



Atlanta Holiday Happenings

ATLANTA (November 26, 2002) – With a chill in the air and the holiday season just around the corner, Atlanta is ready with plenty of festive events, traditions and celebrations.

Enjoy the season with great holiday hotel deals and a chance to see exceptional exhibits at the High Museum of Art. Visit www.atlanta.net for special packages at local hotels in Atlanta. As for holiday entertainment, there are many outstanding celebrations in Atlanta this year that even Scrooge would enjoy.

An Atlanta holiday tradition since 1948, the 55th annual **lighting of the Rich's Great Tree at Lenox** takes place on Thanksgiving night to officially kick off the holiday season in a special way. This year the city's most famous light event will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Teddy Bear by covering the tree with 60 new ornaments shaped like Teddy Bears. Highlights also include a fireworks display and many musical guests, including Grammy Award-winning Usher and the Georgia Mass Choir.

Atlanta's oldest and most celebrated family event, the **Festival of Trees**, allows visitors to enjoy decorations, live entertainment and food with an international theme. This year's Festival, with the theme "Friends Around the World," takes place Dec. 7-15 at the Georgia World Congress Center benefiting Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. The **Children's Christmas Parade** officially kicks off the Festival of Trees on Dec. 7, which starts at Centennial Olympic Park and travels 1.5 miles with the grand finale featuring Santa arriving from the North Pole.

Children's Healthcare will also host **Art of the Season** from Nov. 29-Dec. 8. This holiday arts and crafts extravaganza for children and families offers children more than 25 different activities and crafts, including magical wands, colorful sand necklaces and sparkling spaceships.

A Southern Christmas at Stone Mountain Park will bring the magic of a small town Christmas to the park Nov. 15-Dec 30. Kids will be delighted with more than one million lights, including lights throughout Crossroads and the return of The Song of the Trees musical light show. They can enjoy a ride on the Christmas Train, a live holiday show and the Jingle Bell Bonfire. Appearances by Santa Claus, Tinker the Talking Christmas Tree and the Coca-Cola Polar Bear will add to the excitement.

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The Atlanta Botanical Garden's **Holiday in the Garden** means garlands of holiday greenery, unique gifts, seasonal refreshments and holiday entertainment. Held on Dec. 8, this year's event is themed Deck the New Halls, celebrating the season along with the Garden's new and renovated facilities. Highlights include a visit from Santa, live performances, arts and crafts activities, pony rides, lunch, refreshments and a holiday market offering exciting holiday gift ideas.

Or visit the rare and beautiful orchids in the Fuqua Orchid Center at the Atlanta Botanical Garden during its first holiday season. **Orchid Daze**, a dazzling holiday exhibit featuring extravagant flights of tropical orchids and special winter-blooming orchids, runs from Nov. 8-Jan. 31. During **Orchid Lights** on Dec. 4, 11 and 18, the Orchid Center will be open late with luminary candles and music to enhance the ambience. Specially selected gift orchids will be available for purchase in the lobby as the perfect gift for anyone on your list.

Bring your camera and meet Santa Claus at the **Southeastern Railway Museum** on Nov. 16. Santa will ride the train, pose for pictures and visit the museum, which was called "Georgia's Official Transportation History Museum" by the state legislature.

For a change of pace from traditional holiday celebrations, visit Roy's Restaurant for **Christmas in Hawaii** on Dec. 1. At this family-themed brunch, parents can enjoy Hawaiian martinis while kids of all ages pose for a picture with Santa.

Celebrate the Festival of Lights with family and friends at **Family Day** at the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum. On Nov. 29 join the authors of *The Jewish Family Fun Book* in creating Hanukkah crafts and enjoying music, food and fun. The Herndon Home will celebrate its annual **Christmas-Kwanzaa Open House** Dec. 3-14. Visitors will be treated to traditional Christmas music and enjoy lavishly decorated trees. Original Christmas artifacts belonging to the Herndons will also be on display.

Bright Lights

Lighting up Atlanta with thousands of sparkling lights, Centennial Olympic Park will become a winter wonderland, with **Holiday In Lights** through the first weekend in January. The Southern Company Amphitheater has been transformed into an ice skating rink, creating the only outdoor ice skating opportunity in Atlanta.

Just outside Atlanta, enjoy more than six miles of sparkling lights at the tenth annual **Magical Nights of Lights** at Lake Lanier Islands Resort. Known as the world's largest animated light extravaganza, both kids and adults can experience a trip through the 12 days of Christmas, sneak a peek at Santa's elves at work, explore the North Pole Express, navigate a virtual tunnel through Icicle Bridge and take a stroll down Candy Cane Lane. The Lighting of the Islands takes place through Dec. 30.

Create wonderful holiday memories with family and friends at Callaway Gardens. Celebrating its 11th anniversary, **Fantasy of Lights** is an outdoor holiday show with 12 seasonal scenes brought to life by music and more than eight million lights. Open nightly through Dec. 28, this holiday tradition of the South features many roadside scenes such as Santa's workshop, The March of the Toy Soldiers, 12 days of Christmas and Snowflake Valley. The entire family will also enjoy the 22,000 square-foot Christmas Village. Visitors can stay the night and receive VIP treatment at Callaway with a Fantasy in Lights overnight package, and through Jan. 5 guests will enjoy viewing collections of historical holiday Hallmark greeting cards, "A Collection of Presidential Greeting Cards" and "The Changing Faces of Santa."

Don't miss the chance to see Santa Claus, appearing at the Atlanta area malls including Mall of Georgia, Phipps Plaza, Gwinnett Place Mall, Northlake Mall and others. Enjoy musical shows by local community groups and school choirs at Lenox Square, Mall of Georgia and Phipps Plaza or come to parades at Mall of Georgia, Northlake Mall and Town Center at Cobb.

Music, Dance and Theater

This season on the Fox Theatre stage, the Atlanta Ballet presents, "**The Nutcracker**," Nov. 30 – Dec. 29. In this traditional family favorite, the endearing story of a young girl's fantasy becomes real as Dream Fairies dance in snow-filled forests, her Prince appears and the Christmas tree grows to dizzying heights in this magical spectacle of music and dance.

Another tradition in Atlanta is the annual holiday performance of "**A Christmas Carol**." You can relive Ebenezer Scrooge's transformation of a small and selfish life to one of giving, brotherhood and love at some of Atlanta's great theaters. The classic show starring Kenny Leon as Scrooge runs through Dec. 29 on the Alliance Stage at the Robert W. Woodruff Arts Center. And the New American Shakespeare Tavern will take you back to Christmases of yore in this magical storyteller's version of the Charles Dickens classic running Dec. 12-22.

What if Scrooge were gay? See for yourself in another adaptation of the old classic at 7 Stages Back Stage Theatre from Dec. 13-Jan. 5. "**A Queer Carol**" is put on by Theatre OUTlanta and will be set around Midtown Atlanta.

The Ferst Center at Georgia Tech presents two shows during the holidays. First **Norman Brown** will get Atlantans ready for the holidays with a smooth holiday jazz concert on Dec. 14. Then on Dec. 20-21, Atlanta native Barbara Cook will perform her Tony-nominated show, "**Mostly Sondheim**," while home for the holiday season.

Children can revel in the magic of puppetry with a performance of "**The Velveteen Rabbit**" at The Center for Puppetry Arts from Nov. 29-Jan. 5. Back for its fifth year, "**Chick N Boozy, Christmas Around The World!**" will run Dec. 6-21st at Dad's Garage. Join your favorite washed up actor as he shows you how people around the world celebrate the holiday season.

Experience “**Christmas with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra**”(ASO) Dec. 11-15, featuring conductor William Fred Scott, the ASO chorus, Morehouse College Glee Club and Gwinnett Young Singers. ASO presents a variety of other holiday concerts, including “ASO Chanukah Celebration” Dec. 18; “Kid’s Holiday” concerts Dec. 8 and 15; "Linda Eder Christmas Special with the ASO" Dec. 20-21; and "ASO New Year's Eve," featuring conductor Yoel Levi, Dec. 31. Experience Handel’s Messiah, the holiday classic, with "HANDEL: Messiah - Christmas portion" Dec. 19 or "HANDEL: Messiah - Sing-Along" Dec. 21.

Attend a world premiere at Neighborhood Playhouse through Dec. 7. The semi-professional theater presents its production of “**My Favorite Holiday**,” a new nostalgic holiday musical for everyone. This performance brings back the great movie musicals from the 30s, 40s and 50s and puts them all together for a true holiday treat.

Don’t miss **Holly Cole Christmas Jazz** on Nov. 30. The Canadian singer will perform holiday songs and jazz standards at the Rialto Center. Or come to Spivey Hall on Dec. 7-8 for a **Big Band Christmas with the William Noll Orchestra**. Listen to a mix of swing favorites from the 40s and jazzed-up Christmas tunes. Also playing Dec. 13-14 is **Mo’ Snow**. This Full Radius Dance performance features “That Snow Waltz” at 7 Stages Theatre.

On Nov. 14-24 and Dec. 18-23, see “**A Taffeta Christmas, A 50s Christmas Reunion**” at the Georgia Ensemble Theatre. Come to Horizon Theatre Company on Nov. 25-Dec. 31 for “**The Santaland Diaries**” holiday production by David Sedaris. Onstage Atlanta puts a twist on an old classic from Nov. 29-Dec. 21 with “**Nuncrackers: The Nonsense Christmas Musical.**”

Atlanta has many other multicultural holiday celebrations. At the Ferst Center from Nov. 21-24, Ballethnic Dance Company presents the “**Urban Nutcracker**,” a version of the family favorite set on Atlanta’s Auburn Avenue during the 1940s. Learn about the true spirit of Chanukah through Dec. 8 at the Morris and Rae Frank Theatre, and enjoy a presentation of “**The Magic Dreidels**” by the Jewish Theatre of the South. The New Jomandi takes the Christmas Story from ancient times during “**Black Nativity**” through Dec. 26 at the Tri-Cities Auditorium. From Dec. 6-29, the 14th Street Playhouse will perform “**A Child’s Christmas in Wales**,” Theatre Gael’s musical adaptation of Dylan Thomas’ classic Christmas tale.

Holiday Tours

Atlanta’s many historic homes provide another holiday treat this season, as the public is invited to share in the beauty of their decorations. Visitors can step back in time at the Atlanta History Center’s **Candlelight Tours** Dec. 4. Walk the candlelit paths through 33 acres of gardens to the Tullie Smith Farm, where you will find Christmas, as it would have been celebrated in the mid-1800s in rural Georgia.

“The Art of Christmas” is the theme for the 26-year-old tradition of a **Christmas at Callanwolde**. The halls will be decorated with glittering lights, grand trees and elegant furnishings and ornaments. Guests are invited to tour the lavish holiday home and enjoy other pleasures such as shopping, café dining and entertainment. Tour this home, built for the family of Coca-Cola founder Asa Candler. Or visit the quaint city of Decatur and tour nine distinctive homes and offices at the **Decatur Holiday Candlelight Tour of Homes** Dec. 6-7.

Experience the holidays as they once were at **Christmas in Roswell** from Dec. 1-31. Both Bulloch Hall, an antebellum mansion that will be decorated under the theme “A Teddy Bear Christmas,” and The Smith Plantation Home will be dressed in seasonal splendor and open for tours. Enjoy a reenactment of Mittie Bulloch's Christmas-time 1853 wedding to Theodore Roosevelt. Participate in High Tea, enjoy a candlelight tour of the district and the lighting of the town square and attend performances in Historic Roswell.

Experience Dr. King’s birth home decorated for the holidays just as it would have been when King was a child. Come Dec. 7, 14, and 21 for **Candlelight Tours** at the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site. Come to Marietta Square on Dec. 7-8 to enjoy **The Marietta Pilgrimage: A Christmas Home Tour**. Tour six private historic district homes restored and decorated for the season with candlelight tours at night.

You won’t want to miss the spectacular celebrations this holiday season. From classic theater performances to the 55th annual lighting of the Rich’s Great Christmas Tree, Atlanta has something for everyone. For more information on these and other events in Atlanta, visit www.atlanta.net.

Established in 1913, the ACVB is a private, nonprofit organization created exclusively to market metro Atlanta and Georgia as the premier conventions, meetings and leisure destination in the regional, national and international marketplace and to favorably impact the Atlanta economy through conventions and tourism.

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