

IDEA GUIDE



VISITLEX

Lexington Visitors Center
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www.visitlex.com

HOLIDAY DELIGHTS 2018

*Brighten your season with a festive getaway
to Lexington and the Bluegrass Region*

In Lexington and the Bluegrass, you can experience the holidays in the light of your choice.

Be dazzled by tens of thousands of twinkling lights at the state's largest animated light display — or bask in the glow of candlelight at a historic house. Watch your children's faces light up with excitement at a holiday parade, arts performance or Christmas sing-along — and lighten the task of finding just the right gifts by shopping at Bluegrass craft shows and unique shops.

From mid-November through the end of the year, the calendar abounds with special exhibits, home tours, performances and family fun.

A Horsey Highlight

Lexington is the "Horse Capital of The World," so it shouldn't seem too surprising that the holiday season features some equine enchantment.

At **Southern Lights: Spectacular Sightings on Holiday Nights** at the **Kentucky Horse Park**, horses of light "race" in front of a cheering crowd, clear a steeplechase fence, and graze in Bluegrass pastures. The unique horse scenes help make Southern Lights one of the most distinctive lights festivals anywhere and a time honored tradition among the locals. With tens of thousands of shimmering lights, it's Kentucky's largest lights festival.

You'll also enjoy animated scenes featuring Santa and his reindeer, elves, snowflakes and other traditional holi-

day characters as you drive along the four-mile route through the park.

Through December 23, you can park and check out the indoor exhibits and entertainment. Youngsters can pet reindeer and other creatures in the petting zoo and talk to Santa in the park's International Museum of the Horse, where animated figures and a model railway exhibit enhance the regular equine-related exhibits. You can also shop for handmade arts and crafts, or just enjoy cookies and hot chocolate while you listen to local choirs and other entertainers.

Catch Southern Lights nightly from 5:30 to 10 p.m.

November 16 through December 31. Admission is \$17 per car (\$27 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays), \$37 per extended van, \$65 per mini-bus, \$80 per school bus and \$160 per motorcoach. *The indoor attractions are closed on Thanksgiving Day, and December 24-31, but the drive-through portion remains open every night through the 31st.* (859) 255-5727.

Bluegrass Note: This year Southern Lights at the Kentucky Horse Park features the 17th Annual **Southern Lights Stroll/5K Run** benefiting local charities. On November 15, the night before opening to the public, participants will run, walk or stroll three miles along light displays. Additional activities include mini train rides and refreshments. Call (859) 255-5727 for information.

The Glow of Holidays Past

Imagine what Christmas was like in the days before "hot toys" and artificial trees. At historic houses and sites in and around Lexington you can experience the sights, sounds and spirit of Christmas as it was celebrated in the 18th and 19th centuries.

In Lexington

Christmas on the Estate. This year the Henry Clay Estate will open its doors for A Kentucky Christmas at Ashland on Saturday, December 1 from noon to 7:30 p.m. The illumination begins at 5:15p.m. and is free and open to the public. Vendors will set up tents on the lawn of the Estate. Enjoy candlelight tours after the illumination of the mansion. Students \$7 and adults \$15. An additional candlelight tour will be offered December 8 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. (859) 266-8581.

Antebellum Christmas. At Waveland State Historic Site, you can see what the holiday season was like on a Bluegrass plantation. This year, relive Christmas of the past with scenes from the Dicken's classic, "A Christmas Carol." Follow from room to room as the drama plays out right in front of you. Santa will be in the barn each performance, an hour before the first scheduled performance, for photos. November 30, December 1-2, 7-9 and 14-16. Children \$10 and adults \$20. Reservations required. Call for details: (859) 272-3611

In the Region

Simple Gifts. The simple beauty of the Shaker celebrations takes on special significance during special holiday events at the restored Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill near Harrodsburg. Come to Holiday Reed Stars December 8 and learn how to weave the intricate star pattern using reed. Each participant will take home two reed stars. \$45 per person includes Village admission. You can pack your lunch or make a reservation to dine at the Trustee's Office dining room. Ages 16 and up. On December 8, 15 and 22, it's Children's Tea Time with Mrs. Claus. At 1 or 4 p.m., enjoy spiced cider, cookies and sandwiches made for little fingers. \$18 per person. On Saturdays in December, Illuminated Evenings feature caroling choirs, roaring bonfires, twinkling lights and special visits with Mrs. Claus. Closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. (800) 734-5611.

Landmark Christmas. Visit beautiful Ward Hall this Christmas season. December 7-9 and 14-19 are very special times to visit. Christmas candlelight tours are offered from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. This elegant Greek Revival home, built around 1855 is located on US 460,

west of downtown Georgetown. (502) 863-5356.

Harrodsburg Holiday Homes. Six Harrodsburg homes from the 19th and early 20th century and a historic Mercer County church will open their doors for the 27th Annual Holiday Homes Tour, December 1 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The event is sponsored by the Harrodsburg Historical Society. Purchase \$15 tickets (\$11 for Seniors) and begin the tour at the Historical Society's office, 220 Chiles Street. (859) 734-5985 or the Tourist Commission at (800) 355-9192.

Family Fun

In Lexington

Love a Christmas parade? Wave to Santa and other celebrants at the **Lexington Christmas Parade**, December 4, a Tuesday, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The state's largest holiday parade begins at Main and Midland, and proceeds along Main Street to Broadway. Free. (859) 335-8640.

Light and lively! Lexington officially kicks off the holiday season with

the lighting of the city tree — a local tradition that dates to 1913. This year the activities will begin at 3 p.m. on November 24 at Triangle Park. Festivities continue through the afternoon with food vendors, arts and crafts vendors, live music and more setting the mood for a delightful day downtown. The traditional tree lighting takes place at 6:30 p.m. Santa Claus will flip the switch. (859) 335-8640.

Glide and Slide. The Unified Trust Company Ice Rink at Triangle Park opens mid-November. Bring your own skates if you'd like, but skate rentals are included in the price. The rink is open from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Kids feeling chilly? Grab some hot chocolate at the cafe beside the rink. And no worries, there are plenty of places to sit and observe if you don't want to venture out on to the ice yourself. The rink will be open through mid-January.

In the Region

A Country Christmas. Renfro Valley (located off I-75, exit 62, about 35 miles south of Lexington) has something for all ages at its Christmas show December 1 through December 16. Christmas in the Valley features a large light display, Santa's workshop, strolling carolers and clogging elves, comedy and an original music perfor-

Bluegrass Note: Looking for some natural gift ideas? Try the Lexington Farmers Market, open Saturdays at Cheapside in downtown Lexington under the pavilion all year round. You'll find garlic braids, apple and pumpkin butters, and herbal products as well as homemade ornaments and gift baskets.

mance. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays at 7:00 p.m., plus matinees on Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. (800) 765-7464.

Holiday Express. Climb aboard the Bluegrass Scenic Railway's Santa Claus Special for a scenic holiday train excursion past holiday scenes, elves and bluegrass countryside. The 45-minute excursions leave from Woodford County Park on December 8-9 and 15-16. Departure time is 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, with an added 11 a.m. excursion on December 8 and 15. Tickets range from \$13 to \$20. You can purchase tickets online at www.bgrm.org. (859) 873-2476.

Classic Performances

Messiah Magic. If it's just not Christmas without the Messiah, we've got it covered! On December 1 at 8:00 p.m., hear The Lexington Chamber Chorale with The Lexington Philharmonic and guest soloists as they sing excerpts from Handel's Messiah in the stunning setting of The Cathedral of Christ the King on Colony Boulevard. Selections from Vivaldi and modern masters will round out the program. Call (859) 233-4226 for tickets and reservations. Hear the holiday classic performed by The Lexington Singers on December 7 at 7:30 p.m. at UK Singletary Center for the Arts. Enjoy the 150-plus voice choir with special guest tenor Gregory Turay, deemed "one of the brightest natural talents to have emerged from the US in recent years," by the London Times. (859) 257-4929. The Lexington Community Messiah Sing-Along will be held at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints December 15 at 7 p.m. The performance that features a full choir, brilliant soloists and a live orchestra will give you and your family an opportunity to celebrate Christmas by singing along. (502) 353-0597.

Winter Blast. Head downtown to the atrium of The Square on December 10. The UK Opera Theatre will breathe new life into many Christmas standards at their annual Holiday Celebration of Song from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Here's your chance to sing along with award-winning vocalists. Free. (859) 257-9331.

The Ghosts of Christmas Eve. Rupp Arena will host one spectacular show on Thursday, December 6th at 7:30pm. The Trans-Siberian Orchestra (TSO) will per-

form one of the group's most beloved stories in its own renowned audio visual manner. Tickets \$42 to \$75. (859)233-3535

Holiday Ballet. It wouldn't be Christmas without "The Nutcracker." and Lexington offers plenty of chances to catch this seasonal favorite. The Lexington Ballet will perform this quintessential holiday tale December 14-23 at the Lexington Opera House. Tickets range from \$22-\$49. (859) 233-4567. At Singletary Center for the Arts, you can see Bluegrass Youth Ballet's one act interpretation of this holiday classic December 14 at 7:00 p.m. and December 15 at 2:00 p.m. For ticket information call (859) 257-4929. See the Moscow Ballet's classic version direct from Russia at the UK Singletary Center for the Arts on Monday, December 17, at 7:00 p.m. For information call (859) 257-4929. The Kentucky Ballet Theatre will be performing The Night Before Christmas at Lexington Catholic High School, Sunday, December 16 at 2:00 and 7:00 p.m. (859) 252-5245.

Bluegrass Note: For information on annual December Kwanzaa celebrations in Lexington, call the Martin Luther King Center at (859) 257-4130. Celebrated by millions throughout the world, this African American and Pan-African holiday brings a cultural message which speaks to the best of what it means to be African and human in the fullest sense.

Holiday Spirits

Bourbon Traditions. On November 29 from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Buffalo Trace Distillery in Frankfort kicks off another holiday season. Come out to the gardens of Buffalo Trace for their annual Lighting of the Trace. While you are there you can visit the George T. Stagg Gallery featuring historic photos and bourbon artifacts and listen to the Kentucky State University Choir. And, of course, the Gift Shop! Arrive at 5:30 p.m. for a candlelight tour of the distillery. Santa will arrive at 6:30 p.m. Santa will stop by the Visitor Center on December 6-8 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in case you don't get a chance to tell him what you want on November 29! (502) 696-5926.

Shopper's Delights

A Nostalgic Holiday Experience. Head to the Hillenmeyer Christmas shop for a fun and family-friendly experience where the nostalgia of the past meets today's Christmas traditions. The Hillenmeyer family celebrates 67 years of bringing holiday tradition to the Lexington community. Enjoy hot cider, marshmallow roasting, a vintage sleigh and visits from Santa. Check out their extensive assortment of freshly cut trees, custom wreaths, ornaments and more. The shop is

located at 3389 Tates Creek Road, Lexington. (859) 266-6889.

Oh, Christmas Tree! Looking for the perfect pine, the best balsam, the most fabulous fir? You can find it — already beautifully decorated, to boot — at the 32nd annual Trees of Life Gala, November 16. Attend the grand unveiling of this year's trees at the Grand Reserve Event Center at 8:00 p.m. There will be games, prizes, entertainment by Encore of Lexington, and food from local restaurants. (859) 277-8259.

Shop for the Greater good. Locals look forward to the annual Holly Day Market presented by the Junior League. Proceeds help further many worthwhile projects. You'll find more than 70 vendors with fabulous boutique-style items unique to the Bluegrass Region. Vendors sell jewelry, toys, books, holiday decorations, art; food and clothes for women, men and children. It's held at the Lexington Center November 30 through December 2. Admission is \$10.

Simpler Shopping. Escape the hectic pace of mall shopping and drive to Shaker Village for the Pleasant Hill Craft Store. A village admission ticket is not required to shop in the two craft stores. After shopping and visiting with craftsmen, enjoy a meal or tea in the Trustee's Office dining room. (800) 734-5611.

Stocking Stuff-a-rama. Gift shops at Lexington's top attractions are great places to find that special something with a Kentucky connection. The gift shop at the Kentucky Horse Park, 4089 Iron Works Pike, has everything for the horse lover. Many items are Kentucky-made. Another haven for equine themed gifts is the gift shop at Keeneland Race Course, which carries items ranging from jewelry to kidstuff to Keeneland logowear. The Museum Shop at Ashland, The Henry Clay Estate on Richmond Road, has julep cups, cookbooks, and a host of items relating to life in the Victorian Era.

For even more holiday events, go to www.visitlex.com and click on the Calendar of Events.

Bluegrass Note: Many Bluegrass communities woo shoppers with unique shops, refreshments and entertainment during the holiday season. Enjoy carriage rides, marching bands and kids' activities at the 38th annual Candlelight Tradition in Downtown Frankfort. November 15-18. (502) 223-2261. Come Home for the Holidays in Georgetown December 1. Enjoy the Christmas parade, open houses and more. Call (502) 863-2547 for details. Pick up a piece of Kentucky heritage at the Berea College December Sale taking place December 7-9. (859) 985-3220.

**For more information contact VisitLEX,
Lexington's convention and visitors bureau
at 800-845-3959.**

*By Teresa Day, a freelance writer based in Lexington, KY
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