



ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

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CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAY SEASON IN ILLINOIS *Illinois offers seasonal festivities throughout the state*

Chicago - Plan to celebrate the magic of the holidays with an abundance of events and activities in Illinois. When traveling the state, visitors are invited to partake in local long-standing traditions while creating holiday traditions of their own. Travelers will find Illinois is the ideal destination for a memorable getaway offering holiday festivals, celebrations and much more.

CHICAGO

Visitors to Chicago can kick off the holiday season in grand fashion at the **Magnificent Mile Lights Festival**, November 19. The winter celebration sets the stage for holiday fun on one of Chicago's most magical stretches - The Magnificent Mile. Kids, and kids at heart, can watch Mickey Mouse and Disney characters march down Michigan Avenue as one million lights turn on along the way. Visitors also will enjoy ice-carving demonstrations, caroling, live Disney musical performances and evening fireworks.

For more information, contact the Greater North Michigan Avenue Association (312-642-3570, www.gnmaa.com).

Chicago's Daley Plaza transforms into a replica of Germany's famous Nuremberg market with more than 40 lively, colorful booths during **Christkindlmarket**, November 24-December 22. Similar to the original German Christmas market, visitors to Christkindlmarket can sample traditional German refreshments such as a hot spicy red wine called Glühwein and the German gingerbread known as Lebkuchen. Other features include a series of choral and orchestral performances and vendors selling traditional German holiday gifts.

For more information, contact the German American Chamber of Commerce of the Midwest (312-644-2662, www.christkindlmarket.com).

Chicago's No. 1 tourist attraction becomes a winter wonderland during **Navy Pier's Winter WonderFest**, December 9-January 1. Decked out with breathtaking ornamentation, hundreds of trees and thousands of twinkling lights, Winter WonderFest offers activities for the whole family, including indoor ice skating at the Arctic Ice Rink, the Winter WonderFest Musical Carousel, games, arts and crafts for kids, lively entertainment and more.

For more information, contact Navy Pier (www.navy pier.com, 312-595-PIER).

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CHICAGOLAND

Cuneo Museum and Gardens in Vernon Hills, one of Chicagoland's most celebrated historic treasures, presents the **Cuneo Museum and Gardens' Festival of Lights**, November 25-January 1. On the grounds of the museum, visitors will marvel at the dozens of animated light displays featuring millions of twinkling lights. Visitors can also tour the breathtaking 1914 European villa, where they will discover 25 magnificently decorated rooms.

For more information, contact the Cuneo Museum and Gardens (www.cuneomuseum.org, 847-362-3042).

Fans of best-selling book and hit movie *Polar Express* can finally experience a real **Polar Express** on December 4 in Lisle. The one-hour magical ride departs from the Lisle Metra Station, travels to Union Station in Chicago and back again. On-board family entertainment includes Santa sightings, costumed characters, live music and caroling, arts and crafts and more.

For more information, contact the Lisle Convention and Tourism Bureau (800-733-9811, www.lislecvb.com).

Naperville offers a taste of a 19th-century Christmas during **Christmas Memories** at the Naper Settlement, December 9-11 and 16-18. Visitors to the settlement will enjoy Victorian carolers, Father Christmas, villagers in period costumes, and other holiday entertainment.

For more information, contact the Naper Settlement (630-420-6010, www.naper.settlement.museum).

NORTHERN

Galena Cellars, located in scenic Galena, hosts the **Nouveau Wine Festival** on November 18. The annual festival celebrates both the beginning of the holiday season and the release of Galena Cellars' Nouveau Wine. Visitors will receive the seasonal variety when a horse-drawn wagon makes personal deliveries down Main Street.

For more information, contact Galena Cellars (815-777-3330, www.galenacellars.com).

Families can celebrate the season during **Hollydays in DeKalb** with festivities November 25 and December 1, 3, 11, 17 and 24. Hollydays offers a number of activities such as screenings of holiday movies at the Egyptian Theater, visits from Santa Claus, live entertainment, carriage rides, a holiday parade and more! Visitors to DeKalb can also enjoy discounted shopping on select days, as well as free holiday gift wrap.

For more information, contact Main Street DeKalb (815-748-7788, www.mainstreetdekalb.com).

Rockford's Sinnissippi Park is aglow with dozens of lighted holiday displays during the **Holiday Festival of Lights**, November 27-January 2. Visitors can take a leisurely drive through the park and after marveling at the festive light displays, children can leave their letters and wish lists for Santa in the North Pole Express mailbox.

For more information, contact the Rockford Park District (815-987-8800, www.rockfordparks.org).

CENTRAL

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum in Springfield will present a temporary exhibit entitled “**Christmas at the White House**,” November 25-January 8. Visitors will enjoy a dozen Christmas trees, each representing a presidency and adorned in 19th- and 20th-century dressings. The exhibit will also feature White House and presidential Christmas memorabilia dating back to the early 1800s from the collection of renowned author Mary Evans Seeley, including presidential Christmas cards, messages and gifts given by and to presidents, first ladies, children, and staff over the years.

For more information, contact the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum (www.alplm.org, 800-610-2094).

The city of Bloomington celebrates Christmas the old-fashioned way with **Once Upon A Holiday**, December 3. Visitors are invited downtown to do some holiday shopping and enjoy festivities that include horse-drawn carriage and trolley rides, a Christmas parade and tours of the historic David Davis Mansion built in 1872, which will be adorned with period holiday decorations. Children can enjoy ornament workshops, holiday story book readings, special visits from Santa and live vignettes in store windows.

For more information, contact Uniquely Bloomington! (309-829-9599, www.uniquelybloomington.com).

Christmastime at the Dana-Thomas House, December 16-18, in Springfield, provides visitors with the opportunity to tour a Frank Lloyd Wright-designed home adorned with turn-of-the-century holiday decorations. On December 18, the exterior of the house will be lined with hundreds of glowing luminaria.

For more information, contact the Dana-Thomas House (217-782-6776, www.dana-thomas.org).

WESTERN

The Quincy Chamber of Commerce brings the North Pole to Western Illinois at the awe-inspiring **Avenue of Lights**, November 24-January 1. The two-mile-long animated light festival held in Wavering-Moorman Park features three tunnels, nine arches and a 15-foot poinsettia among the 100 display groupings decorated with more than one million lights.

For more information, contact the Quincy Area Chamber of Commerce (217-222-7980, www.quincychamber.org).

Ranked on the American Bus Association’s Top 100 Events in 2005, the **East Peoria Festival of Lights**, November 26-December 31, offers more than a million lights producing images that range from Santa Claus to menorahs. The festival kicks off with a Parade of Lights featuring 40 stunning floats followed by a magnificent fireworks show. Additional festival activities include a narrated Nativity scene, an enchanted snow-covered forest for kids, and a marketplace.

For more information, contact the city of East Peoria (800-365-3743, www.cityofeastpeoria.com).

SOUTHERN

Carbondale provides a sparkling beginning to the holiday season with the **Lights Fantastic Parade** on December 3. The annual evening parade draws spectators from all over the region and features more than 70 floats emblazoned with lights. Other entertainment includes carolers, marching bands and dancers.

For more information, contact Carbondale Main Street (618-529-8040, www.carbondalemainstreet.com).

Couples can escape from the holiday hustle and bustle to the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail for **A Romantic, Classical Christmas Dinner** at the Von Jakob Vineyard in Pomona on December 16. The picturesque winery features a dinner and more than 20 varieties of wine to sample.

For more information, contact the Von Jakob Vineyard (618-893-4500, www.vonjakobvineyard.com).

SOUTHWEST

Belleville's renowned **Way of Lights** celebration at the National Shrine of our Lady of the Snows, November 15-January 6, offers one mile-and-a-half of electro-art sculptures and life-size figures depicting the Christmas story. Also ranked on the American Bus Association's Top 100 Events in 2005, the Way of Lights festival features a life-sized Nativity scene constructed from LEGO® blocks, camel and donkey rides, horse-drawn carriage rides and more.

For more information, contact the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows (618-397-6700, www.snows.org).

Celebrate the Christmas of yesteryear during the **Victorian Holiday Celebration** in Lebanon, November 18-19. The celebration presents a magnificent lights display, carolers costumed in Victorian dress, carriage rides and refreshments. Following the entertainment, the stores on Main Street will open to the public for holiday shopping.

For more information, contact the Lebanon Visitors Center (618-537-8420).

To get travelers started on their holiday trip planning, the Illinois Bureau of Tourism offers additional information on one-of-a-kind attractions, events statewide, accommodations and bookable 3-Day Getaways through the bureau's Web site, **www.enjoyillinois.com** or its travel counselors at **1-800-2CONNECT**.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Media materials and downloadable images are now available on the Illinois Bureau of Tourism's online media center at **www.illinoismediacenter.com**. Additional photography, available electronically or in slide format, may be obtained by contacting Anne Dattulo at anne.dattulo@edelman.com, 312-240-2829, or Katie Markese at katie.markese@edelman.com, 312-297-7561.

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism manages industry efforts that result in sustainable and significant economic and quality-of-life benefits for Illinois residents.