

IDEA GUIDE



VISITLEX

Lexington Visitors Center
215 West Main Street
Lexington, KY 40507
(859) 233-7299 or (800) 845-3959
www.visitlex.com

HOLIDAY DELIGHTS 2019

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 Sights 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 the creatures in the petting zoo and talk to Santa in his cabin. Animated figures and a model railway exhibit enhance the regular equine-related exhibits. You can also shop for handmade arts and crafts at the Holiday Market, or just enjoy cookies and hot chocolate.

Catch Southern Lights nightly from 5:30 to 10 p.m. November 29 through December 31. Admission is \$20 per car (\$25 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays), \$35 per

extended van, \$65 per mini-bus, \$80 per school bus and \$160 per motorcoach. *The indoor attractions are closed 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 18th Annual **Southern Lights Stroll/5K Run** benefiting local charities. On November 23, come help set the holidays in motion. 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 7 from 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Bring the kids in their PJs for snacks, a gift, and a unique photo opportunity while listening to the Polar Express. Admission is \$8 per child. There will be two Wreath Workshops for \$35 each, one starting at 1:30 and one starting at 3:00. The illumination begins at 5 p.m. and is free and open to the public. Enjoy candlelight tours after the illumination of the mansion, students \$10 and adults \$18. Vendors will set up tents on the lawn of the Estate. An additional candlelight tour will be offered December 14 from 5:30 p.m. - 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.

December 6-8, 13-15 and 20-21. 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 7 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 7, 14 and 21, 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. \$19 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 6-8 and 14-17 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 Tea. Make new friends at the 28th Annual Christmas Tea at Morgan Row. The event is sponsored by the Harrodsburg Historical Society. December 6, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and December 7, 3 p.m. at the Historical Society's charming headquarters at 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 7, a Saturday, beginning at 11:00 a.m. The state's largest holiday parade begins at Main and Midland, and proceeds along Main Street to Broadway and draws a crowd of over 3,000. 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 29 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 Friday, November 15. 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 shows December 1 through December 15. Christmas in the Valley features headliners like Exile and the Oak Ridge Boys, a large light display, Santa's workshop, strolling carolers and

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.

clogging elves, comedy and original music performances. 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 7-8 and 14-15. Departure time is 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, with an added 11 a.m. excursion on December 7 and 14. Tickets range from \$15 to \$22. 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! Hear the holiday classic performed at historic Christ Church Cathedral on Market Street, a downtown tradition for over 25 years. The Lexington Baroque Ensemble, guest soloists and the Cathedral's boy, girl and men's choirs join forces under the direction of Canon Musician Erich Balling. (859)254-4497

A Cathedral Christmas. The Lexington Singers will join the Lexington Philharmonic on December 14 at 8:00 p.m. for a wonderful seasonal collaboration of a beloved holiday tradition in the beautiful space of the magnificent Cathedral of Christ the King. UK Symphony Orchestra Conductor John Nardolillo will be guest conductor for this much-anticipated program of sacred orchestral and choral works. (859) 233-4226.

Winter Blast. Head downtown to the atrium of The Square on December 15. The atrium will be decked out in all its holiday splendor. Conductor Dr. Everett McCorvey will direct a symphony of vocalists and musicians from the UK Opera Theatre, including winners of the Alltech Vocal Scholarship Competition, for Alltech's annual Celebration of Song. The celebration will also feature special guest performances by renowned musical artists. Free. (859) 257-9331.

The Ghosts of Christmas Eve. Rupp Arena will host one spectacular show on Thursday, December 5th at 7:30 p.m. The Trans-Siberian Orchestra (TSO) will perform one of the group's most beloved stories in its own renowned audio visual manner. Tickets \$50 to \$80.

Cirque Dreams Holidayze will be presented on December 18 at 7 p.m., also at Rupp Arena. (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 13-14 at EKU Center for the Arts. Tickets range from \$36-\$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 20 at 7:00 p.m. and December 21 at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are \$17-\$20. (859) 257-4929. See the Moscow Ballet's classic version direct from Russia at the UK Singletary Center for the Arts on Saturday, November 30, at 7:00 p.m. For information call (859) 257-4929. The

Kentucky Ballet Theatre will be performing The Nutcracker at the Lexington Opera House December 14 and 21 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. and December 15 & 22 at 2 p.m. (859) 252-5245.

Holiday Spirits

Bourbon Traditions. On December 5 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 Clubhouse on December 12-14 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. and from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on the 25th, in case you don't get a chance to tell him what you want on December 5! (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 68 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

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.

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 33rd annual Trees of Life Gala, November 22. 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 100 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 15-17. 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. Lexington's Visitors Center in the newly renovated historic courthouse has lots of great options for stocking stuffers as well. 215 West Main Street.
(859)233-7299.

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 21-24. (502) 223-2261. Come Home for the Holidays in Georgetown December 7. 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 Sale taking place the first week of December. (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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