

Holidays at Disney World:

DFB's Merriest Guide



AJ WOLFE & THE DFB TEAM



WELCOME

Mickey and our Disney pals are getting ready to deliver plenty of yuletide cheer during the 2025 holiday season.

Is it really *extra* magical? Absolutely! Visiting Walt Disney World during this time of year will take your vacation to a whole new level.

From the time the first decorations are revealed in early November until they are packed away in January, there's merriment to be found around every corner.

The addition of festive events, seasonal activities, delicious treats, and holiday meals make this time of year at Disney World truly memorable.

In fact, you should mark your calendars now as [Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party](#) will debut on November 7, 2025, and [EPCOT International Festival of the Holidays](#) kicks off on November 28th!

You'll find the magic of the season in the lights, music, FOOD, and more. When it comes to the countless holiday festivities in the World, a little planning goes a long way.

Mentally, we're already walking down Main Street, U.S.A., staring at the Christmas decorations while drinking hot chocolate.

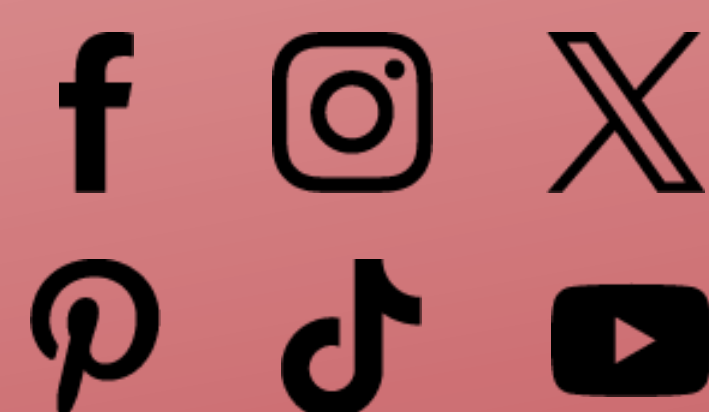
Join us on this holiday adventure!

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HOLIDAY SERVICES

Have you ever woken up at Disney World to find the holidays *magically* appeared overnight? If not, you've gotta put a November trip on your bucket list.

We've seen holiday touches as early as October 24th—like the cozy lanterns in Animal Kingdom's Discovery Island. But the real transformation kicks off on Halloween night and wraps up just in time for Thanksgiving.



It's all thanks to Disney's incredible Holiday Services Team. We're talking 50 year-round Cast Members (plus up to 90 seasonal ones!) who work their magic on over 600 trees, 1,700 wreaths, and nearly 5,000 garlands—that's almost nine miles of holiday cheer.

There are 29 "Icon Trees" (15-70 feet tall), plus 596 smaller ones. Toppers can reach 7 feet wide and weigh over 200 pounds.

A 3.5-acre tree farm near Animal Kingdom grows over 100,000 poinsettias each year.

In total, Disney uses 12,000+ tree branches, 110 tons of steel, 15,000 ornaments, and 260,000 lights to bring the holidays to life.

Once the season ends, the team gets right to work on the next one—installing, maintaining, and removing more than 40,000 decor pieces across 780 locations, including the parks, resorts, and Disney Cruise Line.

And don't forget to look closely—the tiniest details (like gingerbread house features) are part of the magic!



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

HOLIDAY SEASON

Are you headed to Walt Disney World during the holiday season? The festivities begin in early November and last until the first week of January.

During this timeframe, Disney's Parks and Resorts are filled with delights like food, festivities, and FUN. And if you ask us, it's never too early to start planning for the holiday happenings.

We've compiled years of Disney Parks holiday experience so that you don't miss a single treat, holiday meal, event, or activity.

For Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's, guests can expect specialty menus and holiday meals at many Disney restaurants in the Parks, at the Resorts, and in Disney Springs.

CROWDS

It's an extra-magical time to visit; however, holidays are the busiest days of the year at Disney World.

On the actual holidays, it's going to be **crowded**. Wall to wall people, really. The largest pedestrian jams will occur near fireworks viewing areas, during parade times, and at closing time.

Be prepared with a touring strategy, a dining reservation, and a sense of humor. Enjoy the excitement rather than trying to see your entire list of attractions.

Note that **Disney Park Pass reservations** are not required for most guests. Annual Passholders should plan to book Park Passes (when required) as soon as you're able to ensure entry on your preferred touring days.



CHRISTMAS

It's never too early to talk about the winter holidays, right?

If you're looking for a **meal with traditional trimmings** on Christmas Day, book an Advance Dining Reservation. Many restaurants will serve at least one entree that includes traditional fare over the Christmas holidays.

If you make reservations when an after-hours party is taking place, you will need to purchase admission for the event.

Book online or by calling 407-939-3463.

Consider spending Christmas in a not-so-ordinary way! Lounge by the pool, visit a water park, rent a watercraft, and/or Resort hop to discover the best holiday snacks and enjoy the Resort's unique decorations.

It's time to bust out the jingle bells and put on your Christmas sweaters, people!

SPECIAL ENTERTAINMENT

During regular park hours, you can catch some of the entertainment that is usually exclusive to Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party after the Party concludes. Typically they'll last until December 29th (before the New Year's takeover!). In 2025, the following are confirmed:

- Minnie's Wonderful Christmastime Fireworks.
- Mickey's Most Merriest Celebration, several nightly shows
- Mickey's Once Upon a Christmastime Parade

PARK CAPACITY

Does Disney World ever hit capacity? Yes, and historically Magic Kingdom has hit **capacity** on Christmas Day, even if for only a few hours.

When a **park closure** happens, it's usually during afternoon hours when crowds typically peak. Along with those with Park Reservations, Park Hopping ticket holders may lead to capacity issues after noon.

To secure your spot, make a Park Reservation (if required) for your preferred park as early as possible and commit to it for the entire day.

You can monitor park updates and consider a late-day visit, although expect massive crowds.

Usually, Disney World will send out notifications on the **My Disney Experience app** regarding capacity.

Or call the park capacity hotline, a.k.a the park hopping hotline at (407) 560-5000 before you head to your preferred park.

Disney will use a number of transportation tactics to persuade you to stay away from the near-capacity parks, including running buses less frequently, shutting down the monorail, and diverting cars to larger lots.

For example, Disney's Hollywood Studios guests may have to park at EPCOT and then take a provided bus to the Studios.

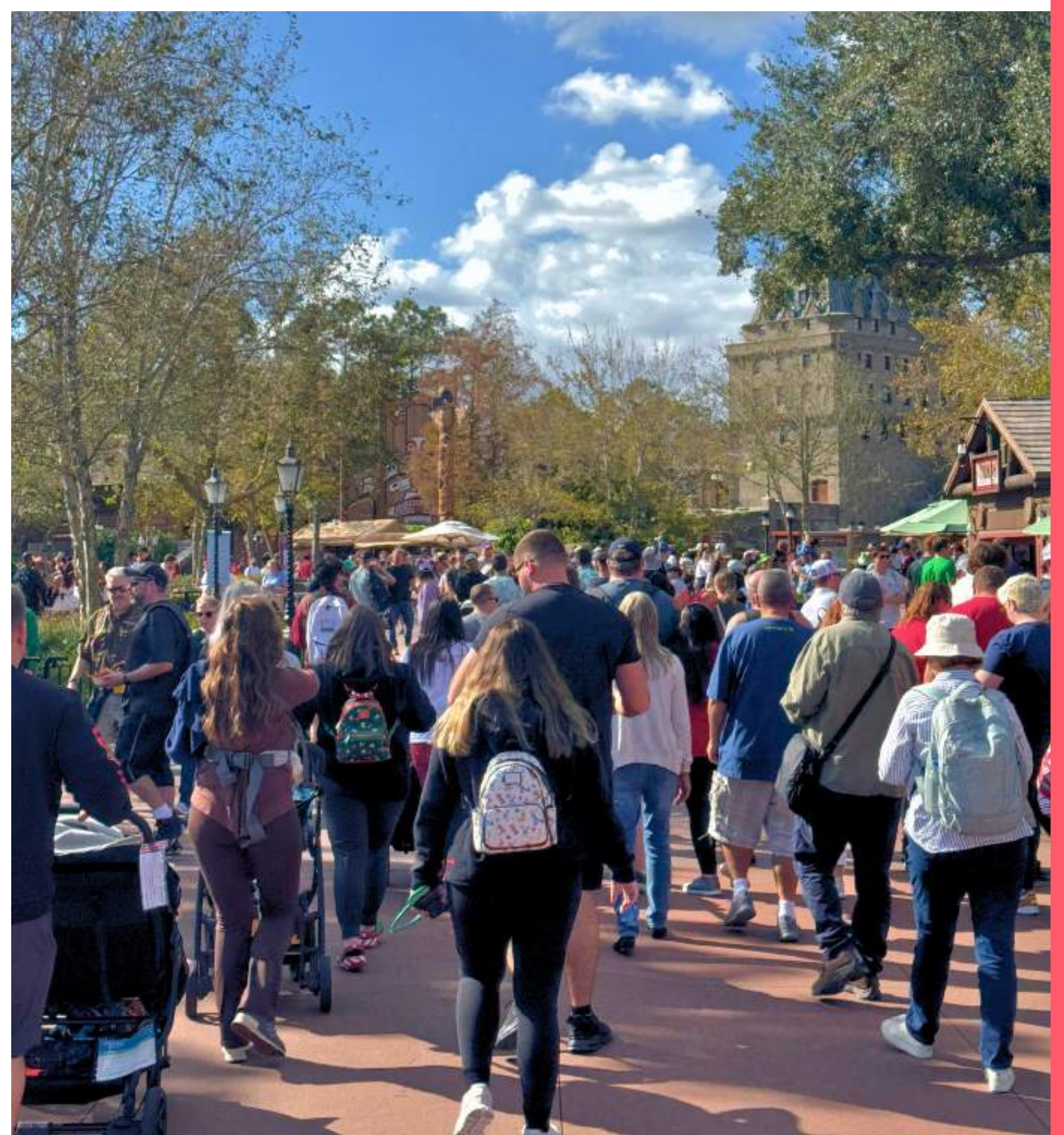
It's so festive around the parks during the holidays. Everything is decorated, Christmas music can be heard everywhere, and we can't forget about the SNOAP. That's why we ALL want to be there!



PARK CLOSURE PHASES

In the past, Disney used this phase system to indicate who can and cannot enter the parks on high capacity days. The phases only apply to a single park, meaning Magic Kingdom can be at Phase 4, while Hollywood Studios is at Phase 1.

- **Phase 1** – Ticket sales are stopped at the theme park that has reached Phase 1. Multi-day ticketholders, Annual Passholders, and Disney Resort guests will be allowed admittance to the parking lot and theme park. Guests re-entering the Park, Park Hopping from another Park, holding a reservation, or arriving via Disney transportation (not car) will be able to enter.
- **Phase 2** – Guests staying at a WDW Resort hotel, with an Annual Pass, Park Hopping from another Park, holding a reservation, or arriving via Disney transportation are allowed in the parking lot and turnstiles.
 - **Phase 2A** – Allows only guests using the last day of their multi-day admission.
- **Phase 3** – The Park and parking lot will only allow Walt Disney World Resort guests staying at a WDW-owned hotel, Annual Passholders, and guests with dining reservations to enter.



- **Phase 4** – Capacity has been reached. No one will be allowed to enter for safety purposes!

Sticking with one park on Christmas Day, and dare we say it, preferably not Magic Kingdom, will reduce the amount of stress around park capacity closures.



MAGIC KINGDOM DECOR & ACTIVITIES



WALT DISNEY WORLD PARKS

Every year Disney decks the parks with impressive trimmings! In addition, special events and shows are presented with Christmas flair.



MAGIC KINGDOM

Even before you walk down Main Street, U.S.A., poinsettias, garlands, and Christmas trees decorate the Park's entrance. Most impressive is the gorgeous train station.

There are **NEW Christmas decorations** this year in Magic Kingdom!



TREE

But this is nothing compared to what you'll find when you walk inside the Magic Kingdom! The **65 ft. tall and 25 ft. wide tree** is especially impressive. The base alone is 18,000 pounds. Don't forget to look for Hidden Mickeys.



JINGLE CRUISE

Venture into the jungles of Adventureland and board the “[Jingle Cruise](#),” a holiday makeover of the popular Jungle Cruise attraction. Homesick Skippers entertain with new jokes for holiday cheer!

Notice the decorations in the queue and boathouse, and boats with holiday names (Eggnog Annie, for one). Don't forget to check out the Crew Mess Dinner Menu!

Began November 3, 2025.



MAGIC KINGDOM DECOR

The park is covered with garlands, wreaths, trees, life-sized toy soldiers, and more—everywhere you look. It takes Holiday Services 3 nights to complete the transformation.

And as many as 119,000 poinsettias are installed around Disney World for the season (with as many as 52,000 in Magic Kingdom).

One of our favorite views is looking down Main Street toward the castle. There's nothing like it!

Take a moment to wander around Magic Kingdom and [admire the details](#) that so many people miss. We can't help but love all the holiday decor throughout the parks.



FROZEN HOLIDAY SURPRISE

Join Elsa, Anna, Olaf, Kristoff, and the Snowgies in front of Cinderella Castle for the [Frozen Holiday Surprise](#) show. The castle is illuminated in a spectacular way!

This show brings Olaf and more than a hundred of his Snowgie siblings, Anna, Elsa, and Kristoff to decorate the castle for the holidays in their festive wear.

The show culminates with Elsa adding shimmering and sparkling touches to Cinderella castle.

This nightly show takes place during regular park hours at 6:15PM and Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party at 8:15PM.

SWISS FAMILY TREEHOUSE

While climbing Swiss Family Treehouse, listen for [classic holiday tunes](#). They're coming from the organ!

WEIRD DOLLS?!

I think it's safe to say that after seeing [these dolls](#), it's not going to be sugar plums dancing in our dreams. How many can you find?

MEET SANTA

Starting Thanksgiving Day, [Storybook Circus](#) gets its first-ever jolly glow-up, and Santa's setting up shop with his own meet-and-greet for all your wish-list dreams.



MAGIC KINGDOM ITINERARY

Are you visiting the Magic Kingdom during the holidays?

There are a few tidbits that we want you to know before setting out for the park. A jolly reminder: plan your family's personal itinerary around any Lightning Lane and/or virtual queue experiences that you've reserved via the My Disney Experience app.

Keep an eye on park hours, which may change as crowds increase.

Yes, holidays are busy in Disney World. Families are out of school and have time off of work, Disney releases limited-time eats and drinks that draw people in, and people like celebrating in the "Most Magical Place on Earth."

Looking for a morning plan? Visit Magic Kingdom on the morning of a Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party, we find these mornings less busy.

Visiting with a thoughtful itinerary will help your family navigate this festive, but crowded time of year.





MAGIC KINGDOM HOLIDAY GAME PLAN

- 🎄 **Arrive early** to stay ahead of holiday crowds
- 🎄 Power-walk straight to Fantasyland and hit **Peter Pan's Flight** before the line gets epic
- 🎄 Snap **holiday PhotoPass pics** on Main Street, U.S.A. 📷
- 🎄 Skip the Starbucks saga and grab your **Joffrey's Revive** in Tomorrowland 🍰
- 🎄 Grab a rocking chair in Frontierland or loiter on Main Street and just **take in the seasonal atmosphere** ❄️
- 🍪 **Mobile-order lunch** (think **Pecos Bill Tall Tale Inn & Café** or **Pinocchio Village Haus**) because lines are for elves 🍴
- 🍪 **Eat early** so you're not hangry mid-parade.
- 🍪 **Stalk ride wait times** in the **My Disney Experience app**
- 🍪 Treat yourself to a **holiday snack**—like a giant Mickey cookie or festive cupcake
- 🌟 **Lock down an Advance Dining Reservation** for a Table Service dinner (hello, **Liberty Tree Tavern** and its Thanksgiving-inspired feast)
- 🌟 End the day with a **family photo in front of Cinderella Castle** while the sky goes full sparkle spectacular



Morning Afternoon Evening



EPCOT DECOR & ACTIVITIES



EPCOT

EPCOT dresses up for the season, too. This park features fantastic decorations in World Celebration, World Nature, and World Discovery, and plenty of old-world touches around the World Showcase!



DECOR

Holiday decorations typically go up a bit later in EPCOT due to the later start date of [Festival of the Holidays](#), which will kick off on November 28th, 2025!



TREE

A giant [Christmas tree](#) decorated in a "Peace on Earth" theme takes center stage as guests step onto World Showcase Promenade.

EPCOT ACTIVITIES

Get ready for a spectacular ceremony as every night at 6PM, a Tree Lighting takes place in World Showcase Plaza!

In past years, the theme of the EPCOT tree has been Peace on Earth! You'll need to look way UP, as the angel that adorns the top of the tree is 70 ft. above the ground. The globe is painted with intricate details—there are penguins painted at the South Pole!

After admiring the beautiful Christmas tree, we love exploring the decor, food, and storytellers around World Showcase!



GLIMMERING GREENHOUSES

The classic attraction [Living with the Land](#)—located in The Land pavilion in EPCOT's World Nature—gets dressed up for the season with a lovely light display at night. These glimmering greenhouses have special, festive touches that enhance the boat cruise throughout the day, as well. It's truly charming.

Launched last year and coming back this year is the [Behind the Seeds: Glimmering Greenhouses](#)! This one-hour walking tour can be booked (via the Disney World website or the [My Disney Experience app](#)) from November 28th to December 30th for \$59 per person at 6PM, 7PM, and 8PM (*new this year!*) daily.



TRAIN VILLAGE

EPCOT's Germany Pavilion is home to a [tiny train village](#).

Take a close look and you'll see that the residents have decorated their little town to celebrate the start of the 2025 EPCOT Festival of the Holidays.

The trains are also decked out for the holiday!



JOURNEY INTO IMAGINATION

Don't forget to pay a visit to [Journey Into Imagination with Figment](#) to see the star of the ride (that's FIGMENT) in his HOLIDAY SWEATER! Last year you could even [buy one for yourself!](#)



THE SEAS AQUARIUM

The aquarium has a [holiday overlay](#). Check out the Menorah, sea urchins wearing santa and antler hats, a fireplace with stockings, and Christmas village.

GINGERBREAD DISPLAYS

This was new last year, the Gingerbread Spaceship Earth, and this beautiful sculpture returns this year. After 160 hours of crafting, an 8-foot-tall [gingerbread Spaceship Earth](#) (with lights and music!) was showcased in Communicore Hall.

Made of 1,300 gingerbread triangles, the sphere took 240 pounds of honey dough, 100 eggs, 100 ounces lebkuchen spice, 55 pounds dark chocolate, and 100 pounds of royal icing. Look for 11 hidden Mickeys to represent the 11 countries of the World Showcase.

Celebration Countdown shows were presented by Citizen every 15 minutes and set to the Beacon of Light soundtrack.



EPCOT ITINERARY

Get ready for some merry making at EPCOT during the holiday season!

For a full day of seasonal entertainment, food, and beverages, take a global tour around World Showcase.

And don't forget to check the My Disney Experience app for showtimes!

There's so much to see that you'll want to work your day around the entertainment and rides that are most important to you.

Of course, if you were out late the night before, you may want to set your alarm for a mid-to-late morning arrival to EPCOT.

By this time of day, guests have moved onto World Showcase. So, you may want to linger in the front of the park for food and entertainment.





EPCOT HOLIDAY HUSTLE

- ❄️ **Start early** and fuel up before getting to the park—your first EPCOT trek is basically a 5K. Skip the Creations Shop temptation and **head straight for rides**
- ❄️ If you've got kids, make a beeline for **Frozen Ever After** in the Norway pavilion before Elsa's line freezes your entire morning ❄️
- ❄️ For early rides: **Soarin', Frozen Ever After, Remy's Ratatouille Adventure**—especially if you came in via International Gateway 🌧️
- ❄️ Snap **holiday PhotoPass pics** between rides for gifts that scream *festive EPCOT brag* 📷
- ❄️ Break for a seasonal snack from the **Holiday Kitchens**—because EPCOT calories don't count 🍰
- 🌧️ Keep clearing your **Must Do list of rides** while everyone else's plan is still forming
- 🌧️ **Mobile-order lunch** at a counter-service spot **or keep grazing the Holiday Kitchens** like it's your personal buffet 🍴
- 🌧️ Tired feet? Good. Use that as an excuse to **catch holiday entertainment** or one of the many shows scattered around 🎵
- 🌟 Settle in for a Table Service dinner—DFB favorites include **Le Cellier Steakhouse or Via Napoli Ristorante e Pizzeria** for wood-fired pies 🍷
- 🌟 Close out with **Luminous: The Symphony of Us**, EPCOT's nighttime spectacular over the World Showcase Lagoon 🌟



Morning



Afternoon



Evening



HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS DECOR & ACTIVITIES



HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

Disney's Hollywood Studios absolutely glitters with holiday finery and charming vintage decorations during the Christmas season.

The tree was first spotted on November 7, 2025.



DECOR

Good ol' Gertie—of Dinosaur Gertie's Ice Cream of Extinction—dons her Santa hat for the occasion.



TREE

The tree is covered in silver garland, candy canes, and multicolored baubles.

Tree lighting typically takes place nightly at dusk. We love how the tree lights are reflected in Echo Lake.



TOY STORY LAND

With Woody donning a holiday scarf, the Toy Story Land [section of the park](#) joins in the festive fun. We love watching for Buzz, Woody, and Jessie in their holiday costumes!

The land is also adorned with holiday decorations like giant cranberry and popcorn garlands, a golden macaroni art ornament, a holiday card selfie of the Toy Story characters, a larger-than-life Hamm sugar cookie, Green Alien ornaments, and more.

On Slinky Dog Dash, you'll hear sleigh bells ringing, and the Alien Swirling Saucers will swirl to two holiday tracks (in addition to themed lighting).

HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS DECOR

Look for holiday décor throughout the park. Take a stroll down Sunset Boulevard to see how many glittering stars you can spot. No, not movie stars, but Christmas stars! The elves truly work their magic for the season.

Year-after-year the amount of decorations from previous years surrounding (and IN!) Echo Lake [continues to increase](#)! And we are still thrilled as they continue to return each year. Chic and nostalgic Tinseltown decorations deck the streets here.

Vintage decor is also found near The Hollywood Brown Derby.



SUNSET SEASONS GREETINGS

Sunset Seasons Greetings debuted in 2017 and will be presented nightly on Sunset Boulevard when the holidays kick off! The show transforms Sunset Boulevard and The Hollywood Tower Hotel with lasers, falling “snow”, and projections. In 2018, lasers were added to the top and mid-sections of the tower. Not only do they fly over our heads as we take in the vignettes, but they also light up the snow that falls on Sunset Boulevard!

Scenes on the Hollywood Holiday Tower Hotel include Mickey and Minnie reminiscing about a hometown Christmas, Toy Story characters guessing which new toys are coming this Christmas, the Swedish Chef from The Muppets baking a gingerbread house, and Olaf pining over his holiday wish!



OLAF'S FROZEN ADVENTURE

This year-round guest favorite—For the First Time in Forever: A Frozen Sing-Along Celebration—features all the great ear-worms from Frozen, plus hilarious storytelling from two Arendelle historians.

During the holidays, a special version of the show is presented including songs from the Frozen short film “Olaf's Frozen Adventure!”

No matter the time of year, though, you WILL see SNOW during the production!



MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT

New last year, juggling elves are showing off their juggling and comedy skills. The Holiday Spirit Band performs some jolly tunes. As well, Seasonz Jukebox is bringing the pep of a collegiate marching band to the park. These high-energy performances include horns, drummers, and dancers bringing your favorite holiday songs to life!

Keep an eye out for [these performers](#) at Echo Lake, around Center Stage, and near Baseline Tap House throughout the day. Check the My Disney Experience app for specific times!

Intermittent shows 9:30AM to 4:30PM.

SANTA

A limited-time meet and greet will be waiting for you inside [Walt Disney Presents!](#) You can meet Santa up until December 23 (after all, he does have plans on December 24!)

PhotoPass will be available.



HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS ITINERARY

Tackling Disney's Hollywood Studios will require a bit of patience during the holidays.

While this park isn't huge, you'll want to be prepared to crisscross the park as you take advantage of attractions with lower wait times. Watch for bottlenecks, especially in the fun-filled Toy Story Land.










Star Wars fans won't want to miss Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge, which we find much less crowded near park closing time. However, some of you may want to devote a good bit of time to this immersive area.

While the park isn't quite as decked out as the Magic Kingdom, holiday decor is festive. Don't miss the Echo Lake area—it's beautiful.





FROM STAR WARS TO SANTA: HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

-  Arrive early enough to get a head **start on big-ticket rides**
-  Choose which must-ride—**Mickey & Minnie’s Runaway Railway** or **Slinky Dog Dash**—you’ll tackle first
-  **Explore Star Wars: Galaxy’s Edge**, and if you planned ahead, hit your **Oga’s Cantina**, **Savi’s Workshop**, or **Droid Depot** reservations ⚡
-  Keep an eye on wait times in the **My Disney Experience app** and fill your afternoon with other favorites while spacing out the headliners
-  **Mobile-Order lunch** at **Backlot Express** or **Docking Bay 7 Food and Cargo**—perfect fuel for more Star Wars time 🍔
-  Grab a seasonal snack and **meet Santa** for that last-minute holiday photo op
-  Save **Rise of the Resistance** for just before park close if you didn’t ride it earlier—often the best combo of low wait and nighttime atmosphere
-  Check in for your **Advance Dining Reservation** at **Hollywood & Vine** for Minnie’s Holiday Dine, complete with characters in their festive best. 🍴
-  Cap the night with a final lap through Galaxy’s Edge or Hollywood Boulevard to **soak up the park’s glowing holiday lights**



Morning

















Afternoon



Evening



HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS FAMILY VACATION

- 
 Gather the crew: **Plan a resort meet-up** with a backup plan—late sleepers can catch up at Hollywood Studios
- 
 Tempt everyone with breakfast motivation: maybe [Chef Mickey's](#) at Disney's Contemporary Resort, [Whispering Canyon Café](#), [Ale & Compass](#), or [Trattoria al Forno](#) (Book an [Advance Dining Reservation](#) if it's not your home resort)
- 
 Aim to arrive mid-morning and start with a group pleaser like **Slinky Dog Dash** or **Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway**
- 
 No breakfast? Rally at [Trolley Car Café](#) and embrace vacation logic with a cupcake or cookie for breakfast 🍪
- 
 Snap photos of grandparents riding **Toy Story Midway Mania** with the grandkids or hand-in-hand moments on the way to Star Tours—holiday heart-melt material 📸
- 
 When thrill rides pop up, remember the “**chicken exit**” option so everyone can walk the queue together and bow out if needed (Tower of Terror's chicken exit? An elevator. Perfect.)
- 
 Refuel with a **Quick Service lunch** at Backlot Express—plenty of seating for big groups 🍔
- 
 Let anyone needing a **mid-day hotel break** peel off for naps or pool time
- 
Take a character break for cheerful photos and last-minute wish-listing—fun for every generation 🧑🏻
- 
 Build in a **snack and beverage stop** while thrill-seekers conquer **Tower of Terror** or **Rock 'n' Roller Coaster**
- 
 Choose attractions everyone can enjoy next—think group flight on **Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run** (up to 6 can pilot together) 🌌
- 
 Go for an early dinner at [50's Prime Time Café](#) for classic comfort food and laugh-out-loud antics 🍴
- 
No reservation? Circle back to [Backlot Express](#) for quick-service eats with lots of seating
- 
 Cap the night with **cocoa and holiday lights** on Sunset Boulevard, soaking in Sunset Seasons Greetings to wrap your festive family day 🎄🌟



Morning Afternoon Evening



ANIMAL KINGDOM DECOR & ACTIVITIES



ANIMAL KINGDOM

Disney's Animal Kingdom has some of our [favorite holiday displays](#) in Walt Disney World!

The first holiday decor was spotted on October 30th this year!



DECOR

Keep an out for [holiday decor](#) throughout the parks and giftshops! You'll usually spot kitschy decor that are wacky, but oh, so fun.

This year? Disney's added even [MORE decorations!](#)



TREE

The holiday tree at the park's entrance is adorned with unique ornaments. The ornaments are inspired by Africa and Asia, and there is, obviously, a BIG animal theme.



ASIA

Started in 2017, the residents of Anandapur decorate the theater district in celebration of Diwali, India's holiday festival of lights.

Glowing flowers, lanterns and more illuminate the square between Anandapur Theater and the waterfront stage, home to authentic and colorful cultural performances.



ANIMAL KINGDOM DECOR

Ranging from earthy and rustic trees to kitschy and wonderful tinsel displays, this is definitely a place you want to tour during the holidays!

In Africa, you'll find a holiday presentation, blending the inspiration and style of Western traditions with the colors and textiles of authentic African celebrations. In Harambe, decorations are made from found objects the way they might be in an African village—look for the soda bottle cap wreaths.

The park often adds holiday cheer with characters in holiday attire, carolers, musical groups, and dancing.

PANDORA

The magic of the holidays also makes its way to Pandora–The World of Avatar! Guests will find kitschy holiday décor at [Pongu Pongu](#) combining vintage pieces from Earth with items handcrafted from materials indigenous to Pandora. The ex-pats living on the moon of Pandora bring holiday fun to their interstellar home.

DISCOVERY ISLAND

2019 delivered new decorations to Animal Kingdom, starting with Discovery Island! The village is filled with sparkling white holiday decorations, and animal-inspired luminaries lining the rooftops for a celebration of winter!

The [Merry Menagerie](#) is a form of holiday entertainment that takes place on Discovery Island. Various winter animals are transformed into life-size puppets. Cast Members maneuver these puppets around to greet guests as musicians accompany them. The puppets include reindeer, foxes, polar bears, penguins, and more, and they are SERIOUSLY charming and utterly adorable.

Intermittently each day 9:45AM - 12:45 PM and 1:35PM - 5:10PM.





AROUND THE PARK

As part of the holiday season, guests will also find characters like Donald and friends and Goofy with Pluto dressed in festive costumes. Sometimes you can even spot Pocahontas in cold weather gear!

TREE OF LIFE AWAKENINGS

At night, [see the Tree of Life Awakenings](#) featured with winter scenes and holiday music. These projections focus on the beauty of nature, showing various scenes, including a winter wonderland!

Along with scenes of snowy nature, you'll also spot some holiday images, like a gorgeous Christmas tree.

Last year, there was a new *The Lion King* addition featuring music from the classic film while projecting images onto the Disney park icon. Keep a look out if it comes back this year!

The Tree of Life Awakenings show begins at 6:15PM and runs every 10 minutes until the park closes.

This park is even more magical once the sun sets.

ANIMAL ENRICHMENT

We love to see the [holiday-themed enrichment](#) for the animals!





ADVENTURERS OUTPOST

If you're visiting Animal Kingdom this holiday season, don't skip out on meeting Mickey and Minnie at Adventurers Outpost! In the past they greeted guests in [special holiday costumes](#).

Looking for more characters? See [ALL Disney World's meet and greets here](#).

The holiday offerings usually take place at Animal Kingdom from mid-November - December 31st. During that time, you can check out the Merry Menagerie, the holiday-themed Tree of Life Awakenings at night, holiday character meets, and seasonal snacks. We can't wait to celebrate!



ANIMAL KINGDOM ITINERARY

If you're staying at a hotel on Walt Disney World property, you can get to Animal Kingdom by taking a Disney Transport bus directly from your resort to the theme park.

Animal Kingdom is unique in that there are no other Disney transportation options for this theme park.

If you're not staying at a hotel on Walt Disney World property but are already in Walt Disney World at another resort or a theme park, you can take a Disney Transport bus to Animal Kingdom from any Disney Resort or theme park.











Private or Hired Vehicle

You can reach Disney's Animal Kingdom via personal car, taxi, [ride share service](#), or [Minnie Van](#).





ANIMAL KINGDOM HOLIDAY ADVENTURE

-  Kick off with **Kilimanjaro Safaris** for that early-morning animal action—best time to catch the wildlife awake
-  Grab a coffee at **Creature Comforts** (aka the park's Starbucks) on your way to the safari ☕
-  If **Avatar Flight of Passage** is on your must-do list, prioritize it early—still the hottest ticket in Pandora 🌌
-  Pop over to Restaurantosaurus for a **Santa meet and greet**—the big guy in safari mode is a vibe
-  Check out the **Merry Menagerie**, where life-size winter animal puppets parade around Discovery Island
-  Sneak away to **Nomad Lounge** for a chill break with river views—ask for outdoor seating if the weather's nice 🍹
-  Hungry? **Flame Tree Barbecue** is a Quick Service favorite with **Mobile Order** and shady riverfront seating 🍔
-  **Catch a few shows and character encounters**—this park's characters know how to keep the holiday spirit wild 🎭
-  Before you leave, pause for the **Tree of Life holiday awakenings** 🌳 ✨
-  Pick up last-minute gifts in the **Discovery Island shops** 🎁



Morning



Afternoon



DISNEY SPRINGS HOLIDAYS

Disney Springs is not only a shopping and dining destination. During the holiday season, [festive opportunities](#) include entertainment, decor, photo backgrounds, Santa, and more beginning November 13th!

Did you know that Disney Springs is the location with the most decor? It was news to us! With nearly 2,000 individual pieces including trees, garlands, ornaments, and other festive details, Disney Springs really sparkles during the holiday season.

CHRISTMAS TREE STROLL

You don't need a park ticket to see some gorgeous Christmas trees in Disney World. Instead, there's the [Christmas Tree Stroll](#) in Disney Springs—grab a map and check out the 21 elaborately decorated trees.

You can pick up a Christmas Tree Stroll map at City Works Eatery & Pour House, Crystal Arts by Arribas

Brothers, Joffrey's Coffee and Tea Company, The LEGO Store, and The Luxury of Time by Diamonds International.

If you do pick up a map, you can add stickers when you find each tree to it and then turn it in for a prize.

If you have a [MagicBand+](#), you can also interact with some of the trees—just make a circular gesture near each tree for something magical!



MAGICBAND+ TREES

You'll find **some extra fun** near the following trees:

- Moana 2
- Toy Story
- The Lion King
- The Nightmare Before Christmas
- Haunted Mansion
- Annual Passholder
- Star Wars
- Coco
- Guardians of the Galaxy
- Disney+
- Lilo and Stitch
- Mickey Mouse & Minnie Mouse
- Encanto
- The Princess and the Frog
- Wish
- Disney Parks



ENTERTAINMENT

- Children can write a letter to Santa at Once Upon A Toy.
- When the sun goes down, the Town Center will experience a shimmering snow fall every half hour.
- Holiday stilt walkers and a rollerblade duo will roam Town Center
- Santa Sleigh DJ will play joyful tunes in the Marketplace area



HOLIDAY DECOR

In addition to the Christmas Tree Stroll, you'll find flagship trees near Once Upon A Toy, World of Disney, and Town Center.

Don't miss the Disney Cruise Line topiary as well as the World of Disney window displays.

At night, Disney Springs sparkles with twinkling lights!



SANTA

Bring that Wish List to Santa starting November 13th from 9AM to 6PM.

Yes, you can [visit Santa Claus](#) while shopping and dining at Disney Springs.

Find the jolly guy at [Santa's Marketplace](#) near [Disney's Pin Traders](#).

Once you've arrived at Disney Springs, use the [My Disney Experience app](#) to enter Santa's virtual queue for up to a maximum of 10 people. Virtual queue slots will open every two hours, from 9am to 6pm, therefore there will be multiple opportunities (subject to availability) to enter the virtual queue each day.

One person can request to join the virtual queue for your entire party. They will receive a push notification when it's time to meet Santa. This notification will open to a link to a digital entry code. (If you are unable to find your digital entry code, select the 3-line "hamburger" icon in the app and select "Virtual Queues.")

Santa will be available at the shop through December 24th.



RESORT DECORATIONS

As part of a Disney World holiday celebration, some resorts turn visions of gingerbread houses into life-size creations, and guests walking into these Disney hotels are greeted first by the memorable aroma that conjures up memories of long-ago Christmas mornings.

Things start with a honey dough (in May), and the Gingerbread itself is baked and cut into shapes over the summer. Despite the beautiful and appetizing appearance of the displays, the gingerbread display pieces are coated with alcohol to prevent pests from eating them. (Thank goodness!) Atop the gingerbread, there's chocolate and icing to admire as well.

While you're [stopping by the various Resorts](#) to see all the displays, look for unique themed ornaments to be available for purchase.

One of our favorite things to do around Disney World during the holidays is take the road less traveled and create our own fun day by visiting all of the nearby Disney hotels. Why? To [check out the unique Christmas trees and decorations!](#)





HOLIDAY DISPLAYS

For many Disney World visitors, touring the [holiday displays at the Disney Resorts](#) is a family tradition. Best of all, they are accessible to anyone.

Note, however, that [parking for visiting guests may not be available](#) during the holiday season.

While all Disney resorts are decked out for the holidays, at least 7 resort hotels are known for their outstanding displays of seasonal décor or fun holiday activities, including:

- Animal Kingdom Lodge
- Beach Club Resort
- BoardWalk Inn
- Contemporary
- Grand Floridian (no gingerbread house in 2025 due to construction)
- Wilderness Lodge
- Yacht Club

GUEST DECOR

Many resort guests decorate their room windows, placing lights and other holiday décor in their resort room windows. We've even seen full-fledged inflatable decorations on the patios! This definitely encourages smiles from passers-by.

And don't forget the amazing displays and golf cart parade at the Fort Wilderness Campground!



ALL-STAR RESORTS DECOR

If you're looking for budget accommodations at Walt Disney World, the All-Star Resorts offer value-priced rooms.

And don't worry—these hotels decorate for the holidays, too!

If you're staying at All-Star Sports, All-Star Movies, or All-Star Music don't miss checking out the Christmas decorations, mostly found in the lobby areas.





ANIMAL KINGDOM LODGE DECOR

Upon arrival at the African-themed Animal Kingdom Lodge, a holiday touch is seen first thing at the entrance sign with decorative deer, then under the Porte Cochere with earth-toned swags.

Once inside, you'll see that this Deluxe Resort is truly one of Disney's [most delightful and unique hotels during the holidays](#).

[Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge](#) is one of our favorite hotels for holiday decorations.

In the entryway, the décor includes natural earth tones and muted reds. Entering the lobby, your eyes take in the sweeping garland around the upper floors of the atrium.

Animal Kingdom Lodge erects an enormous, 4-story tree in the atrium during the holiday season with

ornaments that reflect the African atmosphere and arts and crafts style. Look for safari-themed bows, animal print ornaments, and brushed gold ornaments here. You'll also discover African instruments, baskets, and animals throughout the holiday décor. Once you get past this colossal tree, though, there are even more decorations to check out. There's another tree in the back of the lobby with equally gorgeous ornaments.

The almost 7-foot-tall [gingerbread giraffe and zebra](#) (Ginger and Debra) will be on display in the Jambo House lobby. Look for the Hidden Mickeys!

Throughout the resort you'll find decorative seasonal touches carried out in the stores and restaurant entrances. Curl up in front of the library's crackling fireplace!



BEACH CLUB DECOR

Trees, garlands, wreaths, and swags are highlighted with colorful ornaments and silver ribbons. Dive in closer and you'll find tropical fish, starfish, seahorses, turtles, and seashells, too. We also love the hints of traditional Christmas elements such as red roses and poinsettias!

The smell of chocolate will lead you to the [edible carousel](#), which is a tradition in its 25th year. The carousel's design changes each year. Last year's theme was "Mickey's Christmas Carol"!

The bakery team utilized an impressive 432 pounds of honey, 200 pounds of icing, 100 pounds of eggs,

and 2024 pieces of gingerbread to bring this carousel to life. 24 hidden gold Mickeys make it even more worthwhile to spend time watching the carousel!





BOARDWALK DECOR

Heavy garlands weighed down with ornaments welcome guests to the gorgeous BoardWalk Inn and Villas. We love viewing the uniquely themed holiday decor!

Outside in the center courtyard facing Crescent Lake, a Christmas tree and several garland-wrapped lampposts add a seasonal touch to the old-fashioned, seaside scene.

Poinsettias supplement red coloring to the floral gardens and potted plants.

GINGERBREAD DISPLAY

The [display at Disney's BoardWalk Inn](#) debuted mid-November, featuring a replica of the BoardWalk Deli.

Watch for signing opportunities by a Pastry Chef. And ask about the 210 hours it took to decorate this display!

Look for the hidden Mickeys.

[Gingerbread treats](#) are typically on sale from 2PM until 9:30PM daily.





CONTEMPORARY DECOR

The largest tree at WDW is 70 feet tall. Located at Disney's Contemporary Resort, it weighs more than 33,000 pounds and has 1,200 individual branches. The tree has 16,000 lights and more than 200 custom light-up ornaments.

You can usually find the [gingerbread display](#) on the 4th floor concourse in mid-November.

This is the 14th year of the stunning display that measures over 17 feet tall and 25 feet wide. The Cinderella Castle look-alike will debut a new look with the [Cinderella Castle Dream Lights](#).

Want to know how it's made? The ingredients include 613 pounds of sugar, 1013 pounds of flour, 113

pounds of gingerbread spice, 51 pounds of chocolate, and over 4,000 castle gingerbread bricks.

While enjoying a treat from the nearby shop, look for the 13 hidden Mickeys and the 5-legged goat!





SWAN & DOLPHIN DECOR

The Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin resorts are quite **festive during the holidays**.

Some of the **delightful decor and activities** include:

ELF MAGICAL WORKSHOP

Imagine a magical workshop bustling with activity, where kids can step into a world of wonder and creativity.

As they enter, they're greeted by cheerful elves who guide them through the enchanting space filled with festive activities from a variety of craft stations where they might decorate ornaments, assemble personalized gift bags, or even create their own stuffed toys.

Each station is designed to spark their imagination and bring their ideas to life.

DECK THE HALLS

The elves are brimming with holiday spirit and are eager to sprinkle some North Pole magic into your stay at the Swan and Dolphin. Whether it's bringing Christmas cheer to your hotel room with their in-room Christmas tree decoration packages, Santa's favorite stocking stuffers, or the winter wonderland gift bags, they'll be spreading joy and cheer throughout the resort this year. Fees apply.

SHOPPING

Don't forget the many stores available at the resorts or utilize the complimentary shuttle service to the Orlando Vineland Premium Outlets during the holidays!

See all the details at **[SantasFavoriteResort.com](https://www.santasfavorite.com)**.



WILDERNESS LODGE DECOR

Wilderness Lodge is extra-special at Christmastime because of its cozy, log-cabin feel. Upon arrival at this soaring Deluxe Resort, earth tones reminiscent of the Pacific Northwest are everywhere.

Look above the porte cochere for the unique, native American wreath, which only hints at the rustic splendor that awaits inside this hotel.

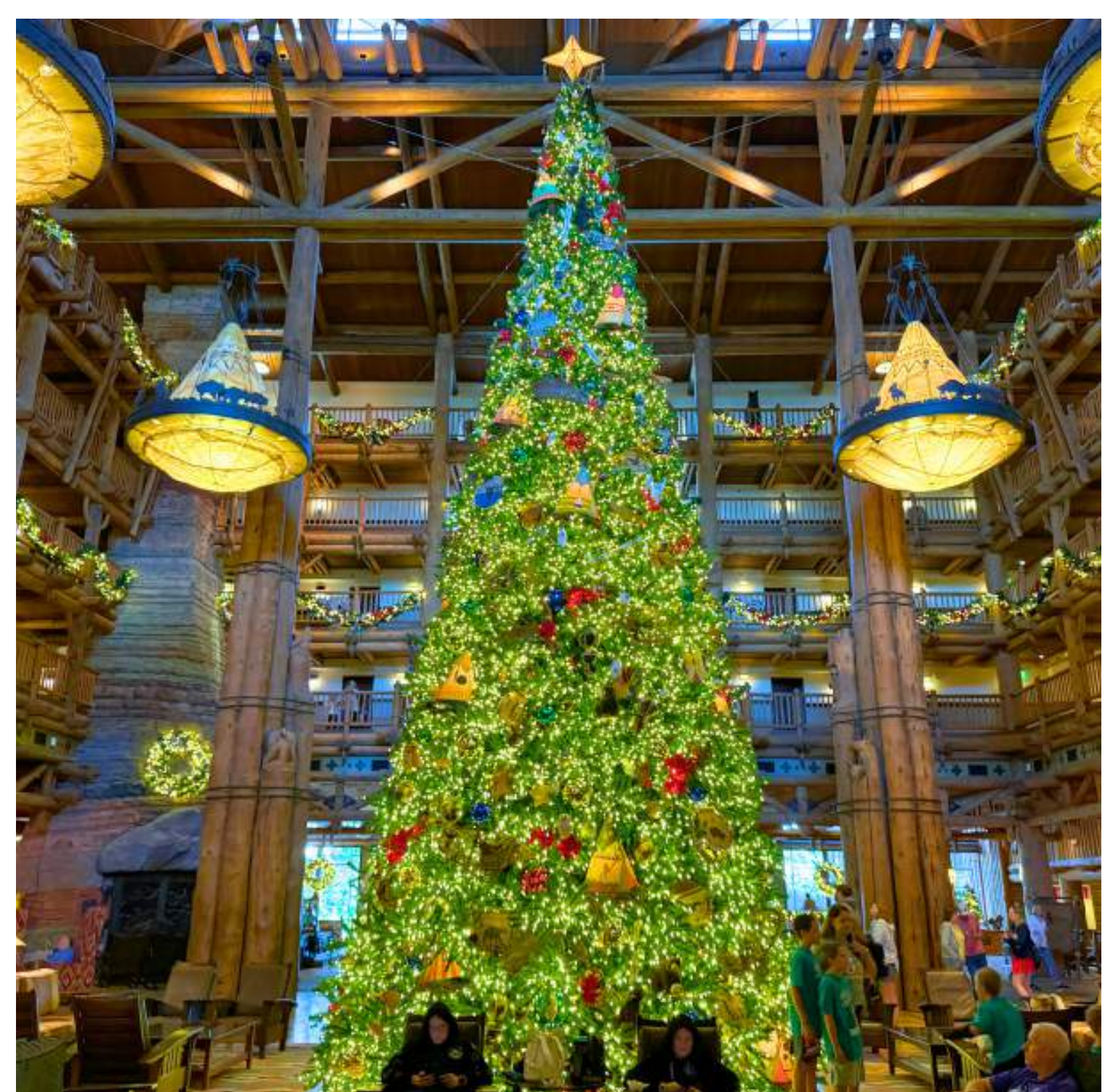
The centerpiece of the lobby is a **massive Christmas tree** decorated in Native American-inspired ornaments, including lighted tee-pees!

The elves took time to weave plaid ribbons into the garlands that festoon the upper railings, adding to the resort's cozy feel. And the old-fashioned wreath hung over the fireplace beckons us to sit in front of the huge fireplace (with or without a warm flannel blanket).

Everywhere you look, wreaths and garlands add to the warm and inviting atmosphere. And bright red poinsettias sit atop tables adjacent to comfy chairs.

A family of decorative bears is set out near the decorated bridge spanning Silver Spring.

This is Christmas!





YACHT CLUB DECOR

The Yacht Club's holiday decor is more understated, however a stop here to view the incredible toy train display is a must on any Disney holiday tour. We love that they've incorporated all of the Yacht and Beach Club's restaurants.

The old-fashioned toy train travels through a huge rock candy mountain, then past candy villages featuring miniature versions of some of our favorite locations, like [Beaches and Cream!](#)

Make it a tradition to spot different scenes (and Hidden Mickeys) at the train display. Many of the scenes are animated and lit with holiday lights—look for the man using a snowblower on his driveway!

From the water's edge to this Deluxe Resort's lobby, garland-wrapped (with bulbs and bows!) lamp posts highlight

your entrance. Red plants line the landscaping beds and potted plants feature red and white floral arrangements, including poinsettia. The holiday tree features nautical touches such as beautiful sailboats. Garlands cascade from railings. White lights add an elegant glow!





RESORT ACTIVITIES



CHIP 'N' DALE

Fort Wilderness is our top pick where Chip and Dale join in the fun! Chip 'N Dale's Campfire Sing-A-Long is located at Disney's Fort Wilderness Resort & Campground.



CAMPFIRES

Watch your resort's activity schedule for evening campfires with storytelling, s'mores, and more. Campfires are typically offered at the Deluxe and Moderate Resort hotels.



S'MORES

Try activities that are new to you! Maybe a sleigh ride, cookie decorating, campfire, outdoor movie, or gingerbread house demo!

LIVE MUSIC

Keep your ears and eyes open for carolers and other live music performances throughout the Disney World Resorts!

At the Deluxe resorts, including the Grand Floridian, Wilderness Lodge, and Yacht Club, carolers periodically sing in the lobby. The Grand Floridian also often has live holiday music provided by a **pianist**.



Port Orleans Resort Riverside, showcases live musicians in the lobby area. Check with the resort concierge or front desk for an entertainment schedule.

And **Yehaa Bob**, the popular performer at the River Roost Lounge at Port Orleans Resort Riverside, often includes familiar holiday tunes in his show throughout the season!

And the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin resorts also offer live holiday music at select times.

CARRIAGE RIDES

At Disney's Port Orleans Resort–Riverside and Disney's Fort Wilderness Resort, 25-minute horse-drawn carriage rides can accommodate up to 4 adults, or 2 adults and three small children.

Rides are \$65 plus tax and tickets are sold by the carriage drivers.

Make reservations in advance (up to 60 days prior) [online](#) or via the My Disney Experience app.



CHEFS

Sometimes chefs will make appearances to sign pins and/or pose for photographs.

Check with the Front Desk at your Resort to learn about these unique opportunities! You may spot signs near the Resort Gingerbread displays notifying of these events as well.



CHARACTERS

During the busy Christmas week, Disney seeks to entertain guests in even more ways, including character greetings at Deluxe resorts. Ask your Front Desk for more information.

For example, at the Grand Floridian, sometimes Victorian Mickey and Minnie will pose for pictures in front of the Christmas tree!

In past years, characters were featured on Christmas Eve at Disney's Fort Wilderness Resort in front of Pioneer Hall. In 2023, we saw Daisy, Chip, and Dale at Beach Club and BoardWalk resorts.

Note that character meet 'n greets are always subject to change and may not happen at all, or perhaps may be kept on a "surprise" basis rather than scheduled.



CAST MEMBER CONTESTS

Watch for Cast Member contests at the resorts.

During the holiday season, Cast Members add extra fun by decorating wreaths, gingerbread houses, and more.

Various teams join together to create their own masterpieces.

These smaller displays have a charm all their own. Vote for your favorites!



DECORATING COOKIES

Holiday time isn't the same without cookies and icing! And Disney often makes sure you (and the little ones!) can enjoy a little of this classic holiday-time activity even while you're on vacation.

Check with the front desk or Concierge to determine exact times for cookie decorating activities or other seasonal offerings.

The kids will love decorating (then eating!) their own gingerbread men and other cookies.



WDW SWAN & DOLPHIN

You'll be able to take part in some holiday Pastry Decorating (cookies, brownies, or cupcakes) on select evenings! Children can create their own masterpiece as cast members help them decorate and create festive holiday cookies.

Located at Santa's Holiday Hangout area at the Swan pool on select nights.

Icing and sprinkles will be provided (while supplies last).

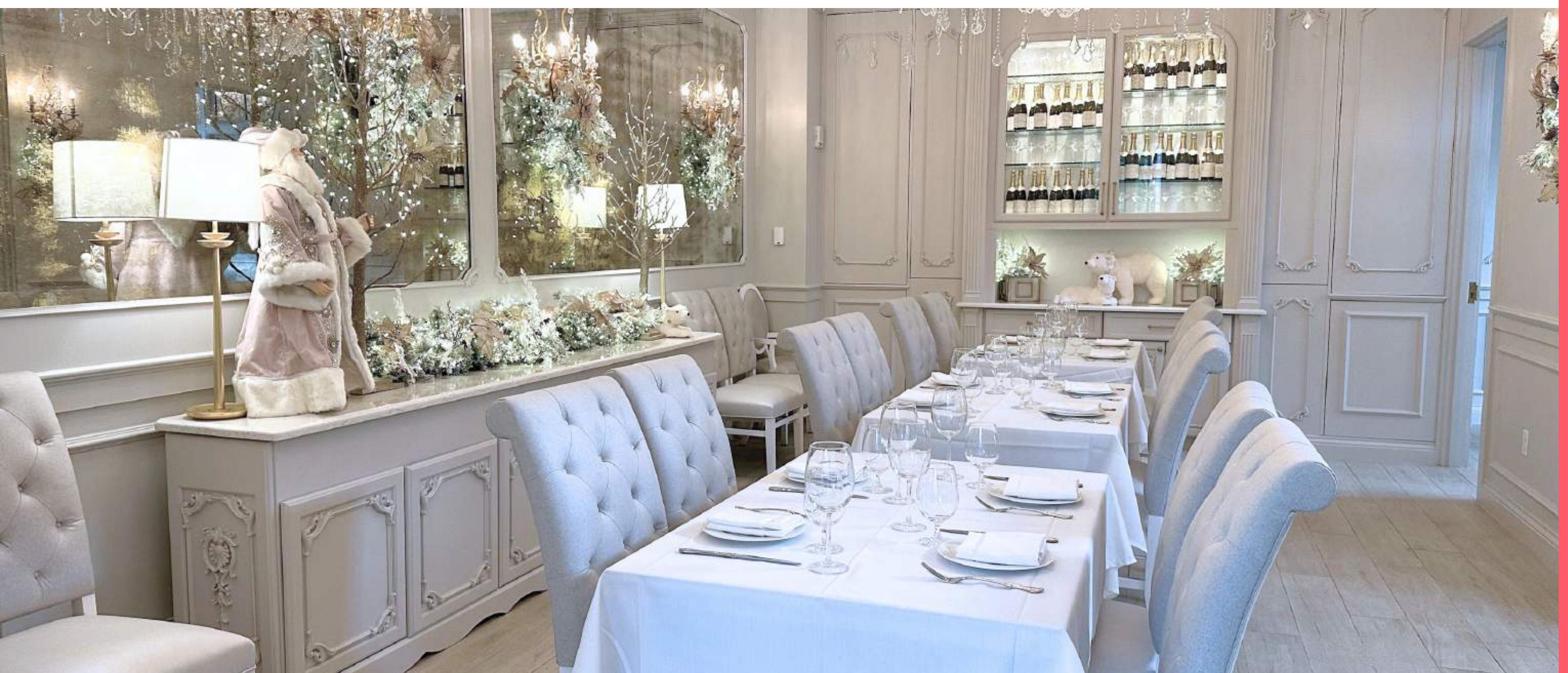
For more information, visit [Santa's Favorite Resort](#).

THE CAKE BAKE SHOP

- The Santa Claus (to the right) was completely custom made. Every single aspect of the design was the creation of Gwendolyn Rogers. Then, she sent it to France to be turned into an animatronic.
- The tree is steel based and looks like an outdoor Alpine tree. Fifteen extra alpine branches were added so that it was full and each branch was lit independently.
- It takes a full 30 minutes to do one rotation on the specially built turntable.

This year, on November 18th, November 25th, December 2nd, and December 9th [you can have dinner with Santa!](#)

The dinner with Santa event offers a festive evening filled with sparkling cocktails and Champagne, hors d'oeuvres, dinner, dessert, and a gift to take home, as well as a family photo and visit with Santa!





CRAFTS

Throughout the year, Disney resort guests have the opportunity to take part in fun craft activities at the hotels, but these take on a decidedly seasonal theme during the holidays!

Don't forget to check out the Activity Schedule for holiday crafts, where kids can show off their artistic talents and take home their creations.

Most activities are free of charge, though some do have a nominal fee. Here's a Tip: Usually, these activities are for all guests, including those not staying at the resort itself.

FUN FOR KIDS

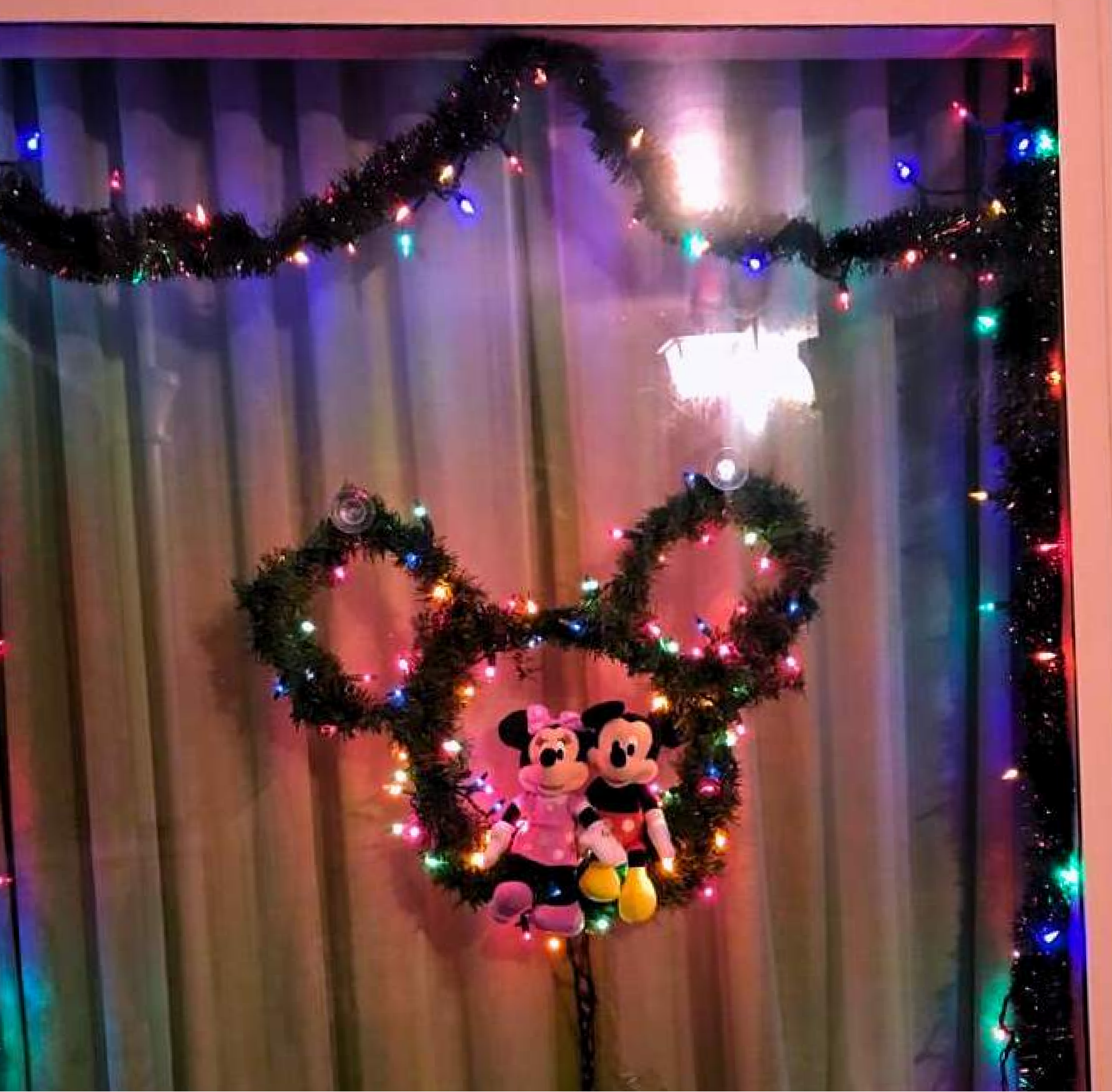
The holidays can be exhausting, and when you add in an active vacation at Walt Disney World, it's wise to plan in some down time.

We recommend escaping the crowds to participate in a resort activity.

Design a craft, go swimming, or wrap gifts.

Make a new holiday tradition!





GUEST DECORATIONS

As you walk around the resorts at Walt Disney World, you may be surprised to see the windows and balconies of resort rooms decorated by fellow travelers.

Christmas lights, small trees, classic paper snowflakes, garlands, and more adorn room windows and railings, and it's a fun (and free!) activity to stroll around and take in some of these creative displays.



Over at Fort Wilderness, [campers decorate their sites in spirited fashion](#). Likewise, campers can participate in [Golf Cart decorating](#)—complete with a contest! On Christmas Eve, typically at 3:30PM, there is a [golf cart parade](#).

Inquire at check-in as there are some rules to keep this tradition safe and family friendly.





FIREWORKS CRUISES

For an extra-special view of the fireworks from the Magic Kingdom or EPCOT, book a [Magic Kingdom Fireworks Cruise](#) or an [EPCOT Fireworks Cruise!](#)

MAGIC KINGDOM CRUISES

Board a 25-foot Tracker Pontoon stocked with water, soda, and packaged snacks for a cruise that culminates in a special view of the fireworks from the Seven Seas Lagoon.

Opt to see fireworks from a boat in the Seven Seas Lagoon near Disney's Magic Kingdom. Sailings are available from the marinas at Contemporary, Polynesian Village, Grand Floridian, Fort Wilderness, and Wilderness Lodge.

This sailing includes music from the show piped in to your vessel!

EPCOT CRUISES

If you'd rather see the evening spectacular from a private vantage point, cruises are available from the Yacht and Beach Club Resort on Crescent Lake.

Your boat will stop underneath the International Gateway bridge, where it will stay during the show. Note that other boats will anchor here as well, however they will not impede your fantastic view.

RESERVATIONS

Each cruise includes a captain, assorted snacks, soft drinks, and festive banners and balloons (upon request at time of booking).

Reservations can be made by calling 407-WDW-PLAY or [407-939-7529](#). A 48-hour cancellation policy applies.



HOLIDAY MOVIES

Many Disney resorts feature movies outside in the evenings! Check your Resort's Activity schedule (pick one up at the front desk) for "Movies Under the Stars." These are typically shown near the resort pool or beachfront.

Classic Christmas films are available in-room at the WDW Swan and Dolphin Resort. Tune into channel 49 at the Swan or channel 50 at the Dolphin for 'round the clock for movies like Elf, A Christmas Story, Polar Express, and other favorites.

DISNEY MOVIES

Look for holiday Disney movies such as "Santa Buddies", "The Nightmare Before Christmas", "Mickey's Christmas Carol", "Mickey's Once

Upon a Christmas", "The Search for Santa Paws", "The Muppet Christmas Carol", "Prep & Landing", "I'll Be Home for Christmas", and the "Santa Clause" trilogy during the holiday season.





SANTA MEET AND GREETES

For the young and young-at-heart looking for a last minute conference with Santa, the jolly wish-taker is usually in the hotel lobbies between 5PM and 9PM on Christmas Eve in year's past.

At the Grand Floridian and several other Deluxe resorts, Santa sits in a beautiful red velvet-upholstered chair in front of a Christmas tree while Cast Members queue up the last minute list-givers.

WDW SWAN & DOLPHIN

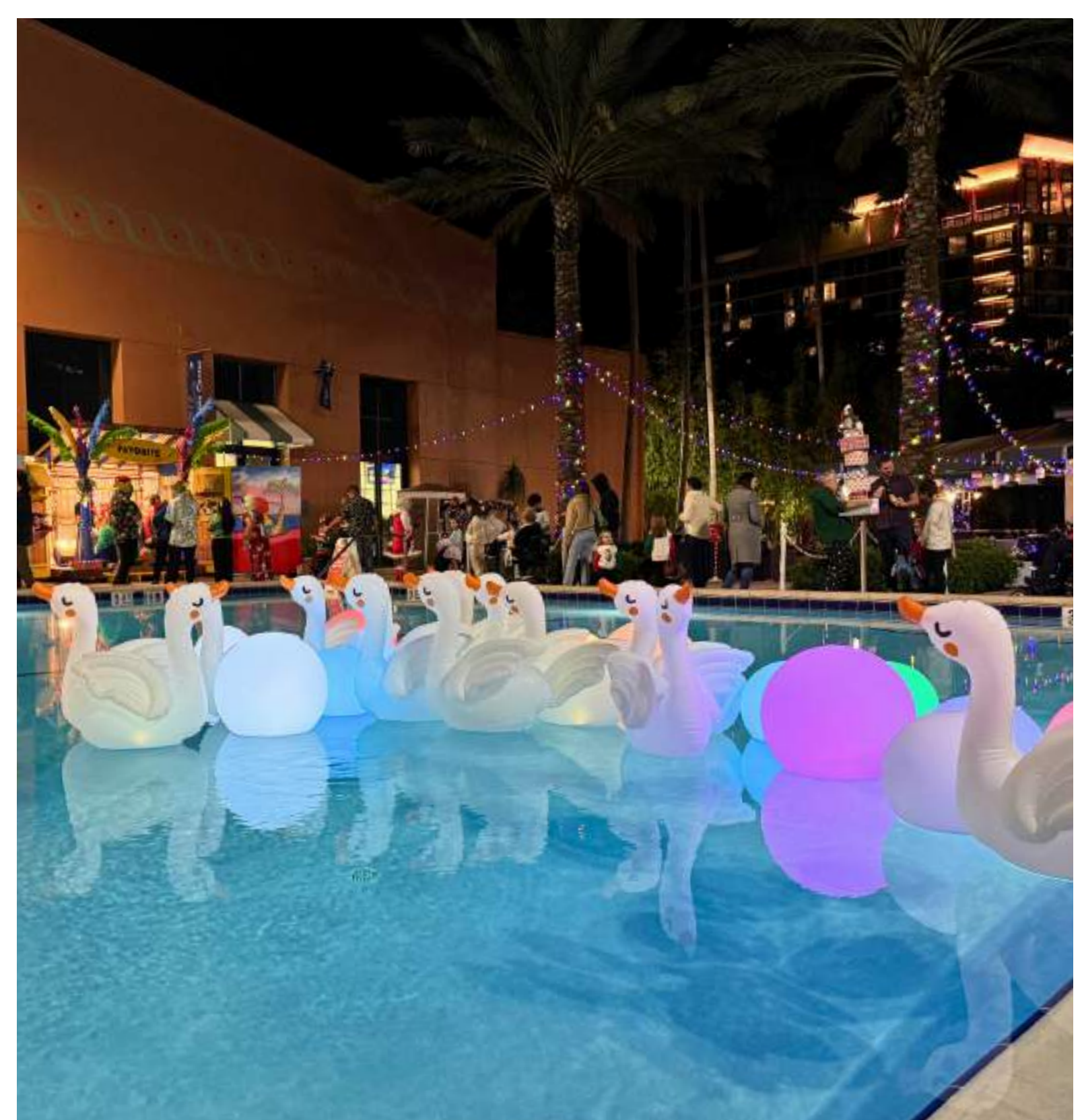
Last year these are the dates you could visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus (and their elf, Kandy Kane) from 6-8PM on:

- **November** 29-30
- **December** 5, 7, 12-14, 19-21, & 23

Look for Santa's Holiday Hangout near the Swan pool.

More information can be found at

SantasFavoriteResort.com



SLEIGH RIDES

What's Christmas without a sleigh ride? (We all have regular sleigh rides during our holiday season, right?... right?) Luckily, your trip to Disney World won't keep you from taking part in this time-honored activity.

Jingle bells ring during these seasonal activities at the Fort Wilderness Resort and Campground.

Departing from the [festively decorated](#) Tri-Circle D Ranch Barn (near the Settlement Bus Depot), the Cast Members at Tri-Circle D Ranch have fashioned [horse-drawn sleighs](#) that can travel without snow. Okay, they have wheels, but that doesn't take away from the holiday spirit during the 25-minute jaunt!

When planning your journey through the wilderness wonderland, remember that sleighs can accommodate four adults or two adults and three small children. Book more than one sleigh if you have a large party.

This year's operating dates:

- **December** 1-30, 2025

These "sleigh" rides are very popular so reserve this activity as soon as possible.

TRANSPORTATION

Allow extra time to get to Fort Wilderness, whether arriving via Walt Disney World transportation or your own vehicle. Unless you have a flying



reindeer, traveling to the Settlement area of Fort Wilderness Resort and Campground requires some patience.

From the Magic Kingdom, travel by boat to Fort Wilderness. Arriving by WDW bus, transfer to a Settlement bus at the Outpost Depot.

If arriving by automobile, your car can be parked at the Outpost Depot, then you will need to board a bus headed to the Settlement Depot.

RESERVATIONS

Sleigh rides can be booked 60 days in advance [online](#) or via the My Disney Experience app. Prices may vary by date, \$80+.

EVENTS



You'll find seasonal events that are free with your theme park admission or available at an extra cost. Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party is a seasonal Magic Kingdom event and Jollywood Nights is a seasonal Hollywood Studios event that both require a separate ticket for entry.

EPCOT presents The Festival of the Holidays, a global experience from November 28 - December 30, 2025. Expect specialty entertainment, international storytellers, food booths, and more! EPCOT also has Holiday Storytellers around the international pavilions during this same time frame.



EPCOT HOLIDAY STORYTELLERS

Las Posadas Celebration

Mexico Pavilion

SUNDAYS - THURSDAYS

11:05 AM, 12:00 PM, 12:50 PM, 2:35 PM, 3:40 PM & 5:15 PM

A Mischievous Magical Barn Santa

Norway Pavilion

DAILY: NOV 28 - DEC 30

11:40 AM, 12:30 PM, 1:25 PM, 2:15 PM, 4:10 PM, 4:55 PM, 5:45 PM & 6:30 PM

Chinese Lion Dancer

China Pavilion

NOV 28-30, DEC 6, 7, 13, 14, 19-25

Noon, 1:00 PM, 2:00 PM, 3:00 PM & 4:00 PM

La Befana

Italy Pavilion

DAILY: NOV 28 - DEC 30

11:15 AM, 12:15 PM, 1:00 PM, 1:55 PM, 3:30 PM, 4:15 PM, 5:00 PM, & 5:40 PM

Daruma Storyteller

Japan Pavilion

DAILY: NOV 28 - DEC 30

10:45 AM, 11:45 AM, 12:45 PM, 1:35 PM, 2:35 PM, 4:15 PM, 5:00 PM, & 5:45 PM



Hanukkah Storyteller

Between Morocco & France Pavilions

DAILY: NOV 28 - DEC 30

Noon, 1:00 PM, 1:50 PM, 2:50 PM, 3:45 PM, 5:05 PM, 5:50 PM, & 6:30 PM

Pere Noel

France Pavilion

DAILY: NOV 28 - DEC 30

10:00 AM, 11:05 AM, 12:10 PM, 12:50 PM, 2:20 PM, 3:25 PM, 4:30 PM, & 5:15 PM

Father Christmas

United Kingdom Pavilion

DAILY: NOV 28 - DEC 30

11:45 AM, 12:30 PM, 1:20 PM, 2:05 PM, 3:50 PM, 4:45 PM, 5:35 PM, & 6:30 PM

Canadian Holiday Voyageurs

Canada Pavilion

DAILY: NOV 28 - DEC 30

3:25 PM, 4:35 PM, 5:35 PM, 6:40 PM, 7:40 PM, & 8:40 PM



BOOKING EVENTS

The holiday season offers multiple events ranging from complimentary admission to pricier options. Ticketed events can be booked ahead of time or upon arrival in Walt Disney World (assuming they're not sold out).

Event tickets can be purchased via credit card over the phone or online prior to your visit. On event day (pending availability), payment can be made at the entrance gate ticket booth.



EVENT DISCOUNTS

For some events, booking online in advance will offer a discount of a few dollars.

Guests who are Walt Disney World Annual Passholders, Golden Oak Residents, or Disney Vacation Club Members may have the opportunity to book early and/or at a discount for holiday events.

[Annual Passholders](#) and [Disney Vacation Club Members](#) can save \$10 per ticket to Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party on select event nights. The eligible dates are November 7-21 and November 30-December 4.



You may not receive physical tickets for your event if the purchase is associated with your [My Disney Experience](#) account. The ticket will simply be put on your account and your [MagicBand](#) or [MagicMobile](#).

MICKEY'S VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS PARTY

Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party tickets are available for purchase on the [Walt Disney World website](#) or via the [My Disney Experience](#) app on July 2nd for resort guests and July 10th for all others.

In September, you can book the dessert parties here:

- Minnie's Wonderful Christmastime Fireworks Dessert Party at [Tomorrowland Terrace](#)
- Holiday Fireworks Dessert Party with [Plaza Garden Viewing](#)

CANDLELIGHT PROCESSIONAL

Booking for the Candlelight Processional dining package opens [online](#) starting **October 29th** (you'll need to be in your 60-day dining window to book) or via (407) WDW-FEST/ 939-3378.

DISNEY JOLLYWOOD NIGHTS

For guests staying at select Disney World hotels, Swan and Dolphin hotels, and Shades of Green tickets went on sale July 2nd.

For all other guests, tickets went on sale July 10th on the Disney World website. Prices range from \$159 to \$179 per person.





CROWD CONTROL

For crowd control, sometimes the Monorail is shut down. Alternate transportation options will be offered, including bus and/or boat.

Guest parking lots at the Resort hotels may be restricted to guests checking into and staying at the resort, attending a conference, or with reservations for the spa, recreational offerings, or dining.



TRAVEL PLANS

Plan accordingly: buses begin departing from Disney resort hotels 45 minutes prior to park opening times and run one hour after park closing. (Buses may run longer after closing during busy seasons.)

If parking lot trams are not operating, be aware that you may have a substantial walk from your car in the parking lot to the Park's entrance.



WEATHER DELAYS

Weather can wreak havoc on travel. Boats, the Monorail, and the Disney Skyliner can all be rendered still by aggressive storms or lightning in the vicinity. When this happens, Disney tries to send more buses to compensate. Look for Cast Members and signs to help lead you to alternate transportation.



BUDGETING MONEY & TIME

While visiting Disney World during the holiday season is truly a memorable experience, it can also be a difficult time of year to stick to a budget. With holiday gifts to be purchased, tempting sweets, and unique souvenir offerings, budgeting for your Disney vacation at this time of year can be challenging.

Budgeting money and time for the holiday season can be daunting. By planning a visit in early December, you'll find lower prices and fewer crowds than you will in late December. Even [Lightning Lane Multi Pass is more expensive](#) during peak travel times.

Traveling during the holiday season can be very expensive in general, so travel to Disney World around the holidays is extra pricey. To further help, we broke down a budget to find out exactly how much it costs to

visit Disney World during the most wonderful time of the year. [You can review it right here!](#)

SAVING MONEY

Holiday shopping at Walt Disney World is not for the bargain hunter. While you may spot some Black Friday deals if you happen to be there after Thanksgiving, overall, expect to break the bank on just about everything.

Let's look at ways to save when every vacation dollar counts!



BUDGETING: MONEY

DISCOUNTS

For starters, check out [all the discounts](#) available in Walt Disney World now. And look for [discounts on special events](#).

If you're paying the big bucks for an [Annual Pass](#), you should do your best to get the most out of it, so don't forget to ask about [applicable discounts](#) at merchandise and dining locations throughout Disney World.

DINING DOLLARS

Are you on the [Disney Dining Plan](#)? Save up your snack credits. Many of the menu items can be purchased with 1 snack credit!

Plus, see how much [food costs and try some of our ideas](#) to stay on top of your dining budget.

MENU PLANNING

Plan ahead. Look at the festival menus before you arrive so that you know what booths are high priority for you. Don't make "impulse purchases" as you walk around the booths.

WAYS TO SAVE

Pre-set a budget!

Look at [the full list of shops and restaurants at Disney Springs](#) before you leave home. You may find that some offer reward programs or coupons if you sign up for emails or text messages.

- Consider your budget when you're planning your Disney Springs visit. If you have a limit in mind, purchase Disney gift cards to use just for this purpose. When the gift cards run out, shopping is done.





- Some big box retailers offer discounts on gift cards. Target Red Card users can save 5%, for example, when purchasing **gift cards**. If you use this program to stock up on Disney gift cards, you can effectively save 5% on everything you buy on vacation.
- Some Disney merchandise makes the leap to **the Disney Store**, and the online retailer frequently has sales—BIG ones. If you spot something onsite that you've just gotta have (even though the price has you palpitating), check on DisneyStore.com to see if the item is available there and what discounts you may be able to apply.
- By purchasing your plane ticket at the right time, you can save money! For domestic travel during Thanksgiving, prices tend to be at their lowest 45 days prior to departure, with a range of 26 to 59 days out. For Christmas, flights are historically at their lowest 58 days before departure, and the low price range is about 36 to 72 days out. It is a bit different for international flights. You should plan on booking your flight as early as possible, as the low price range is 50 days or more before departure. In most cases, prices are at their lowest 101 days before departure, so you won't see a significant price decrease by waiting to book your travel closer to your departure date.



Disney World pricing is all about supply and demand. When kids are out of school or families are celebrating holidays, ticket prices climb. **Magic Kingdom**, being the most iconic park, always has the highest prices compared to **EPCOT**, **Hollywood Studios**, and **Animal Kingdom**.

To avoid the highest prices, try to avoid these dates:

- Thanksgiving Week (November 23–29, 2025): Thanksgiving at Disney World is magical to be sure, but it’s also one of the most expensive weeks of the year. Tickets hover around \$199 for Magic Kingdom, and the parks are packed with holiday visitors.
- Christmas Week (December 21–27, 2025): No surprise here – Christmas is peak Disney. Ticket prices hit the \$199 maximum, and the parks are packed with holiday festivities. If you’re dreaming of seeing Cinderella’s Castle all decked out in its holiday best, be prepared to pay a premium.
- New Year’s Eve Week (December 28, 2025–January 3, 2026): Want to ring in the New Year at Disney? So does everyone else. Tickets during this week are also at the \$199 high point, and crowd levels are off the charts.

During the weeks we’ve highlighted, you’re not just paying for a ticket – you’re paying a premium for high demand. And while Disney World during the holidays can be magical, it’s worth asking yourself if the crowds and costs are really worth it.



RESORT DISCOUNTS

Imagine: It's Christmas morning, and everyone is still asleep—except you. You're up early, living the good life, and taking it all in.

This isn't just any Christmas—nope. Because this morning, you woke up in a Disney World Deluxe hotel.

[Just how'd you swing that, you ask?](#) Don't you worry, we're going to tell you exactly how [Annual Passholders](#) and others can make it happen.

In fact, we have ALL the deals and discounts at Disney World, just [click here](#) to start saving!

- For example, you can save up to \$250 per night on a 4-night, 4-day (or longer) room-and-ticket package at select Disney World hotels, for stays most nights from February 22 to July 25th, 2026. Find out more information [here](#).
- There's FREE Disney Dining for kids coming in 2026! Find out all the details [here](#).

- Members of the U.S. Military can get specially priced Disney World theme park tickets as well, with a choice between a 4-day, 5-day or 6-day [Disney Military Salute Ticket](#). [Find pricing information and more here](#).

Want help booking your Disney World vacation? Our friends over at [Small World Vacations](#) have tons of experience booking magical trips and can help you save time, headaches, and money when you plan! And the best part? **Their services are completely FREE.**



BUDGETING: TIME

YOUR TIME IS VALUABLE

The best way to enjoy the festivities is to know what to expect before you go. This way you can budget your time accordingly and not miss out on any must-do events. Once you have a basic plan in place, stay flexible.

Remember to make every second count and absorb the magic of this year's Disney holiday season.

RESORT GUESTS

If you're a **Disney Resort guest**, you can get a jump on the rope drop crowds by taking advantage of morning **Early Theme Park Entry**. Deluxe Resort and Deluxe Villa guests can also stay late with **Extended Evening Hours**. [Learn more about these extended hour perks here.](#)

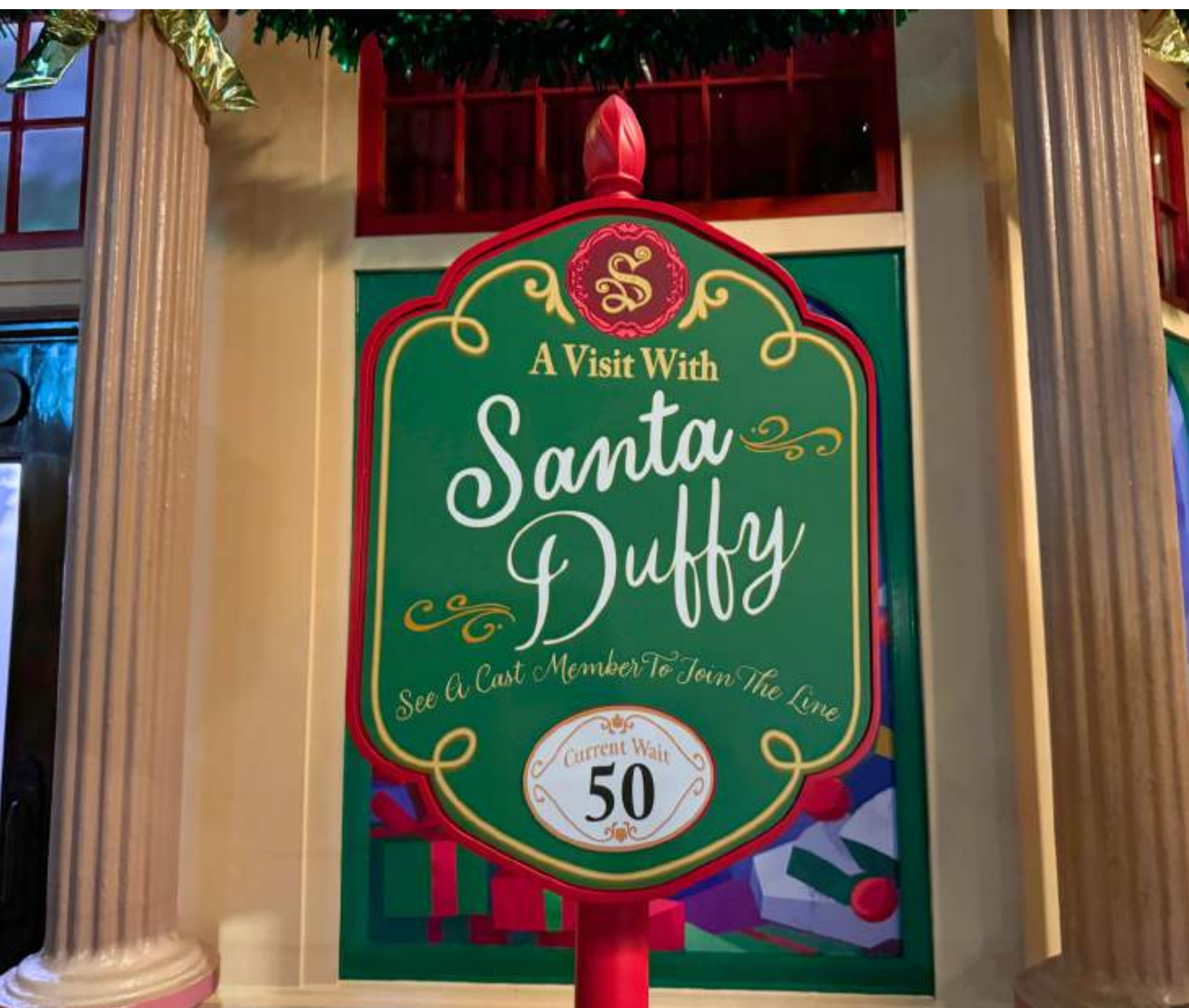
GO EARLY

Go early—in the day, in the week, and in the months of November and December. Remember, many Disney parks close due to being filled to capacity during holiday weeks.

Disney attractions get busier later in the day, on weekends, and the closer it is to Christmas and New Year's Eve.

Visiting on the weekdays will give you a greater chance of avoiding the long lines. If you can get away, the week before Thanksgiving has low crowds!





DINE EARLY

Give your family a small advantage with the crowds by dining early; 11AM for lunch and 4PM for dinner MIGHT be less chaotic, especially at Quick Service locations.

You could also try enjoying 'linner' (lunch and dinner combo!) in mid-afternoon, then enjoying snacks for the rest of the day's sustenance.

Ultimately, there's no guarantee you'll be able to save money at Walt Disney World, but it's worth a try to pinch your pennies here and there.

PARK HOURS

Keep an eye on park hours. They sometimes change at the last minute. Magic Kingdom and Disney's Hollywood Studios close early several nights per week due to seasonal events.

STAY UP LATE

Parks typically stay open later for the holiday time between Christmas and the New Year. And hours will likely be extended during Thanksgiving week as well.

EVENTS

If you're attending an after-hours party in Disney World, it's in your best interest to get there as early as you're allowed to (usually 4PM). Why? Because you'll want to get your money's worth!

LIGHTNING LANE

Consider purchasing a [Lightning Lane Multi Pass](#) and/or a [Lightning Lane Single Pass](#) for your favorite rides. There's also one more option, the [Premier Pass](#), but it is the most expensive option.

Holidays at Disney World are magical, but it's also one of the most expensive times of the year. For example, Thanksgiving tickets hover around \$199 for Magic Kingdom, and the parks are packed with holiday visitors.

That said, [we have a primer for these services specifically during the busiest of seasons here](#).

SHOPPING

Hunting for vacation souvenirs is one of the best parts of a Walt Disney World vacation, and visiting during the Christmas season means you get to combine that with picking out a few fun holiday gifts as well!

If you're looking for [holiday merchandise](#), consider festive ears, [popcorn buckets](#) and sippers, sweatshirts, and stockings. You'll also find Hanukkah themed items.

Remember: Disney's Days of Christmas in Disney Springs and Ye Olde Christmas Shop in Magic Kingdom are filled with holiday spirit no matter what time of year you're visiting.

DFB FAVORITES

With shops featuring everything from elaborate Italian masks to engraved walking sticks—not to mention plush characters fit for every size hug—there's truly something for everyone in Walt Disney World's shops. But with so much shopping and so little time, how's a person supposed to know where to go for a trendy Spirit Jersey? A special ornament? A bag of dried crab snacks for a white elephant gift?

The DFB team has shared their favorite spots to shop for all sort of things so you can win holiday shopping during your Disney trip!



HOLIDAY GIFTS

If you're shopping for fairly traditional holiday gifts like ornaments and figures, you'll want to stop in the year-long Christmas shops: Ye Olde Christmas Shop and Disney's Days of Christmas.

But to add something a little special, check out their personalization options. You could get a glass Mickey globe ornament embellished with the year of your visit or add a child's name to a bauble..

Magnets make great souvenirs. In EPCOT, check out Die Weihnachts Ecke in the Germany pavilion. Glass-blown Mickey ornaments are elegant and fun, and you can get a **traditional nutcracker** and a pickle ornament, too.

A new DFB favorite you can purchase outside the Disney bubble? This adorable **Merry & Bright Balloon Bouquet!** It's a five balloon bouquet anchored on a cute mug that's filled with chocolate! It's sure to brighten anyone's season! We love the idea of **sending one to your resort room** for a little extra magic! (*Picture this:* you walk into your resort room and bam...a merry balloon bouquet waiting to spread holiday cheer!

UNIQUE FINDS

In EPCOT, head to the China pavilion's House of Good Fortune for jade jewelry, silk, and plush pandas, or Japan's Mitsukoshi for kawaii finds, Pokémon, and even pearls.

In Animal Kingdom, Mombasa Marketplace offers African art, drums, and handmade crafts.

And in Galaxy's Edge, you can even build your own droid!





TRENDY AND SEASONAL MERCHANDISE

Want the trendiest Disney finds?

From Minnie ears and Spirit Jerseys to Loungeflys and Crocs, you'll spot them first at Disney Springs—check **Tren-D** for chic character fashion and **DisneyStyle** for Insta-worthy looks.

Over at EPCOT, the **Creations Shop** is the go-to for the newest drops and festive holiday merch (yes, ornaments included!)



BEST RESORTS FOR HOLIDAY SHOPPING

For holiday shopping that doesn't require a Park ticket, don't forget the Resort gift shops. We love the **Contemporary's Bayview Gifts**, where the shelves are always stocked with fun merchandise—including Resort-branded items.

You'll find more Resort-branded items throughout Walt Disney World, with the Grand Floridian being a particularly excellent place to shop. We can't leave the Resort without a stop in Basin. This haven for soap, lotions, and other delights has a signature scent you'll only find at the Grand Floridian.





HOLIDAY TREATS THAT TRAVEL WELL

Speaking of treats that travel well... We're fans of taking some of the edible magic home with us for the holidays!

One of our favorite treats is a sleeve of Macarons from **Les Halles Boulangerie-Patisserie** in EPCOT's France pavilion. This collection of colorful confections comes in its own package, which should make it home in one piece in your carry-on or personal item.

Snacks with Character offers gluten free packaged treats like Lemon Burst Cookies and Chocolate Protein Bites. We suggest looking for the sturdier options from this line; things like potato chips are tasty, but they don't travel well.

Goofy's Candy Co. (and other stores) sell brightly-colored packaged candy, including Gummy Fish. These are a fun gift for the kids (and kids-at-heart) in your life.

HOLIDAY SHOPPING TIPS

We know not everyone loves shopping (even at Walt Disney World), and when the stores are crowded with holiday shoppers, it can be even more unpleasant.

Here are our tips for holiday shopping in the World without losing your holiday cheer.



ONE STOP SHOPPING

Want to shop fast? Head to the big all-in-one stores: **the Emporium** in Magic Kingdom, **Creations Shop** in EPCOT, **Celebrity 5 & 10 & Mickey's of Hollywood** in Hollywood Studios, and **Island Mercantile & Discovery Trading Co.** in Animal Kingdom. Each offers a wide mix of souvenirs so you can check off your list without hopping between shops.



EXCLUSIVES

Stay tuned to DFB for holiday exclusives.

HOLIDAY VILLAGE

[Mickey & Friends Holiday Village](#)

offered Disney fans of all ages the opportunity to find holiday-specific gifts and merchandise online.



CROWDS

Holiday shopping at Disney World gets crowded—it's not just the rides!

If you're shopping in a hectic store, to stay sane, set a clear meeting spot with your group, and grab a bag or basket so you're not juggling merchandise, and ask Cast Members if you can't find something (they often know what's in the back).

Want to avoid the chaos? Plan your shopping around off-peak times.



SPLURGES

EPCOT is home to many kinds of beautiful things from all over the world.

Why not splurge on authentic vintage [Chanel accessories and Christian Dior jewelry](#) at France's Librairie et Galerie.

FAVORITE SHOPS

Did you know there are **97 different shops at Disney Springs**. However, there are 9 stores that are guest favorites. If you are short on time, stick to [these stores](#) for a fun overview of Disney Springs.

COLD WEATHER

Forgot to pack for chilly weather? You'll also find that when the temperatures drop in Disney World, shops will have cold weather gear out for sale.

WORLD SHOWCASE

Many World Showcase shops will offer seasonal holiday treats that are popular in the regions they represent.

Some of our favorites? Panettone and licorice in Italy!

But be sure to look in Norway, the UK, Mexico, and Germany especially to find holiday-themed goodies in the shops.

GIFT WRAP

Watch for gift wrapping stations at the parks and resorts. A small fee is charged.



MOBILE CHECKOUT

If you're looking for a chance to shop for the holidays, you may be interested to [learn about Mobile Checkout](#), which is available through the [My Disney Experience app](#) at select merchandise locations.

ONLINE SHOPPING

Disney dropped its holiday collection online at the [Disney Store](#), and there are more than a few things that we're seriously tempted to add to our online carts!



SHOPPING LOGISTICS

Lunchtime is a great time to shop along the main thoroughfares of the Parks (Main Street, U.S.A., Hollywood Boulevard, etc.). Most guests have ensconced themselves deeper in the Parks where they're waiting in line for rides or loading up on chicken nuggies for lunch. You will likely find stores at their least busy during this mid-day period.

WHEN TO MAKE PURCHASES

Believe it or not, when you shop at Disney matters. Picture this: you find the perfect Stitch plush for your nephew... and then carry it around all day. Not fun.

If you can, save shopping for the end of the day or right before a hotel break—you'll thank yourself later. No juggling bags on rides or squeezing them under your seat.

BUT—some items do sell out fast (think: popular Minnie ears, Starbucks mugs, Dooneys, Loungeflys). If you spot a must-have item, grab it—you might not see it again!

Just know you'll have two options: carry it all day or have Disney ship it home. That's it for now!



Currently the only package service available at Walt Disney World is Shipping, where you pay to ship your item(s) to your home address.

PACKING YOUR PURCHASES

You've found some treasures—now it's time to get them home safely!

One big challenge? Space. Your suitcase was full on the way there, and now you've got souvenirs too.

To make it easier, pack a collapsible duffel in your luggage. Use it for things like dirty clothes or shoes, and save room in your main bag for the fragile stuff.

Pack breakables in a sturdy suitcase and cushion them with clothes or towels—wrapping them up and placing them in the center helps protect them. Disney often wraps fragile items at checkout too, which adds a nice first layer.

No duffel? A Disney tote or reusable bag can work, but you'll likely need to carry it on the plane (as a carry-on or personal item—check your airline's rules).

Bringing food? Pack anything fragile or crumbly in your carry-on. And remember: liquids over 3 oz must go in your checked bag.

Wrap liquids well—start with a gallon zip-top bag, then double-bag with plastic shopping bags. Trust us, no one wants a lotion explosion in their suitcase.

Now go shop! It's hard not to hum carols when the red and green souvenirs hit the shelves.



GETTING TO/FROM DISNEY SPRINGS

While the Disney Springs parking garages (Lime, Orange, and Grapefruit) have greatly improved the situation over the past few years, you'll still need to watch for heavy traffic in the area of Disney Springs. Look for the helpful digital display boards on Buena Vista Drive that often show parking updates for each garage.

If you are staying on-site at a Walt Disney World Resort, we highly recommend taking a WDW bus during peak times. Guests at Saratoga Springs can walk or take a boat, and those staying at Port Orleans–Riverside, Port Orleans–French Quarter, and Old Key West Resorts can typically take a resort boat (the Sassagoula water taxi!). Boat service to and from Disney Springs typically runs 10AM to 12:30AM.



PARKING

Self-parking is complimentary.

Guests with disabilities (and a valid disabilities parking permit) should follow signs to designated parking areas.

PRIVATE OR HIRED VEHICLE

You can reach Disney Springs via personal car, taxi, [ride share service](#), or [Minnie Van](#).

You can [visit our Disney World Transportation page](#) to learn more about getting around the Resort.

BUS STOPS

If you haven't been to Disney Springs in recent years, you'll want to note that the Resort bus stop is in a different location: The Gateway. Centrally located near Town Center, the 18 load zones run as follows:

- Bus service from Disney Resort hotels typically begins 45 minutes before opening.
- Return service to Disney Resort hotels typically ends one hour after closing.