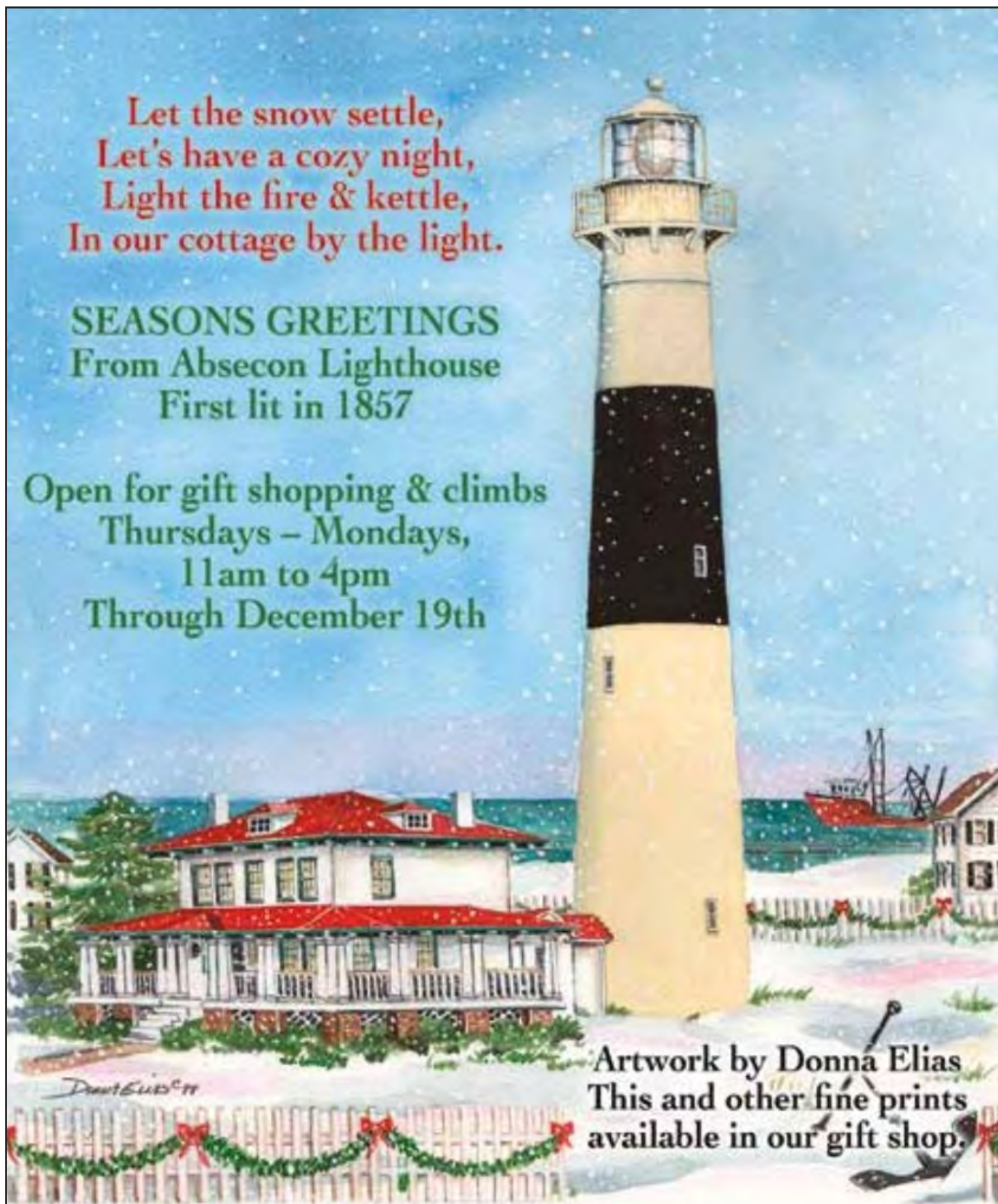


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December's Hidden Holidays: 10 Beautiful Celebrations Beyond Christmas

While Christmas decorations dominate store windows in much of the Western world, December quietly hosts a dazzling array of cultural, religious, and seasonal holidays that light up the darkest month in their own unique ways. Here are ten worth knowing - and maybe even joining.

Hanukkah – The Jewish Festival of Lights

For eight nights (December 14–22 in 2025), families light the menorah, eat fried foods like latkes and sufganiyot (jelly donuts), play dreidel, and celebrate the miracle of oil that burned for eight days in the rededicated Temple. It's a story of resilience, religious freedom, and the triumph of light over darkness.

Kwanzaa – Honoring African Heritage

From December 26 to January 1, millions of African-American and Pan-African families celebrate seven principles (Umoja through Imani) with candles on the kinara, libations, storytelling, music, and feasts featuring crops from the African diaspora. Created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, Kwanzaa is a non-religious cultural holiday focused on community and heritage.

Winter Solstice / Yule – The Return of the Light

On December 21 or 22, the shortest day of the year, ancient and modern Pagans, Wiccans, and nature-based spiritualists mark Yule with bonfires, evergreens, and feasts. Many Christmas traditions - trees, wreaths, Yule logs - actually began here.

Dongzhi Festival – China's Cozy Solstice

Families gather for tangyuan (sweet glutinous rice balls symbolizing reunion) and warmer clothes as the days finally start getting longer again. It's one of China's most important traditional festivals.

Bodhi Day – When the Buddha Became Enlightened

Mahayana Buddhists celebrate December 8 as the day Siddhartha Gautama sat beneath the Bodhi tree and attained enlightenment. Temples are decorated with lights, and people meditate, study sutras, and sometimes enjoy a simple rice-and-milk meal.

Saint Lucia Day – Sweden's Queen of Light

On December 13, the eldest daughter (or a chosen girl) dresses in white with a crown of candles and wakes the household with saffron buns (lussekatter) and coffee. A beautiful blend of Christian and pre-Christian midwinter traditions.

Las Posadas – Mexico's Nine-Night Journey

From December 16–24, neighborhoods reenact Mary and Joseph's search for lodging with processions, piñatas, ponche, and songs. It's nine nights of community, music, and warmth leading right up to Navidad.

Ōmisoka – Japan's Year-End Purification

December 31 is for massive house cleaning (susuharai), eating toshikoshi soba noodles for longevity, and visiting shrines at midnight when bells ring 108 times to cleanse the sins of the year.

Watch Night – A Night of Freedom and Faith

In many African-American churches, December 31 services commemorate the night in 1862 when enslaved people gathered to await news of the Emancipation Proclamation taking effect on January 1, 1863. It's a powerful blend of worship, reflection, and celebration of liberation.

Boxing Day – Giving Back Across the Commonwealth

December 26 in the UK, Canada, Australia, and elsewhere is traditionally when people boxed up gifts for workers and those in need. Today it's a day of sports, sales, and charity.

December reminds us that this season isn't owned by any one tradition. Whether you're spinning a dreidel, eating tangyuan, lighting a kinara, or simply watching the sun stand still on the solstice, the darkest month has always been humanity's time to create light - together.

Which of these will you learn more about (or try celebrating) this year?



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SAT 10/18
☐ **A Royal Montana Christmas** 8/7c

SUN 10/19
☐ **A Christmas Angel Match** 8/7c

FRI 10/24
☐ **Mistletoe Murders** 8/7c

SAT 10/25
☐ **Merry Christmas, Ted Cooper!** 8/7c

SUN 10/26
☐ **Season's Greetings from Cherry Lane** 4/3c
☐ **Happy Holidays from Cherry Lane** 6/5c
☐ **Deck the Halls on Cherry Lane** 8/7c

MON 10/27
☐ **Finding Mr. Christmas** 8/7c SEASON 2 PREMIERE
☐ **Baked with Love: Holiday** 9/8c SERIES PREMIERE

FRI 10/31
☐ **Mistletoe Murders** 8/7c SEASON FINALE

MON 11/10
☐ **Finding Mr. Christmas** 8/7c
☐ **Baked with Love: Holiday** 9/8c

FRI 11/14
☐ **Mistletoe Murders** 8/7c

SAT 11/15
☐ **Three Wisest Men** 8/7c

SUN 11/16
☐ **Tidings for the Season** 8/7c

MON 11/17
☐ **Finding Mr. Christmas** 8/7c
☐ **Baked with Love: Holiday** 9/8c

FRI 11/21
☐ **Mistletoe Murders** 8/7c SEASON FINALE

SAT 11/22
☐ **Holiday Touchdown: A Bills Love Story** 8/7c

SUN 11/23
☐ **Melt My Heart This Christmas** 8/7c

MON 11/24
☐ **Finding Mr. Christmas** 8/7c
☐ **Baked with Love: Holiday** 9/8c

THURS 11/27
☐ **We Met in December** 8/7c

FRI 12/5
☐ **Twelve Dates 'Til Christmas** 8/7c SERIES PREMIERE

SAT 12/6
☐ **She's Making a List** 8/7c
☐ **Hallmark Christmas Experience Special** 10/9c

SUN 12/7
☐ **Single on the 25th** 8/7c

MON 12/8
☐ **Finding Mr. Christmas** 8/7c
☐ **Baked with Love: Holiday** 9/8c

FRI 12/12
☐ **Twelve Dates 'Til Christmas** 8/7c

SAT 12/13
☐ **A Suite Holiday Romance** 8/7c

SUN 12/14
☐ **Oy to the World!** 8/7c

MON 12/15
☐ **Finding Mr. Christmas** 8/7c SEASON FINALE
☐ **Baked with Love: Holiday** 9/8c SEASON FINALE

FRI 12/19
☐ **Twelve Dates 'Til Christmas** 8/7c SERIES FINALE

SAT 12/20
☐ **A Make or Break Holiday** 8/7c
☐ **Finding Mr. Christmas** 10/9c REUNION

SUN 12/21
☐ **The Christmas Baby** 8/7c

NOVEMBER

SAT 11/1
☐ **Christmas on Duty** 8/7c

SUN 11/2
☐ **A Newport Christmas** 8/7c

MON 11/3
☐ **Finding Mr. Christmas** 8/7c
☐ **Baked with Love: Holiday** 9/8c

FRI 11/7
☐ **Mistletoe Murders** 8/7c SEASON 2 PREMIERE

SAT 11/8
☐ **Christmas Above the Clouds** 8/7c

SUN 11/9
☐ **A Keller Christmas Vacation** 8/7c

FRI 11/28
 DOUBLE FEATURE
☐ **The Snow Must Go On** 6/5c
☐ **The More the Merrier** 8/7c

SAT 11/29
 DOUBLE FEATURE
☐ **An Alpine Holiday** 6/5c
☐ **A Grand Ole Opry Christmas** 8/7c

SUN 11/30
 DOUBLE FEATURE
☐ **The Christmas Cup** 6/5c
☐ **Christmas at the Catnip Café** 8/7c

DECEMBER

MON 12/1
☐ **Finding Mr. Christmas** 8/7c
☐ **Baked with Love: Holiday** 9/8c

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The Seeing Eye is thrilled to announce our holiday cards and 2026 Seeing Eye puppy calendar are now available for purchase at: shopseeingeye.merchorders.com

These wonderful cards include a joyful message in both text and braille, making them perfect for your well wishes this holiday season! Be sure to purchase them while supplies last!

Photo Description: A golden retriever Seeing Eye puppy smiles as he sits with the holiday cards and the 2026 Seeing Eye puppy calendar before him. The holiday card features a German shepherd outdoors in a snowy setting. The Christmas card features three young Seeing Eye puppies - a German shepherd, a golden retriever, and a black Lab - against a dark green background, wearing either red Christmas bows or a Seeing Eye puppy raising program bandana. Text reads, "Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!" The cover of the 2026 Seeing Eye puppy calendar shows four Seeing Eye puppies, a chocolate Lab, a German shepherd, a yellow Lab, and a Golden retriever, sitting before tall blooming sunflowers.

PPAWS (People & Puppies at Work for Sight) is a dedicated group of local families from Atlantic and Cape May Counties, which raise these amazing puppies for The Seeing Eye. Until a Seeing Eye dog is ready for training, he or she lives with a puppy raising or foster family that gives the dog love, gentle guidance, and consistent care. These volunteers nurture their puppy to accomplish its special destiny.

If you are interested in raising a puppy for The Seeing Eye, call Peter at (609)804-8774 or visit seeingeye.org/raise for info.



Get Ready for a Full Schedule of Holiday Events in Ocean City

The "Earlier than the Bird" Downtown Shopping Extravaganza has become a fun tradition for holiday shoppers in Ocean City. The event is always held on the Saturday before Thanksgiving and encourages folks to shop in their pajamas for early-bird specials at stores on downtown Asbury Avenue. Check it out from 8am to noon on Nov. 22.

Free Horse and Carriage Rides along decorated downtown Asbury Avenue also begin on Nov. 22. They are available on weekends from noon to 3pm and continue through the season, including extended hours on Festive Fridays, with boarding at Sixth Street.

Ocean City Fire Department will be ready in case Santa makes his usual landing on the roof of City Hall at 5pm on Friday, Nov 28. While others are crowding the malls on Black Friday, you can enjoy the old-fashioned Christmas in the Downtown - "Our Miracle on Asbury Avenue." Join the downtown merchants and Chamber of Commerce in shopping, caroling and other entertainment.

There will be a couple options for getting photos with Santa. He will be available for Photos with Santa in a Lifeguard Boat from 1-3pm on Nov 29-30 and Dec 6-7, 13-14, 20-21 at the Ocean City Music Pier. On the same dates, Santa also will be available to visit with kids from 9-11am in the Downtown at Mark Soifer Park (9th and Asbury).

The annual **Christmas Parade** is scheduled for 6pm on Fri, Dec. 5 on Asbury Avenue from 6th Street to 11th Street.

Another holiday tradition is the **Train Show** at the Ocean City Music Pier. The free event features model train displays 10am to 4pm Sat and Sun, Dec 6 and 7.

Festive Fridays are on tap for Dec 12 and 19. Join downtown Ocean City merchants as they celebrate the holidays with specials. Enjoy horse-and-carriage rides from 4-7pm through the downtown adorned with thousands of Christmas lights and shop for some of the best gifts this holiday season. Two pickup locations - the Tabernacle (6th & Asbury) and OceanFirst Bank (10th & Asbury).

Tickets are on sale now for a new holiday trolley tour geared toward families with young children. The **Jolly Trolley Lights Tour** on Dec. 17 will include a tour

of Ocean City homes decorated for the holidays, a photo with Santa and a Christmas craft project. Trolley riders are encouraged to dress warmly in their pajamas and enjoy hot cocoa and other treats. Two tours are scheduled: 5-7pm Dec. 17 and 6-8pm Dec. 17. They will be staged from the Ocean City Senior Center at 1735 Simpson Ave. Space is limited, so get your tickets (\$30 per person) now by visiting ocnj.us/jollytrolley.

It's not too early to think about celebrating the arrival of 2026 at Ocean City's family-friendly **First Night New Year's Eve Celebration**. All-inclusive admission buttons are on sale now for \$20 per person (inclusive of service fee) until November 30, 2025 - the price increases to \$25 on December 1. One button admits you to all programs (children under 2 free), and sales are capped (they often sell out). Buy online at firstnightocnj.com, by phone at 609-399-6111, or at welcome centers.

First Night offers more than 70 entertainment programs at 20 different venues throughout town on Dec. 31. Headline entertainment at the Ocean City Music Pier this year includes a tribute to the music of Journey and "Motor City: the Motown Revue." The return of perennial favorites like outdoor ice-skating, a magic show, a mentalist, the Harlem Wizards, and a variety of other shows also highlight the entertainment lineup. Ocean City will reunite Elton John and Billy Joel at the Ocean City High School auditorium with separate tributes (Yellow Brick Road: A Tribute to Elton John and a Billy Joel tribute act).

A drone light show in the sky over Carey Stadium synced to music is scheduled again this year (returning after its popular debut in 2024). As always, the festivities will end with a fireworks display to ring in the new year at midnight.

First Night's 2026 sponsors include the Ocean City Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Cape May County Division of Culture and Heritage, McMahon Insurance Agency, Ocean City Free Public Library, Pete Madden of Goldcoast Sotheby's International Realty, Uncle Bill's Pancake House, and Atlantic City Electric.

The festivities continue with **First Day** events on Jan. 1, 2026. Registration is open for the **First Day 5K** running race on the Boardwalk (ocnj.us/race-events). Complete info on First Night at firstnightocnj.com. Happy New Year!

Operation Santa Paws 2025: Give Shelter Dogs a Christmas They'll Never Forget

Operation Santa Paws runs December 1 to December 24, and in 2025 we're shining the spotlight on the millions of loyal dogs waiting in shelters for a little holiday magic. While families unwrap gifts under the tree, roughly 3.1 million dogs will enter U.S. shelters this year alone (Best Friends Animal Society 2024 data), many scared, cold, and hoping someone remembers them. This simple, heartfelt drive makes sure every shelter pup gets new toys, treats, warm blankets, and the joy of knowing someone cares.

The History of Operation Santa Paws

Dogs have been humanity's companions for over 15,000 years - guiding the blind, detecting danger, herding livestock, and curling up beside us on the toughest days. Yet every year thousands end up abandoned, lost, or surrendered through no fault of their own. Shelters do heroic work, but winter is especially hard: donations drop, heating costs rise, and kennels stay full.

That's why Long Beach animal lover Justin Rudd founded Operation Santa Paws in 2001 through his nonprofit Haute Dogs organization. What began as one California community filling trucks with toys and treats for local shelters has spread coast-to-coast (and even to the UK and Hong Kong) purely through word-of-mouth and kindness. There's no big national office or registration - just people like you collecting gifts and delivering them so shelter dogs wake up to something special under the tree (or in their kennel) on Christmas morning.

How to Celebrate Operation Santa Paws in 2025

Anyone, anywhere can participate - it's completely decentralized and welcoming:

- Donate the items shelters need most -> Durable chew toys (Kong classics, Benebones), peanut butter (xylitol-free), high-value treats, martingale collars, 6-foot leashes, fleece blankets, puzzle toys, and gift cards to Chewy or Tractor Supply. Download free wish-list flyers at justinrudd.com/santapaws.html.
- Host your own drive -> Put a collection box at work, your vet's office, gym, church, or neighborhood pet store. Many stores love being official drop-off spots!
- Give money or time -> Monetary gifts help with vet bills, and shelters always need extra walkers and socializers in December.
- Foster or adopt -> The ultimate gift is a home - even a two-week foster spot frees up kennel space and saves lives.

5 Heart-Melting Facts About Our Best Friends

- 1 - Super sniffers - A dog's nose has up to 300 million olfactory receptors (vs. our 6 million) - they can smell 10,000-100,000 times better than we can and even detect diseases like cancer or oncoming seizures.
- 2 - Dreamers just like us - Watch a sleeping dog's twitching paws and muffled woofs - they experience full REM cycles and actually dream (often about you!).
- 3 - Unique as fingerprints - Every dog's nose print is one-of-a-kind - shelters sometimes use them for ID the way we use fingerprints.
- 4 - Tail talk experts - A wag biased to the right means genuine happiness; to the left can signal anxiety. Speed and height tell the whole emotional story.
- 5 - Loyal beyond words - Stories like Hachiko the Akita (who waited nine years at a train station for his owner) remind us why dogs truly are man's (and woman's!) best friend.

This December, let's make sure no shelter dog spends the holidays forgotten. One toy, one blanket, one wagging tail at a time. Visit justinrudd.com/santapaws.html, grab the free posters, and start your drive today - because every dog deserves a merry Christmas.

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in association with
SPQR Stage Company
presents



Big Louie is Comin' to Town

Written by Jeff Dunne

Directed by Marlene May

and

Magic Flowers

Written and Directed by Bill Sterritt

Fri, December 12th at 8pm • Sat, December 13th at *2pm & 4pm (*12/13 2pm Livestream) • Sun, December 14th at 2pm
All Tickets - \$20 • Purchase & Info at studiospacespnj.com • Advance & Livestream Tickets on Eventbrite
Reservations at (323) 793-2153 or at spqrstageco@aol.com • Cash only at the door



Made possible by funds from the
Atlantic County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, a partner
of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

SOUTH JERSEY PLAYERS, INC IS A 501C3 NON-PROFIT

SOUTH JERSEY PLAYERS present HOLIDAY SHOW at STUDIO;SPACE

South Jersey Players in association with SPQR Stage Company, will present **BIG LOUIE IS COMIN' TO TOWN** by Jeff Dunne and directed by Marlene May.

In this short 15-minute comedy, Santa Claus (Edward Shakespeare) may think he has the whole "make the kids happy with gifts thing" in the proverbial bag - but just wait! Big Louie (Joe Chialastri) is moving in on his game and is pretty sure he has a better business model that'll knock Santa right out of the Macy's display windows. The action takes place in the McAllistor's living room on Christmas Eve.



MAGIC FLOWERS, the short and sweet 30-minute original play by local playwright, Bill Sterritt, takes place on Christmas Eve in Manhattan. The story follows co-workers in an advertising agency, Ethel and Ralph, who seem to have nothing in common outside of the office. Ralph, portrayed by Eric Olsson, is wholly popular, while Ethel, played by Laura Cyert, prepares to spend yet another Christmas Eve alone - with a bottle of



wine, that is. An unexpected shabby-looking guest arrives at Ethel's door selling flowers. Feeling sorry for the obviously homeless gent and for herself, she buys his "magic flowers", as he claims they will bring her love.

MAGIC FLOWERS has become a holiday tradition for Atlantic and Cape May County audiences. With the addition of **BIG LOUIE IS COMIN' TO TOWN**, SJP and SPQR Stage Co. promise a light-hearted, witty, holiday package - two plays for the price of one!

Tickets are \$20.00 per person. Reservations can be made by email at: spqrstageco@aol.com or by phone at: 323-793-2153. For info, and live streaming tix go to: www.studio;spacespnj.com

studio;space is located at 112 Woodland Avenue in Somers Point (across from The Crab Trap).

Showtimes: Friday, 12/12 at 8pm. Saturday, 12/13 at 2pm and 4pm and Sunday, 12/14 at 2pm. (The Saturday 2pm show will be livestreamed!)

Hometown Holiday Parades & Tree Lightings in Atlantic & Cape May Counties

Everyone knows the big draws: Atlantic City's glittering Tinseltown, Cape May's Victorian Christmas wonderland, Ocean City's "Miracle on Asbury Avenue," and the Wildwoods' festive holiday events all get their own spotlight in this guide. But the quieter towns and communities throughout Atlantic and Cape May Counties have their own special brand of holiday magic - cozy parades with fire-truck Santa arrivals, tree lightings under quiet night skies, and events that feel like you stepped into a snow globe. Here are the confirmed 2025 celebrations (in chronological order) you won't want to miss in the towns that prove the season shines just as bright off the beaten path.

****Tuesday, December 2****

Linwood Tree Lighting Ceremony

5:00-8:00 p.m. at the Linwood Arboretum

Live music, hot chocolate, and holiday activities light up the evening in this peaceful garden setting filled with twinkling lights and cheerful gatherings.

****Wednesday, December 3****

Galloway Township Tree Lighting Ceremony

Evening (typically 6:00 p.m.) at the Municipal Complex (300 E Jimmie Leeds Road)

The township's official kick-off with Santa, treats, and the big lighting - a new earlier date for 2025 that brings neighbors together for carols and community warmth.

****Friday, December 5****

Middle Township Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting (CMCH) - 6:00 p.m.

Starts at Memorial Field, north on Route 9, west on Mechanic Street, ends at the county library with tree lighting and Santa. Lighted fire trucks, floats, and local groups create a joyful procession full of holiday cheer.



****Saturday, December 6****

Egg Harbor City Lloyd Wimberg Winter Bazaar and Holiday Celebration

5:00-8:00 p.m. along the 100 Block of Philadelphia Avenue

Vendors, crafts, food, family fun, and the town's official tree lighting - the heart of Egg Harbor City's Christmas season, where the street comes alive with lights, laughter, and seasonal scents.

Cape May County Park and Zoo Tree Lighting and Winter Festival (CMCH)

Starting noon, lighting at dusk

Free temporary ice skating rink, horse-and-carriage rides, petting zoo, food trucks, and Santa - one of the biggest local celebrations of the year, complete with twinkling paths, animal encounters, and that magical moment when the lights switch on.



Northfield Holiday Tree Lighting Celebration - 5:00 p.m. at Birch Grove Park
Fire-truck Santa arrival with sirens and lights, lagoon train rides, campfire s'mores, caroling, and the big switch-on - a cozy evening of family traditions around the glowing lagoons.

Stone Harbor Christmas Parade

Evening (typically 6:30 p.m.) along 96th Street (route from Third Avenue at 107th Street, right onto 96th Street, left onto Second Avenue to 95th Street)

A charming small-town parade with local flair, plenty of lights, decorated floats, marching groups, and holiday spirit that draws families to line the streets in festive attire.

****Friday, December 12****

Sea Isle City First Responders Holiday Parade - 6:00 p.m.

Decorated fire trucks and emergency vehicles from across the region bring the sparkle, starting at the Dog Park, south on Landis Avenue to 83rd Street, then north on Central Avenue to the firehouse - a glowing convoy of heroes spreading cheer with lights and sirens.



****Saturday, December 13****

Hammonton Fire Department Christmas Parade

7:00 p.m. (line-up 5:30 p.m. at Hammonton High School)

Route down Fairview Avenue through downtown - the county's biggest local parade with floats, bands, fire trucks, and Santa. Tree lighting and awards follow in a celebration packed with community pride and twinkling excitement.



Lower Township Rotary Christmas Parade - 6:00 p.m.

Starts at Breakwater and Bayshore Roads, along Bayshore Road, ends on Rosehill Parkway - a beloved tradition featuring lighted floats, marching bands, local groups, and Santa waving from his sleigh amid waves of holiday applause.

****Saturday, December 20****

Egg Harbor Township Holiday Celebration and Tree Lighting - Evening (typically starting 5:00 p.m.) at the Community Center (5045 English Creek Avenue, Cardiff)
Fire-truck Santa arrival with flashing lights and sirens, indoor crafts, ice skating rink, photos with Santa, and the grand lighting - a perfect late-season tradition that keeps the joy alive right up to Christmas week.

These local celebrations are all free, family-friendly, and full of real community heart. They are the kind of nights where neighbors wave from lawn chairs, children collect candy canes from firefighters, and the tree lighting really does feel magical. Bundle up, pick a few dates, and discover why Atlantic and Cape May Counties' hometown events deliver some of South Jersey's most heartfelt holiday memories.

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HOLIDAY list



- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Decorate the house | ☐ Build a gingerbread house |
| ☐ Eat candy canes | ☐ Family game night |
| ☐ Wrap presents | ☐ Wear cozy socks |
| ☐ Bake and decorate cookies | ☐ An act of kindness |
| ☐ Holiday movie marathon | ☐ Make paper snowflakes |
| ☐ Wear an ugly sweater | ☐ Mail a card or gift |
| ☐ Try a new recipe | ☐ Write a letter to a loved one |
| ☐ See holiday lights around town | ☐ Start an advent calendar |
| ☐ Wear matching pajamas | ☐ Build a fort |
| ☐ Make a donation | ☐ Attend a holiday parade |
| ☐ Take a family/group photo | ☐ Make S'mores |



Elf on the Shelf Christmas I Spy



Where Has Your Elf Been?

ELF on the SHELF

Kids: Use this checklist to keep track of all the places your elf travels this holiday season!

- 1 elf goes fishing
- 2 elf tp's the tree
- 3 elf makes snow angel
- 4 elf has a tea party
- 5 elf builds a tower
- 6 elf drinks cocoa
- 7 elf does laundry
- 8 elf claims tree topper
- 9 elf gets a cold
- 10 elf hides in the advent calendar
- 11 elf is held hostage
- 12 elf in the cookies
- 13 elf reads to friends
- 14 elf takes a bath
- 15 elf hangs from the garland
- 16 elf plays an instrument
- 17 elf is trapped in the fridge
- 18 elf brings a note from santa
- 19 elf gets locked out
- 20 elf takes a nap
- 21 elf makes breakfast
- 22 elf wraps presents
- 23 elf's feet get cold
- 24 elf is up high
- 25 elf cooks
- 26 elf in the car
- 27 elf watches a movie
- 28 elf quarantines
- 29 elf takes a selfie
- 30 elf says good-bye





Jersey Cape & Atlantic County Magazines' 2025 New Year Coloring Contest

How does the contest work? All entries must be received by Wed, December 24, 2025. One entry per child. To enter, take a picture of your child holding up their completed coloring page and email it to atlanticcountymagazine@comcast.net with the subject "Coloring Contest." Be sure to include child's name, age and what they are looking forward to and/or goals for this year. **Are there prizes?** Yes! The winner will be featured in Atlantic County and Jersey Cape Magazines as "Child of the Week" with their art!



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CHRISTMAS MULE



INGREDIENTS:

- 1 oz. vodka
- 1 oz. peppermint schnapps
- 1 oz. 100% all natural cranberry juice
- ½ tbps. simple syrup (omit if using sweetened cranberry juice)
- 4 oz. ginger beer

For the garnish:

- rosemary sprig
- peppermint stick

In a copper mug or glass, pour in the vodka, cranberry juice, peppermint schnapps, and simple syrup. Add the ginger beer. Add ice and garnish with a rosemary sprig and peppermint stick, if desired. Serve immediately.

Tip: For advanced prep, pour together the 8x the recipe in a pitcher. Then pour a little over 3 ounces in each glass and top with 4 ounces ginger beer.

MISTLETOE MARGARITAS



INGREDIENTS:

- coarse salt for the rim
- 2 oz. Grand Marnier
- 1 ½ oz. Tequila
- 2 oz. white cranberry juice
- 2 oz. freshly squeezed lime juice
- 1 oz. simple syrup
- lime for garnish
- fresh cranberries for garnish
- rosemary for garnish

SIMPLE SYRUP:

- ½ c. water
- ½ c. sugar

Rim each glass with a lime wedge and dip in the coarse salt. Fill each glass with ice. In a cocktail shaker, add the grand marnier, tequila, cranberry juice, lime juice and syrup and shake for 30 to 60 seconds. pour over the ice. Garnish with extra limes and fresh cranberries! Throw in a sprig of rosemary if you wish.

SIMPLE SYRUP:
Stir together the water and sugar in a saucepan over medium heat. Whisk until the sugar dissolves and bring the mixture to a simmer. Remove from the heat and let it cool to room temperature.

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