

ENTERTAINMENT

One tank trip: Amelia Island drifts you into Victorian London with 'Dickens on Centre'

Josephine Johnson For Savannah Morning News

Published 6:03 a.m. ET Dec. 2, 2021 | Updated 11:17 a.m. ET Dec. 2, 2021

Full disclosure: in high school I signed up for a college-level seminar on the literature of Charles Dickens. We read his most noted works and pages of his journalism. I loved his quirky characters and adored his observations, social commentary and how he, in perfect form and grammar, could twist, turn and run a sentence the full length of a paragraph.

Indeed, the jaunty, pointed drama of it all!

When I heard that a small barrier island off the coast of north Florida hosts an annual Dickens-themed Christmas festival, I was intrigued. At just two hours south of Savannah, Amelia Island, Florida, offers a unique holiday experience — "Dickens on Centre" — a family-friendly event so jolly and packed with fun.

It's sure to brighten the countenance of even the humbug-i-est of sour Scrooges.

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It all begins Dec. 3 at First Baptist Church with a performance from Wynton Marsalis and The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. That Friday also kicks-off "Dickens Dining Week," with restaurants across the island featuring Victorian-inspired menus. During my visit, I got a chance to try one of those items at The Beech Street Grill.

The Beech Street Grill, an elaborate wedding gift built in 1889, boasts two stories of bay windows, verandahs and Chippendale-style balustrades. Its intricacies harken to a bygone era replete with all things romantic. Whether single or hitched, Beech Street Grill is a dining experience equal parts decadent atmosphere and sumptuous cuisine.

As appetizer, I opted for collard greens stuffed with cornbread, Andouille and shrimp, for main course selected the crab-encrusted flounder with garlic broccolini. Dessert was triple

layer chocolate cheesecake—so delicious, I ordered a second for take away.

One tank trip: Jekyll Island is for the birds - bird lovers, that is

Later, I wandered over to the Green Turtle Tavern. Not quite a dive bar, but it's definitely a spot locals frequent—lots of band and beer stickers on the walls, and names of patrons near and far scribed in pen and marker. A wooden-beamed, wrap-around porch invites animated conversation. The bartender on duty is also a notary public.

"I can sign anything you need a notary for," beamed Bob Tidball. "Mostly legal things for real estate, but I've notarized divorce papers in here."

Tidball, who relocated to Amelia Island almost fifteen years ago, is happy with his decision. Here, not only does he tend bar and notarize — ultimately having a finger on the very pulse of the island — but he's also a woodworker and builds furniture, doors and more when he's not at the tavern.

"This bar is like a microcosm of the whole island," pondered Tidball. "Young people, old people, regulars and visitors all come here because it's laidback, chill and honest, and as long as no one brings up politics, it's always a good time."

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On Thursday, Dec. 9, the island kicks into high gear with all things Dickensian when the community gathers for the annual illuminated procession. Folks dress up in their best Victorian attire, walk around with homemade lanterns and end up at the waterfront where the evening concludes with live music and fireworks.

"It's really the thing to do here," emphasized Amy Boek, marketing officer for Amelia Island. "We have local school groups that really get into it and make lanterns as art projects, and then most people dress up. Imagine what it's like having the community dressed as Dickens characters and carrying lanterns—it's beautiful and fun to see how people get into it."

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The snow globes feature charcuterie and an array of beverage options for those above and below 21.

The island is also home to artists, artisans and independent retail storeowners—including two mom-and-pop bookstores—as well as a toyshop. Todd Duncan and his daughter, Theresa, have owned and managed Ville Villekulla Toys for the past seven years. Their toys are special. Remember those wooden train sets where magnets held each car together? They sell those. And Gumby and Pokey! And science experiment kits and pretty much every toy I ever enjoyed as a child.

"Our focus is on the imagination, toys and games that are rugged. We don't sell any electronics," said Duncan. "I enjoy being a business owner on Amelia Island, we're all really connected and supportive here, and I'm looking forward to the Dickens Christmas celebration. They always dress me up in some kind of costume, and like our store, it's always an adventure in imagination and magic."

If you go

Where: Amelia Island, Florida

When: Dickens Dining Week, Dec. 3-12; Dickens on Centre, Dec. 9-12

For complete list of events, check out Amelia

Island: ameliaislandtdc.com/events/dickens-on-centre

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Amelia Island Celebrates Dickens on Centre Victorian Christmas Festival December 9 to 12

By Lucia Viti

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Amelia Island Dickens On Centre

December 08, 2021 at 11:25 am EST

Amelia Island — Amelia Island's Dickens on Centre Victorian Christmas Festival kicks-off on Thursday, December 9, and run through Sunday, December 12. Celebrating the beloved Charles Dickens novella, *A Christmas Carol*, the annual event, now its seventh year, transforms Historic Centre Street into an English Victorian Christmas wonderland.

Attendees will enjoy costumed characters, Saint Nicholas, and artisans showcasing their wares in betwixt and between everything a festival could possibly offer. Dancers, musicians, and jugglers will roam the street artists along with more than 50 food vendors against a backdrop of Christmas music, parades, concerts and holiday movies. And if that isn't enough entertainment for the kids they can decorate cookies and take pictures with Santa in the kid zone.

The themed festival will also feature a performance of *A Christmas Carol*, staged by Jason Woods, a local actor and producer.

Also, new this year, the festival will host an Enchanted Village, a one-of-a-kind ensemble of themed snow globes for guests to enjoy unique dining experiences. The garden igloo themes include the Ghost of Christmas Past; the Ghost of Christmas Future; The Ghost of Christmas Present; the Sugar Plum Fairy; and The Nutcracker.

Maurie Dugger, the Director of Program Development for the Amelia Island Convention and Visitors Bureau, describes the town's mutation of all things Victorian English as fitting since the island was named after Princess Amelia King, the daughter of King George II. The British flag was one of eight that once flew over the island.

Dugger says the festival is "an opportunity for the whole family to enjoy the weekend."

What began as a need period - to fill the island's tourist gap between Thanksgiving and Christmas - has evolved



THE BRIAN KILMEADE SHOW WEEKDAYS 9AM - NOON

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er estimates that more

Gil Langley, president and CEO of the Amelia Island Convention & Visitors Bureau said that new additions such as the Enchanted Village, plus the great special offers from award-winning hotels, resorts and inns, will make the season a truly special time to enjoy.

Trolley Transportation will be provided.

Amelia Island Holiday Schedule of Events:



Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival on December 3. Big Band Holidays and The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra features global superstar Wynton Marsalis with special guest vocalist Alita Moses.



Holiday Home Tour runs from December 3 to December 4. The tour will showcase five beautifully decorated homes in the downtown historic district of Fernandina Beach from 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Dickens on Centre Dining Week runs from December 3 to December 12. The annual 10-day culinary delight features several of Amelia Island's most popular dining spots offering Dickens-themed/Victorian-inspired menus. Restaurants include The Alley/ Amelia Island Brewing Company; Amelia Island Tea House; Bantam & Biddy; Beech Street Bar & Grill; Brett's Waterway Café; Café Karibo; Coast Restaurant at The Ritz-Carlton/Amelia Island; Island Kitchen; Lagniappe Restaurant; Leddy's Porch Bistro at the Florida House Inn; Story & Song Bookstore Bistro; The Tavern/Amelia Island Brewing Company; Tides Pool Bar & Grill; and Tidewater Grill at the Ritz-Carlton/Amelia Island.

Dickens Illuminated Procession on December 9. Grab anything that glows and twinkles for a leisurely stroll through Fernandina's historic district. Fireworks will be on display over the Fernandina Harbor Marina at 7 p.m.

Dickens Enchanted Village runs December 1- through December 12. The Dickens Enchanted Village is an exclusive picnic dining experience in one of six festive domed snow globes.

Run Like the Dickens on December 11. This seasonal scramble is a one-mile fun run at Amelia Island's Main Beach which begins at 8:30 a.m. Kids and dogs are welcome.

Dickens After Dark on December 11. A VIP, adult-only event (attendees must be 21 or older) features specialty entertainment, a historic ghost tour, festive food, open bar and more at the historic Lesesne House in downtown Fernandina Beach.

For a complete list of events, as well as special offers and packages from Amelia Island's collection of hotels, resorts and B & B's visit AmeliaIsland.com/Holiday.

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Holiday Pops and Nutcracker return to NE Florida this weekend.

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WOKV Weekend Spotlight December

December 09, 2021 at 10:19 am EST

By Rich Jones

Jacksonville, FI — With just over two weeks until Christmas, several holiday-season events will make their return to Jacksonville this weekend. Here is a list of several events:



12/9 Weekend Spotlight

Thursday, December 9, 2021 7:38 am

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Thursday - Sunday: Holiday Pops at Jacoby Hall

Thursday - Sunday: Dickens on Centre in Amelia Island

Thursday: Pigeons Playing Ping Pong at St. Augustine Amphitheatre

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Thursday and Friday: The Fab Four - The Ultimate Tribute at Ponte Vedra Concert Hall



Friday: <u>Jacksonville Icemen vs. Greenville at VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena</u>



Saturday: Jacksonville Icemen vs. Orlando at VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena

Friday: 30th Community Nutcracker at Florida Theatre

Friday: <u>Joe Bonamassa at St. Augustine Amphitheatre</u>

Saturday: Santa on the Run - St. Augustine 5K

Saturday: St. Augustine Regatta of Lights

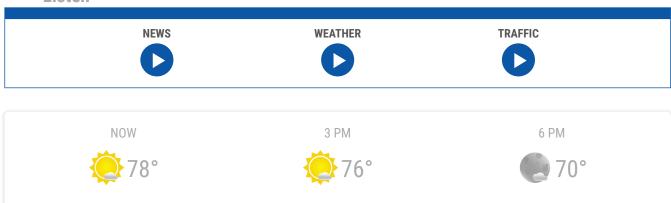
Saturday: Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder at Ponte Vedra Concert Hall

Saturday and Sunday: Old Dominion "Band Behind the Curtain Tour" at St. Augustine Amphitheatre

Sunday: A Hip-Hop Nutcracker at Florida Theatre

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"Dickens on Centre" Victorian Christmas Festival Returns to Amelia Island

By Charles Wagoner -- November 17, 2021 -- 1991 Views



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selling handmade seasonal wares and treats, and much more. Accompanying the festival this year is a special Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival performance, the Amelia Island Museum of History Holiday Home Tour, and the new Dickens Enchanted Village, a one-of-a-kind picnic bringing to life the magic of snow globes.

"The holiday events and family festivities on Amelia Island are a tradition for many visitors and residents, especially Dickens on Centre, which is a wonderful centerpiece for the season," said Gil Langley, president and CEO of the Amelia Island Convention & Visitors Bureau. "New additions such as the Enchanted Village, plus the great special offers from our award-winning hotels, resorts and inns, make this December a truly special time to enjoy the season together."

Inspired by Charles Dickens' novella, "A Christmas Carol," Dickens on Centre transforms downtown Fernandina into a classic English village lit by the warm glow of festive holiday lights and colorful decorations.



The current schedule of holiday activities includes:



- Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival (Dec. 3) The 21st season opens with Big Band Holidays and The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, featuring global superstar Wynton Marsalis and special guest vocalist Alita Moses.
- Holiday Home Tour (Dec. 3-4) The 15th annual Amelia Island Museum of History Holiday Home Tour will showcase five beautifully decorated homes in the downtown historic district of Fernandina Beach from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Dickens on Centre Dining Week (Dec. 3-12) This annual 10-day culinary showcase features some of Amelia Island's most popular dining spots offering pre-fixe Dickensthemed or Victorian-inspired menus. Participating restaurants include The Alley, by Amelia Island Brewing Company; Amelia Island Tea House; Bantam & Biddy; Beech Street Bar & Grill; Brett's Waterway Café; Café Karibo; Coast Restaurant at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island; Island Kitchen; Lagniappe Restaurant; Leddy's Porch Bistro at the Florida House Inn; Story & Song Bookstore Bistro; The Tavern, by Amelia Island Brewing Company; Tides Pool Bar & Grill; and Tidewater Grill at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island.
- Dickens Illuminated Procession (Dec. 9) Grab your friends and anything that glows or twinkles to join in a leisurely, glimmering stroll through Fernandina's historic district. Food trucks and music add to the fun, ending with fireworks over the Fernandina Harbor Marina at 7 p.m.
- **Dickens Enchanted Village (Dec. 10-12)** New this year, the Dickens Enchanted Village is an exclusive picnic experience that will bring to life the magical feeling of snow globes in one of six festive domes, each decorated in a unique Christmas theme. And the forecast is even calling for snow.
- Run Like the Dickens (Dec. 11) This seasonal scramble is a one-mile fun run at Amelia Island's Main Beach at 8:30 a.m. Everyone is welcome, including kids and dogs.
- **Dickens After Dark (Dec. 11)** This VIP, adult-only event (21+) features specialty entertainment, a historic ghost tour, festive food, open bar and more at the historic Lesesne House in downtown Fernandina Beach.

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By Josephine Johnson

Dec 2, 2021

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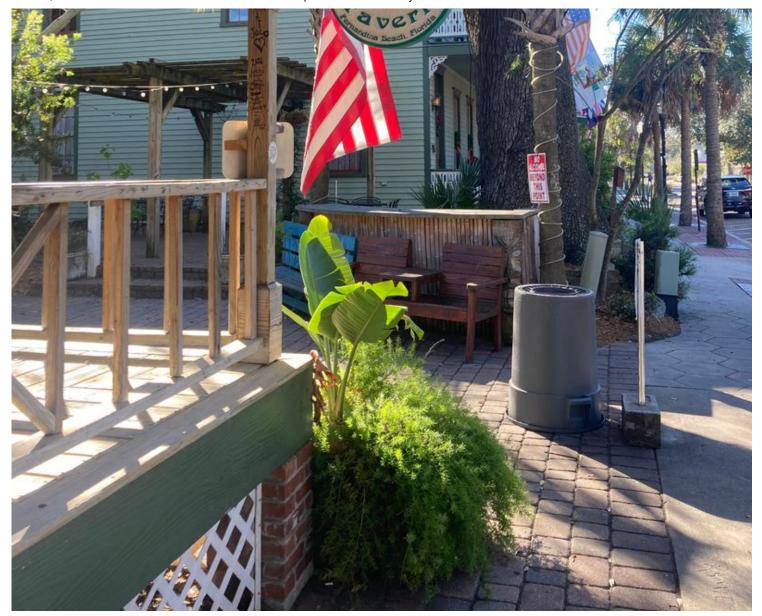
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Credit: Josephine Johnson / For Savannah Morning News

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For complete list of events, check out Amelia Island: ameliaislandtdc.com/events/dickens-on-centre

This article originally appeared on Savannah Morning News: One tank trip: Amelia Island drifts you into Victorian London with 'Dickens on Centre'

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From "Dickens on Centre" to Christmas concerts and fun-filled holiday happenings, Amelia Island knows how to celebrate Christmas, Chanukah, and New Year's Eve.

is the season to be merry, and all the Christmas finery is coming out on Amelia Island! The shopping season has begun, and the holiday decorations and lights have been carefully placed. Look around the island and you will see historic bedand-breakfast inns decorated with garlands and greenery. The Salvation Army volunteers are ringing their bells, and children are trying their best to be as good as possible. The past two years have been challenging for everyone, but Amelia Islanders are doing what they do best—enjoying their beautiful island paradise!

CELEBRATING THE SEASON WITH MUSIC

On December 2, 3, and 5, celebrate the 25th anniversary of "An Evening in December" at Amelia Baptist Church. This beloved event features the Amelia Community Choir and includes drama, uplifting music, and a Bethlehem-inspired village with volunteers from more than ten different churches. The evening will begin with a mini-concert, which will include favorite Christmas carols. It will be followed by a guided walk through the events that led up to the birth of Jesus, as well as an immersive visit to a first-century Bethlehem inspired-village.

The village will include a petting zoo and scavenger hunt for children. Since this free event has limited space, small groups and individuals must register through Eventbrite or by calling the church.

Attendees will arrive at their registered ticket time and gather with others to be led through this

celebration. For more information and to reserve a time slot, visit



To purchase tickets, visit www.ameliachambermusic.org (https://www.ameliachambermusic.org (https://www.ameliachambermu

A popular holiday tradition is the Annual Amelia Island Museum of History Holiday Home Tour, celebrating its fifteenth year, held December 3 and 4 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visit four beautiful homes in historic Fernandina Beach, each decorated for the holidays by a local decorator. For tickets and more information, call (904) 261-7378 or visit www.ameliamuseum.org/holidayhometour (https://www.ameliamuseum.org/holidayhometour).

Story and Song Bookstore Bistro presents a festive holiday performance featuring The Dynamic Les DeMerle Band With Bonnie Eisele, vocals; Doug Matthews, piano/keyboards; Johnnie Robinson, saxophone; and Les DeMerle, drums. The Jazz Spirit of Christmas Show is presented on Saturday, December 4, with two showtimes at 2 and 5 p.m. This exciting show features classic jazz holiday music from the Les DeMerle Band's internationally acclaimed CD on Origin Records, "The Jazz Spirit of Christmas," with swingin' interpretations of holiday classics like "Winter Wonderland," "I'll Be Home for Christmas," and Bonnie's version of "Santa Baby" to get you in the mood for the season. For tickets, call (904) 601-2118. Story and Song is located at 1430 Park Avenue.

Kick off your holiday season with the annual Lighted Christmas Parade on December 4 at 6 p.m. Come enjoy the magic of the holiday season, organized by America's Youth. The parade, which begins at Central Park, consists of bands, dancers, lighted floats, and more. For information on becoming a participant, contact John Gilbert at john@americayouth.org (mailto:john@americayouth.org).

If running is your thing, consider entering the Reindeer Run Half Marathon and 5k Race on December 5. The race begins at Main Beach Park at 7 a.m. This is a running/walking event held by the City of Fernandina Beach to help raise funds for our community. If you're not a runner, come see the race and support the participants! This year, bring your pups and join in the fun with a 5k Dog walk with all proceeds going to FAN, a non-profit that helps animals and their owners with their needs. For more information, visit www.ameliarunners.com/reindeer-run (https://www.ameliarunners.com/reindeer-run (<a href="https://ww

Also on December 5, the Jewish Community of Amelia Island is celebrating Chanukah with a Chanukah Party! Often called the Festival of Lights, the holiday is celebrated with the lighting of the menorah, traditional foods, games, and gifts. For location, time, and more information, call Deb Price at (203) 313-3925 or email her at Deb203@aol.com (mailto:Deb203@aol.com).

DICKENS ON CENTRE IN DOWNTOWN FERNANDINA BEACH

Dickens on Centre is a Victorian holiday festival that transports downtown Fernandina Beach back into the time of Charles Dickens, themed after his popular novel, A Christmas Carol. Join the festivities on Thursday, December 9, at 6:30 p.m. for the Dickens Illuminated Procession, a Victorian walking lantern parade followed by fireworks. Stay for a weekend of holiday cheer with the Dickens on Centre festival starting Friday, December 10 at 5 p.m. through Sunday, December 12 at 7 p.m. Enjoy the expanded festival footprint while you meet St. Nick in his workshop within Tiny Tim's Kid Zone. Stay for the variety of period performances on multiple stages and in the streets throughout the festival. All Covid-19 protocols and measures will be in place for everyone's safety.

As part of Dickens on Centre, bring the whole family to Main Beach on Saturday, December 11 a.m.



Enjoy great holiday food at the Dickens on Centre Dining Week, where the island's most popular dining hot spots will offer Dickens-themed or Victorian-inspired menus. Held December 4 to December 13, folks can enjoy everything from Italian to Creole to seafood to pub favorites in participating restaurants all around the island. There are menus for every taste and budget.

Similar to the signature Amelia Island Restaurant Week, Dickens on Centre Dining Week is your chance to not only experience delicious and diverse menu items but to also get out and support our island restaurants at the holidays. Whether you're looking to try a new spot or enjoy your tried-and-true favorite, kick off your holiday season with Dickens on Centre Dining week!

Animal lovers and fans of holiday cuteness won't want to miss the Nassau Humane Society's annual Parade of Paws on December 11 at 11 a.m., where beloved pets are decked out in their holiday best for a festive stroll up Centre Street from the Welcome Center. Registration is \$20 per animal, with proceeds going to NHS. Pre-registration, strongly encouraged, is available now at the NHS Adoption Center and Dog Park, Second Chance and The Closet resale stores, and Redbones Dog Bakery. People-friendly and animal-friendly dogs only please. Prizes will be awarded for the best overall costumes. For more information, call the Nassau Humane Society at (904) 321-1647.

While you're out and about on December 11, be sure to stop at the local galleries during the Second Saturday Artrageous Artwalk, held from 5 to 8 p.m. Participating galleries host art events and open houses during the second Saturday Artrageous Artwalk to showcase their resident artists. Locals and tourists alike can enjoy the various types of art that each gallery has to offer as well as meet the artists. Photography, pottery, copper, metal, fused as well as stained glass, watercolors, acrylics, oils, and batik are just a few of the varied media folks can expect to see.

JOY TO THE CHILDREN RETURNS

"We are happy to announce we will bring Joy to the Children this year!" says Dawn Grant, president of the organization. "Since 1995, Joy has been able to serve economically disadvantaged children and their families in the Nassau County community. In recent years we have hosted 150 children and their families each Christmas Day to provide a celebration that included Christmas dinner and gifts of clothing, bedding, books, school supplies, hygiene products, and toys. The families, along with our Christmas Day volunteers, account for almost 400 people celebrating Christmas in the cafeteria at Yulee Middle School."

Once again, due to Covid, Joy to the Children is changing how they provide Christmas for these families. They will still provide dinner and gifts, but in lieu of the usual Christmas Day celebration Joy will provide a Curbside Christmas. On Christmas Eve, the organization will distribute the unwrapped gifts to the families along with fresh fruit and essential food items that the families may use to prepare dinner.

"The families we serve are chosen with the help of the Homeless/FIT (Families In Transition) Program of Nassau County Schools," says Grant. "While most of the families are not actually homeless, they are displaced and living with relatives or in hotels. Your donation this year will greatly help in the

continued success of this local program, and that is why we are counting on your support." To make a doi (htt:

On on that (https://www.ameliaislander.com/) onsite to educate families about vital services and programs that are beneficial, along with games,

onsite to educate families about vital services and programs that are beneficial, along with games, crafts, and much more. Come out and enjoy this free, informational event! For more information, contact Michele Ford at (904) 530-6506 or mforde@nassaucountyfl.com (mailto:mforde@nassaucountyfl.com).

On December 18, Crescendo Amelia Big Band presents "How the Big Band Stole Christmas, featuring over twenty-five world class performers in a classic big band setting including professional singers, entertainers, dancers, and actors. This family-friendly holiday show is sure to get everyone in the spirit. Ask anyone that has attended before, and they will tell you this show is a "must-see" event. This full theatre production will include all your favorite holiday songs, local celebrity singers, dancing, acting and a few surprises! And if you're nice, maybe St. Nick will pay a visit too! "How the Big Band Stole Christmas" will be held at Fernandina Beach Middle School, located at 315 Citrona Drive. To purchase tickets, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/how-the-big-band-stole-christmas-fernandina-beach-tickets-203561547067).

SHRIMP DROP AND NEW YEAR'S EVE

Ring in the New Year on December 31 when Story and Song Bookstore Bistro presents a "Jazzy New Year: Venice." Greet the New Year in Venice to the swingin' sounds of the Dynamic Les DeMerle Trio, featuring vocalist Bonnie Eisele. Tickets include a traditional Italian dinner and a champagne toast when it's midnight in Italy! For more information or to purchase tickets, call (904) 601-2118. Story and Song is located at 1430 Park Avenue.

On December 31, the New Year's Eve Shrimp Drop celebration and fireworks will begin at 5 p.m. with vendors and food. Presented by "Light Up Amelia," a non-profit community organization, the group is planning fireworks for 7 p.m. sharp! Don't miss out on all the fun as Amelia Island rings in the New Year! For more information and updates on the event, visit their Facebook page or their web site at www.lightupamelia.com (https://www.lightupamelia.com).

Visit www.ameliaisland.com) for updates on these and other holiday events. Be sure to check with the local churches for the dates of their pageants and craft shows, and don't forget our local charities. The Barnabas Center, Micah's Place, Hope House, and many other charities need donations of time and gifts this season. Enjoy the season here on Amelia Island and spread some holiday cheer of your own!

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Amelia Islander

December 2021 (https://www.ameliaislander.com/amelia-islander-december-2021/)

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Dickens on Centre

December 9-12

This Victorian-inspired holiday festival is as fun as the dickens for the entire family! Inspired by Charles Dickens' novella, A Christmas Carol, Dickens on Centre transforms downtown Fernandina into a classic English village, sure to enliven your Christmas spirit. Kicking off this year's festivities is the inaugural Dickens Illuminated Procession from 6 to 8 pm. Parade-goers and their lanterns will

enjoy a leisurely stroll up Ash Street and into Fernandina's historic district before turning around down Centre Street back to the waterfront, where they will be greeted by music, merriment, and fireworks! Throughout the weekend there will be costumed characters, themed entertainment and performances, Dickens After Dark, visits from Saint Nick, an Enchanted Village with life-sized snow globes, and a variety of vendors selling seasonal gifts and wares. Festival hours are Friday 5-9 pm, Saturday 10am-9pm, and Sunday 10am-7pm.



Letters to Santa is a favorite part of Fernandina's annual Dickens on Centre celebration.

parade starts at noon at the Peck Center at 516 South 10th Street (The historic site of Peck High School). FERNANDINA BEACH WEATHER





Thursday, December 16, 2021

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THINGS TO DO

"Dickens on Centre" Victorian Christmas Festival Returns to Amelia Island

November 12, 2021 / Press Release / No Comments

Amelia Island Convention Visitors Bureau Media Release November 15, 2021



AMELIA ISLAND, Fla. (Nov. 12, 2021) – Northeast Florida's Amelia Island is preparing for the 7th Annual "Dickens on Centre" Victorian Christmas Festival (Dec. 9-12) in downtown Fernandina Beach, transforming historic Centre Street into a wonderland of Charles Dickens' early Victorian era England. The highlight of the island's seasonal celebrations, the festival is free to the public and features costumed characters,

themed live entertainment, visits from Saint Nick, a variety of vendors selling handmade seasonal wares and treats, and much more. Accompanying the festival this year is a special Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival performance, the Amelia Island Museum of History Holiday Home Tour, and the new Dickens Enchanted Village, a one-of-a-kind picnic bringing to life the magic of snow globes.

"The holiday events and family festivities on Amelia Island are a tradition for many visitors and residents, especially Dickens on Centre, which is a wonderful centerpiece for the season," said Gil Langley, president and CEO of the Amelia Island Convention & Visitors Bureau. "New additions such as the Enchanted Village, plus the great special offers from our award-winning hotels, resorts and inns, make this December a truly special time to enjoy the season together."

Inspired by Charles Dickens' novella, "A Christmas Carol," Dickens on Centre transforms downtown Fernandina into a classic English village lit by the warm glow of festive holiday lights and colorful decorations. The Dickens on Centre festival anchors a full slate of holiday events in December, including concerts, tours, a parade, a fun run, dining experiences, and more, which can all be found at Amelialsland.com/Holiday. The current schedule of holiday activities* includes:

- Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival (Dec. 3) The 21st season opens with Big Band Holidays and The Jazz at Lincoln Center
 Orchestra, featuring global superstar Wynton Marsalis and special guest vocalist Alita Moses.
- Holiday Home Tour (Dec. 3-4) The 15th annual Amelia Island Museum of History Holiday Home Tour will showcase five beautifully decorated homes in the downtown historic district of Fernandina Beach from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Dickens on Centre Dining Week (Dec. 3-12) This annual 10-day culinary showcase features some of Amelia Island's most popular dining spots offering pre-fixe Dickens-themed or Victorian-inspired menus. Participating restaurants include The Alley, by Amelia Island Brewing Company; Amelia Island Tea House; Bantam & Biddy; Beech Street Bar & Grill; Brett's Waterway Café; Café Karibo; Coast Restaurant at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island; Island Kitchen; Lagniappe Restaurant; Leddy's Porch Bistro at the Florida House Inn; Story & Song Bookstore Bistro; The Tavern, by Amelia Island Brewing Company; Tides Pool Bar & Grill; and Tidewater Grill at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island.
- Dickens Illuminated Procession (Dec. 9) Grab your friends and anything that glows or twinkles to join in a leisurely, glimmering stroll through Fernandina's historic district. Food trucks and music add to the fun, ending with fireworks over the Fernandina Harbor Marina at 7 p.m.
- Dickens Enchanted Village (Dec. 10-12) New this year, the Dickens Enchanted Village is an exclusive picnic experience that will bring to life the magical feeling of snow globes in one of six festive domes, each decorated in a unique Christmas theme. And the forecast is even calling for snow.
- Run Like the Dickens (Dec. 11) This seasonal scramble is a one-mile fun run at Amelia Island's Main Beach at 8:30 a.m. Everyone is welcome, including kids and dogs.
- Dickens After Dark (Dec. 11) This VIP, adult-only event (21+) features specialty entertainment, a historic ghost tour, festive food, open bar and more at the historic Lesesne House in downtown Fernandina Beach.

For a complete list of events, as well as special offers and packages from Amelia Island's collection of award-winning hotels, beds and breakfasts, and resorts, visit AmeliaIsland.com/Holiday.

*Please note: All activities are subject to change. We will give advance notice where and when possible.

About Amelia Island

Northeast Florida's coastal treasure, Amelia Island is a barrier island rich in colorful history and breath- taking natural beauty. Amelia Island offers long, beautiful beaches, abundant wildlife, and pristine waters. Upscale resorts with world-class spas, championship golf and exclusive dining blend effortlessly with a captivating collection of bed and breakfast inns and historic districts. The island is home to Fernandina Beach, once a vibrant Victorian seaport village, and now a charming downtown district of eclectic shops, attractions and eateries. Forget the everyday getaway; come make memories on Amelia Island. For visitor information and online planning, visit AmeliaIsland.com.



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GENERAL THINGS TO DO

Dickens on Centre – This Christmas, Come Make Memories – Dec 9 – 12

December 9, 2021 / Press Release / No Comments

December 9, 2021



A Victorian Christmas festival that transforms historic Fernandina Beach into Victorian London!

Travel back in time December 9-12, 2021 during the seventh annual Dickens on Centre festival in historic downtown Fernandina Beach, Florida, on beautiful Amelia Island. Free to the public, this Victorian holiday festival is sure to enliven your Christmas spirit. Throughout the weekend feel the spirit of the holiday with Victorian-inspired entertainment on two stages. Families will enjoy a plethora of fun including Tiny Tim's Kids Zone, visits with St. Nick, holiday entertainment and shopping, festive food and drink, costumed characters, holiday movies and plenty of Christmas inspiration.

This Christmas, Come Make Memories.

Dickens on Center Festival Hours

Thursday, December 9th, 5:30 – 7:30pm

Friday, December 10th, 5 – 9pm

Saturday, December 11th, 10am – 9pm

Sunday, December 12th, 10am – 7pm



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ENTERTAINMENT

EVENTS

Here are 22 Events We're Putting on Our Calendars This Fall & Winter

From the Great American Race to the stinkiest festival in South Florida, these are the hottest happenings around the state from October to February.

SHARE IF YOU ENJOYED IT

NORTH



Every holiday season more than three million lights illuminate the Ancient City. Photography courtesy of Floridashistoriccoast.com.

Nights of Lights

ST. AUGUSTINE NOV. 20-JAN. 31

The Ancient City puts Clark Griswold's house to shame each holiday season when more than three million lights illuminate every branch and banister. Rooted in the old Spanish tradition of placing a candle in the window at Christmastime, St. Augustine's over-the-top spectacle has been named one of 10 must-see holiday light displays around the world by *National Geographic*. The Plaza de la Constitución glows as the heart of the show, each tree wrapped in lights and a multicolored Christmas tree towering over it all, but the Lightner Museum and Flagler College often steal the glory when their Gilded Age facades begin to glimmer. To escape the crowds, soak up the scenery by boat, and watch a rainbow of colors shimmer off the surface of the Matanzas River.

visitstaugustine.com/event/nights-lights

Super Girl Surf Pro

JACKSONVILLE BEACH NOV. 12–14

Women are taking over the waves at the largest female professional surf competition featuring Olympic gold medalist Carissa Moore and Florida favorite Caroline Marks. supergirljax.com

Dickens on Centre

FERNANDINA BEACH DEC. 9-12

Laughter and good humor are irresistibly contagious at this Victorian celebration of Christmas past. Cheers with costumed characters, spill your wish list to Saint Nick and banish holiday bah-humbug. *ameliaisland.com*

Polar Bear Dip

PERDIDO KEY JAN. 1

Brave the wintry waters of the Gulf of Mexico for a free beer and black-eyed peas lunch from the Flora-Bama Lounge. Costumes are encouraged (and wet suits are for weenies). *florabama.com*

30A Songwriters Festival

SOUTH WALTON JAN. 14–17

Heavy hitters like Mavis Staples, Emmylou Harris and John Driskell Hopkins mingle with up-and-coming musicians at this sweet-sounding spectacle in the 30A beach communities. *30asongwritersfestival.com*

Apalachicola Oyster Cook-Off

APALACHICOLA JAN. 14-15

Slurp and score the Panhandle's best bivalves during this two-day shellfish showdown that benefits the town's volunteer fire department. Squeeze in a quick 3-mile run before the taste test begins. *oystercookoff.com*

Donna Marathon

JACKSONVILLE BEACHES FEB. 6

At the nation's only marathon dedicated to breast cancer research, patients, survivors and supporters race in everything from the 5K to the 110-mile ultramarathon or the beachfront, Boston-qualifying marathon. *breastcancermarathon.com*

The Donna Marathon serves as a Boston-qualifying marathon. Photography courtesy of the Donna Marathon.

CENTRAL

This year will be the 64th anniversary of the Daytona 500. Photography courtesy of Daytona International Speedway.

Daytona 500

DAYTONA BEACH FEB. 20

Get a front-row seat at the most iconic race in motor sports, where the world's best drivers push their cars and themselves to the limits at NASCAR's signature speedway. Thanks to the course's high banks (and the race's high stakes), outcomes are known to change in an instant at the Daytona 500, keeping fans—and drivers—on the edge of their seats. At this year's 64th annual competition, catch a prerace performance by Luke Combs, get a glimpse of the pit crews prepping the cars in the UNOH Fan Zone and even sign your name on the starting line. When the flood lights illuminate the 2.5-mile trioval track and the roar of the crowd threatens to drown out the revving engines, you'll understand why they call this the Great American Race.

daytonainternationalspeedway.com

Sarasota Mod Weekend

SARASOTA NOV. 12–14

Celebrate all things sleek, chic and thoroughly Sarasota during this deep dive into the city's signature architecture. Stroll around stunning homes and get to know the mastermind behind the Sarasota style. *sarasotamod.com*

St. Pete Run Fest

ST. PETERSBURG NOV. 12-14

Lace up your sneakers and tour this Gulf Coast gem on foot when you sign up for the half marathon, 10K or 5K. Not a runner? Cheer on your athlete from the sidelines and stick around for the post-race party. *stpeterunfest.org*

Americana musicians from around the country play this chill festival in Lake Wales. Photography by Greenprint Photography/Alexis Wharem.

Orange Blossom Revue

LAKE WALES DEC. 3-4

Rock out to roots music beneath a blanket of live oaks in the heart of Old Florida. Blackberry Smoke, Nicki Bluhm, Devon Gilfillian and more bring their soulful sounds to this not-so-sleepy town. *orangeblossomrevue.com*

John's Pass Seafood Festival

MADEIRA BEACH JAN. 20-23

Feast on the freshest flavors of the Gulf just steps from where they're reeling it in with a quaint fishing village as the backdrop. Live music, local vendors and a VIP tasting event round out this seafood fete. *johnspassseafoodfest.com*

Fellsmere Frog Leg Festival

FELLSMERE JAN. 20-23

Sample a true down-home delicacy in every dish imaginable at this quirky festival going 31 years strong. Start small with a single frog pop or order a whole pound of frog legs to share with the family. This year, you don't even have to leave the car to get your amphibian appetizers. Just swing by the drive-thru. *froglegfestival.com*

25th Annual Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival

CAPE CANAVERAL FEB. 2-6

Grab your best binoculars and look to the skies to see some of Florida's feathery friends. Embark on field trips to birding hot spots, hear from experts in the industry and even learn how to capture these creatures on film. *scbwf.org*

Florida State Fair

TAMPA FEB. 10-21

This annual carnival with a massive midway is the only time downing a basket of deep-fried cookie dough and chili cheese fries before taking a whirl on the Zipper sounds like a good idea. Pro tip: It's not. *floridastatefair.com*

SOUTH

After canceling its 2020 show, Art Basel returns to Miami Beach at the end of 2021. Photography courtesy of Art Basel.

Art Basel Miami Beach

MIAMI BEACH DEC. 2-4

From the fair that brought us the infamous duct-taped banana, which sold for \$120,000, Art Basel Miami Beach returns to once again push the boundaries of conventional art. As the continent's most comprehensive contemporary art fair, Art Basel showcases the work of more than 4,000 artists from more than 260 galleries across the globe inside the enormous Miami Beach Convention Center. Admire installations from established and emerging artisans and maybe even spot an A-list celebrity or two ducking into exclusive parties across the Magic City. It's not just the convention center that's brimming with art. During the fair, museums and galleries throughout the city host events that elevate the arts in Miami. But just a friendly reminder: Don't eat the displays.

artbasel.com/miami-beach

Sip cocktails and admire classic cruisers at the first-ever Fort Lauderdale Concours. Photography courtesy of the Fort Lauderdale Concours.

Fort Lauderdale Concours

FORT LAUDERDALE OCT. 29

Gear up for the classiest night of cars and cocktails on the rooftop of the Las Olas Parking Garage at the Intracoastal, guaranteed to make classic car enthusiasts out of anyone, with fine art, fashion and live music to seal the deal. *ftlconcours.com*

Stone Crab Festival

NAPLES OCT. 29-31

The best of Florida's signature seafood harvesters celebrate the opening of stone crab season at the Stone Crab Festival, hosted by the waterfront businesses that define the

area. stonecrabfestival.com

Miami Book Fair

MIAMI NOV. 14-21

Floridians with a penchant for page-turners can nerd out with their favorite authors at this beloved book fair. Past guests have included Margaret Atwood, Debbie Harry and Richard Russo. You may even see some familiar *Flamingo* faces! *miamibookfair.com*

Key West Food and Wine Festival

KEY WEST JAN. 26-30

Enjoy a night in Tuscany, a Spanish fiesta and a boozy brunch without leaving the Keys at this festival showcasing local food and wine vendors. *keywestfoodandwinefestival.com*

Garlic Fest

DELRAY BEACH FEB. 12-13

Break out the breath mints for the "best stinkin' party in South Florida." Indulge in garlic gator, a breakfast garlic burger and even a cone piled high with garlic ice cream at this odorous ode to everyone's favorite herb.

garlicfestfl.com

Honda Classic

Palm Beach Gardens Feb. 21–27

The best players on the PGA Tour descend on Palm Beach Gardens to tackle the formidable Bear Trap and battle for the \$1.4-million winner's share. Ticket sales benefit the Children's Healthcare Charity. *thehondaclassic.com*



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Florida is Home to One of the Best Christmas Towns in America

By Florida Daily - 11.11.21



Florida is home to one of the best Christmas towns in America – **Fernandina Beach**.

It's the most wonderful time of the year, and to celebrate the season, the dating reviews website

MyDatingAdviser.com has ranked the 152 best Christmas towns in the USA.

The 33rd place spot goes to Fernandina Beach which has been a popular Christmas town for decades with warming hot cocoa, shopping, and Christmas lights. If you're in the mood for cozy, wintry towns to get into the Christmas spirit, Fernandina Beach is a great place to visit for some serious holiday cheer.

To determine the best Christmas towns in the USA, MyDatingAdviser compared 152 well-known Christmas towns across the country on 21 key metrics. They looked into festive activities, weather, dining, hotels, transport, among other indicators of a joyful Christmas break.

Using the data points, each town has been given a 'Christmas Town Index Score'. This represents the quality of the Christmas break you could have there.

Here are the top Christmas towns in Florida:

1. Fernandina Beach, FL

Rank: #33, Index Score: 61

Description: For those who don't need snow to have the perfect Christmas, there's Fernandina on Amelia Island. While the holidays have been a bit different because of the pandemic, the town is still promising "plenty of holiday cheer and merriment with reimagined events." The Christmas activities include an annual holiday home tour Dec. 4-5 during which historic downtown homes are decorated for the season and opened to the public, a St. Nick Meet & Greet, and horse and carriage rides.

2. St. Augustine, FL

Rank: #40, Index Score: 59

Description: We're guessing you didn't expect our list to open with a warm-weather locale. But St. Augustine won a spot here because it's downright festive. Lights, candles, and Christmas decor are sprinkled throughout the town throughout the entire holiday season—and best of all, you don't have to wear a coat to get out and enjoy it all.

3. Naples, FL

Rank: #50, Index Score: 56

Description: Heading to the beach for your not-so-winter getaway? Naples, Florida has sun and sand for days, with a handful of must-do annual holiday traditions. Victoria Park and Third Street offer free entertainment from local parades to live music or check out the Naples Botanical Gardens for some luscious wandering. Illuminated with Christmas lights, the sculptures and plants have a holiday overlay, and you can round out your night by grabbing themed cocktails.

4. Key West, FL

Rank: #52, Index Score: 56

Description: You might think a snow-covered chalet and a roaring fire is the ultimate Christmas

destination, but a tropical destination can be just as fun. Why not put the greenery back in your Christmas tree – as in green palm trees, azure warm water, and an umbrella Christmas cocktail – and head to Key West, Florida for Christmas?

Located at the southernmost point in the USA, Key West is the last stop on US Highway 1 and 90 miles before you reach Cuba. Its laid-back island vibe is the reason so many revelers flock here to escape the harsh winter up north and enjoy the holidays in paradise. The holidays are the perfect time to get in, on, or under the water, and you can snorkel, sail, dive, parasail, kayak, fish, or just hang out by the water with a cocktail during the day. Then watch the sunset from Mallory Square and the fun begins.

5. Delray Beach, FL

Rank: #94, Index Score: 45

Description: A 100-foot-tall Christmas tree is just the thing to shift the mood from beach to holiday. At the center of the aptly named Old School Square (a historic district revived as a cultural center), the tree magically opens to reveal a wonderland inside, with toy trains running around miniature scenes depicting holiday traditions.

6. Seaside, FL

Rank: #122, Index Score: 37

Description: Take your Christmas celebrations to the beach for a visit full of coastal festivities and seafood galore. Seaside, Florida is the perfect coastal holiday destination because there is so much to do on 30A in December. There's plenty of holiday decorations to enjoy and so many shops and restaurants to browse. We're dreaming of a coastal Christmas.

7. Orlando, FL

Rank: #126, Index Score: 36

Description: Few places compare to Disney World during the holidays. Once Halloween passes, Disney World slowly starts to transform into a Christmas wonderland. Magic Kingdom hosts Mickey's Very Merry Christmas every year, which celebrates the season with countless lights, festive decor, (fake) snow, unparalleled holiday entertainment, and so much more.

8. Santa Rosa Beach, FL

Rank: #138, Index Score: 30

Description: Head down to the beach for a mild-weather Christmas celebration of lights, festivals and holiday magic that spans the length of 30A and then further down both ways via Highway 98 to Destin and Panama City Beach. No need to do your shopping beforehand, because Santa Rosa Beach and its neighboring beach towns are filled with sweet shops and fantastic restaurants that will spark some December indulgence.

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EPISODE 42 - HOW TO DO THE HOLIDAYS IN FLORIDA

Episodes, Podcast / By Tonya / November 9, 2021



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What's up this week?

You will not be short of activities to do if you do holidays in Florida. It is the best time of year for weather down here and we know how to do holiday fun. Join us this week as we give you some of the best Christmas in Florida things to do and places to see.

Who loves us?

Well, we hope YOU do! This week's episode is sponsored by you! If you want to sponsor the Florida Travel Pod, reach out to us via email at hello@floridatravelpod.com to learn how your business can be featured in this spot. We'll write the ad copy for you or work with you to customize your ad copy for our audience. Email us at hello@floridatravelpod.com to get started.

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Product and Locations Mentions

- 1. Gaylord Palms Have you ever been snow tubing? Do you love gingerbread decorating? There's so much Christmas to be had at Gaylord. Be etnertained with Christmas acrobats and you can even find Buddy the Elf!
- 2. Give Kids the World Night of a Million Lights is exactly what it sounds like. Take a walk through dazzling display of over 3 million lights.
- 3. Enchant Christmas in St. Pete Visit the Village of Lights and ice skate through a forest of Christmas lights.
- 4. Night of Lights in St. Augustine Take a trolley tour of lights throughout St. Augustine. Buy your Trolley Tickets here. Prices are for the entire row.
- 5. See the Gingerbread Extravaganza at Old St. Andrews Church in Jax. The event includes the traditional exhibit at Old St. Andrew's Church as well as a holiday gift shop, bake shop, silent auction and an online contest to vote for your favorite display.
- 6. Asian Lantern Festival at Central Florida Zoo The zoo is lit up with the culture of Asian lanterns coupled with zoo exhibits.
- 7. Boat Parades are all over Florida so be sure to check your local areas. If you have water nearby, you will likely find a lighted Christmas boast parade.
- 8. Pensacola Winterfest Ranked by Florida Travel + Life as one of the top holiday events in the state, Pensacola Winterfest's celebration features more than 400,000 dazzling white lights. Visit and talk with Santa and play Reindeer Games. There is tons more to do there, but I guess you'll have to listen to learn!
- 9. German Christmas Market Lake Worth Fl, American German Club
 - 1. https://www.americangermanclub.org/events-calendar/christkindlmarkt
 - 2. https://www.onlyinyourstate.com/florida/florida-german-christmas-market/
- 10. Wait! It doesn't snow in Florida! Acually, it does! Visit Celebration, FL. The main event is the Nightly Snowfall. 'Snoap' is blasted out of the street lanterns high into the sky before fluttering back down to land gently on Market Street.
 - 1. A synthetic ice rink in Market Street, ice skates for rent, perhaps even some Christmas cheer, all combine to present a seriously fun experience. Open from 4pm 10pm daily.
- 11. The Nutcracker
 - 1. Orlando Ballet https://orlandoballet.org/event/the-nutcracker-5/
 - 2. Miami https://www.thenutcrackermiami.com/ https://www.miamicityballet.org/nutcracker
- 12. Theater
 - 1. Christmas Carol at the Shakes
 - 2. Ruth Eckerd Hall in Clearwater
 - 3. Ft Lauderdale
 - 4. Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts Jax
- 13. Carols by Candlelight in Naples
- 14. Orchestras
 - Orlando Philharmonic Holiday Singers and Opera Orlando Youth Chorus are full of holiday spirit with familiar classics and new surprises.
 - 2. Orchestra Miami Holiday Pops at Pinecrest Gardens
 - 3. Jacksonville Symphony Holiday Pops
 - 4. Florida Symphony Enjoy Holiday Pops.Y
- 15. Movies

- 1. You can check your area theaters, both live and screen, for Christmas movies and watch along parties. https://www.gardentheatre.org/movies/
- 16. Sandi Land West Palm Beach Sand castle christmas display. Could not find up to date info
- 17. Christmas, Florida Is it as Merry as it sounds?
- 18. Daytona Beach Christmas at the beach? Yes, please. Drive thru a dazzling Christmas lights spectacle made up your your favorite holiday scenes and characters.
- 19. Santa's Winter Wonderland Village in Waterford Lakes Town Center in Orlando. Here you can visit Santa's Workshop, delight in all the holiday foods, amusement rides, and thousands of Christmas lights and holiday displays.

Not mentioned in the show, but extra stuff we found for things to do in Florida at Christams

1. Dickens on Centre – Inspired by Charles Dickens' novella, "A Christmas Carol," Dickens on Centre transforms downtown Fernandina into a classic English village lit by the warm glow of festive holiday lights and colorful decorations.

Florida Product of the Week

This week's Featured product is Caloosa Wear. They're an old favorite of ours. They believe life is better on the water. Each holiday season they have a cute collection of holiday clothes. Check the out and wear your best Florida.

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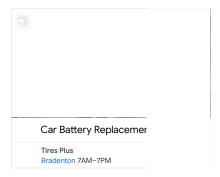
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Ultimate Holiday Guide: County-by-county events

Tree lightings, holiday events and more in your community

Carianne Luter, Social Media Producer

Published: December 2, 2021, 2:30 PM Updated: December 14, 2021, 2:47 PM

Tags: Events, Christmas, Holiday, County-By-County, Movies



Iacksonville Zoo



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JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – With the calendar flipping to December, holiday events are in full swing. Before you know it we will usher in a new year.

No matter where you live around northeast Florida and southeast Georgia, gather your family and friends and head out to enjoy an event near you.

Here are events in Florida broken down by county:

Duval County

Free movie at the Florida Theatre (12/19) -- The Florida Theatre and CSX present *How the Grinch Stole Christmas (2000)*, to benefit **Feeding Northeast Florida**. Admission is FREE for every adult and child with a gift of canned or nonperishable food. *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* begins at 2 p.m. Runtime is 104 min. **Click here** for more details.



Deck The Chairs in Jacksonville Beach (11/24 - 1/1/2022) -- This event puts a unique twist on Christmas decorating! The display features over 20,000 pieces of waste that were all collected along the coast. The finished project will be on display

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VyStar Credit Union Presents "Jason Woods' A Christmas Carol" (12/22) -- VyStar presents "Jason Woods' A Christmas Carol," a one-man holiday storytelling experience on Wed., Dec. 22, outside of the VyStar Tower at 76 S. Laura St. in downtown Jacksonville. The performance will be held from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and is **free** and open to the public. Guests are encouraged to bring blankets and chairs and hot chocolate will be provided while supplies lasts. For more information, please visit **VyStar's Facebook page**.

Ad

'Dazzling Nights' at Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens (11/19 - 1/9/2022) The Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens is lighting the town during **"Dazzling Nights,"** a three-quarter-mile interactive holiday experience. The family-friendly event begins Nov. 19 and will end on Jan. 9, 2022. **Click here** for more details.

Illuminating Nature (12/7, 12/10, 12/14 &12/17) -- View the Cummer Gardens in a whole new light. Illuminating Nature features an installation of over a dozen glowing fabric sculptures throughout the Museum's 2 ½ acre backyard. **Click here for tickets and details.**



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ZOOLights (12/10-12, 17-19, 22-24 & 26) -- The 10th annual ZOOLights, a fantastical holiday light experience set to transform Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens, will take guests on a magical journey of the artistry of lights, sound, and nature itself. During this nightly event, the animals settle down for their long winter's nap, while the lights take center stage. (**Click here** to purchase tickets)



Historic Springfield's Annual Holiday Bicycle Ride (12/14) -- Join over 300 friends and neighbors for this Springfield tradition -- the Holiday Bicycle Ride. It's a leisurely evening riding through the Historic District to enjoy the lights and



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N Main St) will be the meet-up spot with music and drinks available before and after the ride. The parade will kick off at 6 p.m. and return before 8 p.m.

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Fun Walk in Jacksonville Beach (12/15) -- The fun walk is a free walk to look at Deck the Chairs and Christmas lights in Jax Beach. It is approximately a 5k walk. It will begin at 6:30 p.m. at 429 1st St. S Jax Beach 32250. **Click here** for more information.

Christmas Toy Giveaway (12/18) -- North Jax Baptist Church is hosting a toy giveaway on December 18 from 9-11 a.m. at 8531 N Main Street. The toy drive is to help those on the Northside of Jacksonville. Last year the church had 850+ people come through. Every child gets a toy and a chance to win a bike! **Click here** for more information.

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Christmas Toy Giveaway December 18

Clay County

Christmas on the Corner (12/18) -- This event will be held on Dec. 18 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. "We have decorated our church property with thousands of Christmas lights set to music for you to walk through and enjoy. This night will also have a live nativity with animals that you can pet, Santa, carolers, refreshments and more." **Click here** for more information.

Nassau County

2021 New Years Eve Shrimp Drop (12/21) -- The Annual New Year's Eve Shrimp Drop features live music, laser shows, kids' zone with a bounce house, food, local vendors and a fireworks show. It will be held on Centre Street in Fernandina Beach. It will begin at 5 p.m.

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Saturday and will run each night through Jan. 31.

2021 Saint Augustine Nutcracker Ballet (12/18) -- The Saint Augustine Ballet presents the 13th Annual Nutcracker — "a timeless classic featuring professional ballet dancers and dance students around the area. This holiday favorite will be staged December 18-19, 2021 in Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College." PERFORMANCES: 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 18; 7 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 18; 2 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 19. **Click here** for tickets and more information.

Ad

St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum to host first annual Lighthouse Illuminations event (now - 1/21/2022) -- Discover twenty-one uniquely decorated trees, each with a distinct theme. Available on select days between November 22 and January 21.



Here are events in Georgia broken down by county:

Camden County

Christmas Underwater (until Dec. 24) -- The Adventure Aquarium event returns for its 13th season! Enjoy lively



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Glynn County

Christmas at Sea Island (12/22 - 12/26) -- This event has it all! "From storytime with Santa's elves to our life-size Gingerbread Advent Cottage in the Solarium to a Reindeer Dash fun run, we have every reason for you to join us this Christmas holiday." **Click here** for more information.

Click here to find the best Christmas light displays around Jacksonville.

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Carianne Luter

Carianne Luter is a social media producer for News4Jax and has worked at Channel 4 since December 2015. She graduated from the University of North Florida with a degree in communications.

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9 Fun Things To Do in Florida That You Don't Want To Miss This Winter

Let's turn that summer vacation into a winter escape.

By Kaitlyn Yarborough

Florida isn't called the Sunshine State for nothing. Southerners—along with people from all over the country—flock to the coastal state year-round for white sand beaches, clear blue waters, and warm, sunny weather.

As much as we love summer vacations on Scenic Highway 30A or down at the Keys, there is just as much to love about Florida come wintertime. From December through February, this state packs in special things you don't want to miss, from Christmas festivities at Walt Disney World to migrating manatees (that you can snorkel with!) to the biggest NASCAR race of the year. A Florida winter really is as sunny as it gets.

Here are 9 of the best things to do in Florida during the winter.

Snorkel with the manatees at Three Sisters Springs in Crystal River

During the winter months, manatees flock to Crystal River seeking warm water refuge before the water temperature drops too low in other areas. The 57-acre wetland refuge that surrounds Three Sisters Springs, along with its scenic boardwalk, see hundreds of manatees during the winter, and visitors are able to swim, snorkel, or paddle alongside the gentle giants in the clearest of water. It's definitely a sight worth seeing. https://doi.org/10.1001/jhreesistersspringsvisitor.org/10.1001/jhreesist



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Meet Pixel 6, starting from \$599

Completely reimagined, inside and out. Pixel's all-day Adaptive battery is everything a battery should be. Get Pixel 6 on Fi, a phone plan by Google.

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Head to "The Happiest Place on Earth"

Not only are you able to catch these parks at a less crowded time (summer is the high season!), but you're also typically able to do it a cheaper price. Not to mention, once you've fared the long, hot, sweaty, crowded park day in the middle of July, you'll be dreaming of a more autumnal or wintertime Walt Disney World visit.

If you're there during the holidays, expect an extravaganza of holiday spirit—twinkling lights and all—at every park and resort, and don't miss out on Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party. If you're traveling in January, consider visiting during the popular Walt Disney World Marathon. There are 5K, 10K, half marathon, and full marathon races on the docket, along with a few special challenges named after famous characters like Goofy and Dopey. disney.go.com

Catch St. Augustine, the nation's oldest city, during Night of Lights

Come December, St. Augustine's historic district dresses up its Southern charm with millions of tiny white lights scattered throughout the city, inspired by the Spanish tradition of displaying a white candle in the window. It's known as one of the top holiday light displays in the country, and you can attend the annual festival, Night of Lights, for fun-filled events like trolley tours, a tour of homes, and a regatta of lights. <code>visitstaugustine.com</code>

Catch waves with the Surfing Santas at Cocoa Beach

Florida said, "We'll see your Old Saint Nick and raise you a Surfing Santa." If you're looking for a relaxed December getaway, head to Cocoa Beach, located about an hour southeast of Orlando. The beach town boasts an annual tradition that brings hundreds of surfers dressed up as Santa who kick off the festivities promptly at 8 a.m. on Christmas Eve. There's even a costume competition for all ages. This laidback event is the perfect way to kickstart your holiday celebrations. surfingsantas.org

Get a taste of in-season Florida citrus

Did you know that Florida citrus—oranges, grapefruit, tangerines, and more—are actually in-season during the winter months? Their sunny colors might fool you, but it's one of the best times of the year to get a taste (specifically from November through April).

Head to Citra, Florida, to visit the iconic Orange Shop, which has been in operation since 1936. You can stock up on fresh citrus fruits, Bundt cakes, marmalades, and more. Plenty of farms throughout the state, such as U-Pick Citrus in Ft. Meyers, lets you pick your own bushel of fruit. Bring the whole family, and make it a fun activity. floridaorangeshop.com

Send your greeting cards from Christmas, Florida

Located about 25 miles outside Orlando, this small town is quite the destination once December hits. People from all over pay a visit to the Post Office to send greeting cards to friends and family—postmarked Christmas, Florida. The Post Office has even been known to offer colorful stamps and ink to decorate your envelopes, which was once a town tradition.

Experience Dickens on Centre at Fernandina Beach

Why not travel back in time at the turn of the year? Inspired by Charles Dickens famed "A Christmas Carol," this Victorian-inspired festival sees downtown Fernandina flooded with costumed characters, themed performances, and plenty of festive vendors hocking things like chestnuts roasting. It's basically a beach town transformed into a charming English village for a spell. ameliaisland.com

See the Gaylord Palms all dressed up for the holidays

Say hello to the most festive hotel in Florida. It's the perfect place to create lifelong memories with your family this season, including a trip or two to the resort's ICE! attraction. The indoor winter wonderland features a self-guided walk with life-sized ice sculptures—including hand-carved scenes from holiday-favorite movie, *The Polar Express*—and a handful of two-story ice slides. marriott.com

Attend the Daytona 500, NASCAR's most prestigious race, at Daytona Beach

February in Florida means one thing: Daytona 500. This big-time race, held in mid-February, is an once-in-a-lifetime experience all Southerners should put on the bucket list. You might not be into NASCAR, but you'll still think it's one of the most exciting sporting events of all time. (The crowd goes absolutely crazy!) End the winter season on a high note at Daytona International Speedway.

It's time to head to the Sunshine State—you've got places to be and things to do.

HOLIDAY

No money, no problem: 10 free holiday events coming to the Jacksonville area

Tom Szaroleta Florida Times-Union

Published 9:27 a.m. ET Nov. 24, 2021 | Updated 9:38 a.m. ET Dec. 10, 2021

Northeast Florida is getting into the holiday spirit, with many traditional events returning after last year's pandemic shutdown and plenty of new ones. Here are 10 free events coming to the Jacksonville area for the holiday season.

Nights of Lights

When: Through Jan. 31

A stroll through historic downtown St. Augustine is always a delight, but when they add 3 million lights and leave them up for two months, it's pretty special. Many businesses stay open late during the Nights of Lights festivities, which are every night through the end of January. It's free to walk the streets, or you can spend a few bucks and check out the lights from a horse-drawn carriage, a trolley, an electric car, a boat or even a helicopter.

Guide: Holiday events in Jacksonville, St. Augustine and more

Lights, camera, action: Jacksonville family's holiday lights display featured on ABC's 'Great Christmas Light Fight'

Deck the Chairs

When: 5 p.m. to 1 a.m. through Jan. 1

There's not a lot about a traditional lifeguard chair that puts you in the holiday mood. But get a look at the chairs at Jacksonville Beach Deck the Chairs at Seawalk Pavilion and you might feel differently. They're more like lighted sculpture than chairs and they've become a Beaches tradition. This year, the display includes the SeaSongs Light & Music interactive light and sound show, open from 6 to 9 p.m. nightly.

Light Boat Parade

When: 6 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 27

Anyone who has ever attended the Jacksonville Light Boat Parade knows not to leave early. Dozens of privately owned boats, decorated with lights, Santas and Christmas trees, will parade along the St. Johns River starting at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 27. Grab a spot on either side of the river, between the Hyatt Regency and the Fuller Warren Bridge, for the best views. But stick around for the "waterfall" fireworks show, which features rivers of sparks pouring into the river from the Main Street and Acosta bridges.

Christmas in the Cathedral District

When: Nov. 27- Dec. 26

Jacksonville's Cathedral District is on the edge of downtown, between the office towers and the sports complex and bordered by Main, Liberty, Beaver and Forsyth streets. For the holiday season, "Let There be Light" is the theme for the neighborhood's holiday celebration, with trees. churches and historic buildings lit up. Download a free driving map for a self-guided tour or just wander the neighborhood on foot. From 6 to 9 p.m. every Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday from Dec. 9-26, a laser light show will be projected on the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception at 121 E. Duval St.

Totally Lit

When: 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 29

Celebrate Hanukkah at the Totally Lit festival at James Weldon Johnson Park in the heart of downtown Jacksonville. They'll have live music, a food truck, dreidel games, sufganiot, kosher beer and wine and a menorah lighting at 6:30 p.m.

Holiday parades

When: Dec. 4 and Dec. 11

Santa has a busy schedule over the next few weeks, with appearances booked for at least four holiday parades in the area. Saturday, Dec. 4, has three parades scheduled. At 9 a.m., the St. Augustine Christmas Parade starts at Mission Nombre de Dios and winds through the downtown streets. The Callahan Christmas Parade starts at 11 a.m. on Warrior Street; a craft

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fair on the town's historic rail bed runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Green Cove Springs' Christmas on Walnut Street festival runs from 3 to 9 p.m. that day; the Green Cove Springs Christmas Parade starts at 6 p.m. and runs along U.S. 17 from Lamont Street to Walnut Street and back. The Yulee Holiday Parade is a week later, on Saturday, Dec. 11, starting at 10 a.m. and traveling down Hamilton Street, Goodbread Road and Page's Dairy Road.

Dickens on Centre

When: Dec. 9-12

Downtown Fernandina Beach is transformed into long-ago London for the 7th annual Dickens on Centre festival with an opening night lighted procession, holiday movies, a Tiny Tim's kids' zone, a pet parade, live music on two stages and events inspired by Charles Dickens.

Drive-through Living Nativity

When: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Dec. 9-12

Westside Baptist Church, 7500 Herlong Road, tells the Biblical Christmas story with a Drivethrough Living Nativity show featuring live animals, actors and holiday lights. It's a very popular event – organizers say they had 6,000 cars come through last year and are planning for 10,000 this year – so plan to get in line at Ed White High School to wait your turn.

Tuba Christmas

When: 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11

Nothing says Christmas quite like a couple hundred tuba players oompahing their way through "Jingle Bells." Tuba and euphonium players, young and old, talented and not-so-talented, will play holiday classics during Tuba Christmas at Seawalk Pavilion in Jacksonville Beach. It costs \$15 to play, but it's free to watch.

Riverside/Avondale Luminaria

When: Sunday, Dec. 12

Thousands of lighted bags will line the streets of Jacksonville's historic Riverside and Avondale neighborhoods for the 37th annual luminaria celebration, which starts at dusk.

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Augustine and more

Cherri Pitzer Florida Times-Union

Published 11:09 a.m. ET Nov. 12, 2021 | Updated 3:41 p.m. ET Nov. 17, 2021

There's plenty to see and do this holiday season in Jacksonville and Northeast Florida, from annual traditions Jacksonville Light Boat Parade and St. Augustine's Nights of Lights to new ones, like Dazzling Nights. Here's our list.

First Coast Cultural Center's 31st annual Holiday Shoppes

Where: Marsh Landing County Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway, Ponte Vedra Beach

When: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nov. 12 and 13

Information: firstcoastculturalcenter.org

15th Annual Holiday Spectacular

Where: St. Johns Town Center

When: 2 to 8 p.m. Nov. 13

Event details: An action-packed day of holiday-themed activities, family-friendly fun, and festive entertainment, culminating with the lighting of the 32-foot tree by Santa Claus and a fireworks display. The Chris Thomas Band will perform.

Holiday shopping: Black Friday mall, store hours in Jacksonville

Outlet shop 'til you drop: Here are 11 of our favorite Florida outlet malls

A Christmas Carole

Where: Alhambra Dinner Theatre, 12000 Beach Blvd.

When: Nov. 17-Dec. 24.

Cost: \$68 to \$73.

Information: alhambrajax.com/tickets/

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When: Nov. 18

Cost: \$52-114.50.

Information: timesunioncenter.com/events

Dazzling Nights

Where: Jacksonville Arboretum and Gardens, 1445 Millcoe Road

When: Nov. 19-Jan. 9, 2022

Event details: A magical wonderland featuring a million dazzling lights, shining forests,

magical displays, and beautiful sculptures.

Cost: \$22 per person weekdays (\$25 per person weekends)

Information: www.dazzlingjax.com

St. Augustine Nights of Lights

Where: Downtown St. Augustine

When: Nov. 20 to Jan. 31, 2022

Cost: Free

Information: visitstaugustine.com

St. Augustine Night of Lights Festival of Art

Where: Francis Field, 25 W. Castillo Dr., St. Augustine

When: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Nov. 27; 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Nov. 28

Event details: Arts and crafts, juried art show, food, and music.

When: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Nov. 20

Cost: Free

Information: facebook.com/events/3747720705318243

Jacksonville Beach Deck the Chairs

Where: Jacksonville Beach and surrounding areas

When: Nov. 24 through Jan. 1, 2022

Event details: Forty-give chairs will be decorated throughout the park with weekend stage programming and holiday concessions. Events include: Beaches Go Green Octopus Garden, Moonlight Movies, Santa Visit, Christmas Eve Service, Weekly Children's Dance Programming; on Thursday, Dec. 30 there will be a Gator Bowl Pep Rally; Musical Light Show held hourly from 6 to 9 p.m. The event is handicap accessible and pet friendly; concessions are available on weekends and scheduled holiday nights.

Information: deckthechairs.org

Annual Ritz-Carlton Christmas Tree Lighting

Where: The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island

When: 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 24, 2021

Cost: Ticket purchase is required for entry with a \$10 donation for ages 10 and older. 100% of the proceeds will be shared with Boys & Girls Club of Nassau County, The St. Marys Riverkeeper, Micah's Place and The Amelia Island Sea Turtle Watch.

Information: facebook.com/events/449281513156687

Christmas Made in the South

Where: Prime Osborn Convention Center, 1000 Water St.

When: Nov. 26-28

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Cost: Adults, \$8; Children 12 & Under, free; one admission good for all three days with handstamp.

Information: www.primefosborn.com/events

Jacksonville Light Boat Parade

Where: North and Southbank Riverwalks including Riverfront Plaza along the St. Johns River in Downtown Jacksonville

When: 6 p.m. Nov. 27

Event details: Boats adorn their hulls with festive decorations as they float along the north and south banks of the St. Johns River.

Cost: Free

Christmas in the Cathedral District

Where: Downtown's Cathedral District, bordered by Main and Liberty streets and Beaver and Forsyth streets

When: Nov. 27 to Dec. 31

Details: Self-guided driving tour of the Cathedral District's historic churches and other landmark buildings, all illuminated with thousands of lights. And each Thursday through Sunday from Dec. 9-26, enjoy the laser light installation at the district's churches.

Information: cathedraldistrict-jax.org

A Christmas Carol

Where: Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts, 300 Water St.

When: 7 p.m. Nov. 28

Event details: A new adaptation of Dickens' ever-popular classic fills the stage with professional actors, lush costumes, stunning sets and puppetry, song, and dance, a heavy dose of humor, and a timeless message.

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Home for the Holidays Home Decor Demonstration and Morning Tea

Where: Ribault Garden Club, 705 Second Ave. N.

When: 9 a.m. to noon Nov. 30

Cost: \$15

Reservations: (904) 280-8487

Chanukkah Extravaganza/Festival of Lights

Where: Jewish Community Alliance, 8505 San Jose Blvd.

When: 5:45 p.m. Nov. 30

Information: jcajax.org/JCAFest

Jacksonville Tree Lighting

Where: James Weldon Johnson Park, 135 W. Monroe St.

When: 5 to 9 p.m. Dec. 1

Information: specialevents.coj.net

St. Augustine Luminary Night

Where: St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum

Date: 6 to 9 p.m. Dec. 1

Information: floridashistoriccoast.com/events

Dave Koz & Friends Christmas Tour 2021

Where: Florida Theatre, 128 E. Forsyth St.

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Emott, and trumpeter kick braun.

Cost: \$43 to \$83

Information: floridatheatre.com

The Wizards of Winter

Where: Thrasher-Horne Center, 283 College Drive, Orange Park

When: 7 p.m. Dec. 2

Event details: Featuring former members of Classic Rock Bands- The Trans- Siberian Orchestra, Def Leppard, The Irish Tenors Rainbow, Blue Oyster Cult, Alice Cooper Band and others.

Cost: \$29 to \$69 (plus fees)

Information: www.thcenter.org

Cirque Dreams Holidaze

Where: Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts, 300 Water St.

When: 7:30 p.m. Dec. 2.

Cost: \$39 to \$106.50

Information: fscjartistseries.org

15th Annual Amelia Island Museum of History Holiday Home Tour

Where: Fernandina Beach Main Street, 309 1/2 Centre St., Fernandina Beach

When: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 3

Cost: \$7 per house

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information: amenamuseum.org

Christmas in Avondale

Where: Along St. John's Avenue in the historical Avondale neighborhood

When: 4 to 8 p.m. Dec. 4

Cost: Free

Green Cove Springs Christmas Parade

Where: U.S. 17 between CVS and City Hall, Green Cove Springs

When: 6 to 7:30 p.m. Dec. 4

Information: www.facebook.com/GCSChristmas

Under the Streetlamp "Hip to the Holidays"

Where: Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, 1050 A1A N., Ponte Vedra Beach

When: 7 p.m. Dec. 4.

Cost: \$61 to \$71

Information: www.pvconcerthall.com

26th Annual Festival of Lights 5K and one-mile fun run

Where: San Marco Square, 2018 San Marco Blvd.

When: 5 p.m. Dec. 4

Event details: Luminaries will light up the streets of beautiful San Marco as runners, walkers, and strollers of all ages and abilities take off during this unique, holiday-themed race. All proceeds from this event benefit Children's Miracle Network Hospitals.

Information: 1stplacesports.com

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Memorial Arena

When: Dec. 4-22

Hours: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday-Fridays (seniors only/health cautious from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (last appointment slot at noon); general admission from 1 to 4 p.m. (last appointment slot is 3 p.m.); 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays (last appointment slot begins at 3 p.m.); noon to 4 p.m. Sunday's (last appointment slot at 3 p.m.); closed Mondays and on Dec. 19.

Event details: Presented by the Jacksonville Historical Society, organizers of the event are working to ensure the health and safety of its visitors. Masks may be required, and hand sanitizer stations will be located throughout the venue. All proceeds from the event benefit the educational programs and archival repository of the Jacksonville Historical Society.

Tickets: \$7 to \$10

Information: jaxhistory.networkforgood.com/events/34116-gingerbread-extravaganza-2021-tickets

Builders Entry Form: jaxhistory.dm.networkforgood.com/forms/gingerbread-builders-entry-form

St. Augustine Christmas Parade

Where: Starts by the Mission Nombre de Dios off San Marco Avenue and continues through the downtown streets of historic St. Augustine

Date: 9 a.m. Dec. 4

Information: floridashistoriccoast.com

Callahan Christmas Parade and Craft Fair 2021

Where: 542300 U.S. Highway 1, Callahan

Date: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 4

Event details: All proceeds go to the West Nassau Historical Society.

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Where: Avondale and Riverside neighborhoods

When: 3 to 7 p.m. Dec. 5

Event details: Several local homes, porches, and businesses in the Avondale and Riverside areas will be adorned in holiday décor. The venues will each have their own holiday theme designed by local decorators, and take-away activities will be available at each themed location.

Information: jljacksonville.org/events

A Peter White Christmas

Where: Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, 1050 A1A N., Ponte Vedra Beach

When: 8 p.m. Dec. 8

Cost: \$66 to \$116.50

Information: pvconcerthall.com

Jacksonville Symphony's Holiday Pops Concert

Where: Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts, 300 Water St.

When: Dec. 9-12

Cost: \$25 to \$77

Information: jaxsymphony.org/event

Jacksonville Christmas Celebration - The Living Nativity

Where: Westside Baptist Church, 7775 Herlong Rd.

When: 6 to 9 p.m. Dec. 9-12

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Cost: Free

Information: (904) 781-0618 or wbcjax.com/thelivingnativity

"Dickens on Centre" Victorian Christmas Festival Returns to Amelia Island

Where: Downtown Fernandina Beach

When: Dec. 9-12

Details: Costumed characters, themed live entertainment, visits from Saint Nick, a variety of vendors selling handmade seasonal wares and treats, and much more. Accompanying the festival this year is a special Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival performance, the Amelia Island Museum of History Holiday Home Tour, and the new Dickens Enchanted Village, a one-of-a-kind picnic bringing to life the magic of snow globes.

Website: ameliaisland.com/Holiday

Jacksonville ZOOlights

Where: Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens

When: 6 to 9 p.m., Dec. 10-12, 17-19, 22-24 & 26

Details: Now in its 10th year, the event uses thousands of LED lights to create nighttime displays of moving sculptures, forests of lighted trees and animal silhouettes throughout the zoo. Strolling performers, carolers, hot chocolate, s'mores and warming adult beverages are also part of the experience.

Cost: Members, \$15; Non-members, \$25. Note tickets must be purchased online.

Information: jacksonvillezoo.org/zoolights

30th Annual Community Nutcracker

Where: Florida Theatre, 128 E. Forsyth St.

When: 7:30 p.m. Dec. 10; 1 and 7:30 p.m. Dec. 11

St. Augustine Holiday Regatta of Lights

Where: Matanzas Bay

When: 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. Dec. 11

Details: The annual Regatta of Lights takes St. Augustine's world-famous Nights of Lights onto the water, with amazing vessels showing off their brilliant lighting displays as they parade along Matanzas Bay.

Information: visitstaugustine.com

17th Annual Yulee Holiday Parade

Where: 86142 Goodbread Road, Yulee

When: 10 a.m. Dec. 11

Event details: The parade route will be utilizing Hamilton Street, Goodbread Road and

Page's Dairy Road.

Information: facebook.com/events/593830098415323/

Jacksonville Tuba Christmas

Where: Seawalk Pavilion, 75 1st St. N., Jacksonville Beach

When: Dec. 11, time TBA

Cost: Free

Information: tubachristmasjax.com

The Hip Hop Nutcracker

Where: Florida Theatre, 128 E. Forsyth St.

Date: 7 p.m. Dec. 12

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crassic, smasning nip-nop dance and i charkovksy's timeless music together into a neartstirring and inspirational holiday event.

Information: floridatheatre.com

A Very Merry K9 Christmas

Where: The Barn at Cottonwood Ranch, 452039 Old Dixie Hwy., Callahan

Date: 1 to 4 p.m. Dec. 12

Cost: \$50

Event details: Hors d'oeuvres, an open bar, K9 photo booth, silent auction, music, special K9 demonstrations, and VIP guest appearances.

Information: www.facebook.com/events/556000015411797/permalink/55600002207846 3/

Hope & Anticipation performed by the University of North Florida's Choral Ensemble and Orchestra

Where: Ponte Vedra Concert Hall

Date: 4 p.m. Dec. 12

Cost: \$15 for students, seniors, and military; \$25 for general admission.

37th Annual Luminaria in Riverside/Avondale

Where: Riverside Avondale neighborhoods

When: Dec. 12

Event details: Join each of your neighbors in lighting up our streets, sidewalks, your porches, and more. Purchasing your kit through Riverside Avondale Preservation also ensures we will donate kits to our public spaces, merchant areas, parks, and churches. Delivery of kits begins on Dec. 1 for all kits sold online. Pickup and in-person kits will be

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information: To purchase kits online, riversideavondale.org

Cirque Musica Holiday Spectacular

Where: Florida Theatre, 128 E. Forsyth St.

When: 7:30 p.m. Dec. 15

Cost: \$28.50 - \$88.50

Events details: This all-new production features some of the greatest holiday songs of all

time performed with the world-renowned cast of Cirque Musica.

Information: floridatheatre.com

Trans-Siberian Orchestra Christmas Eve & Other Stories

Where: VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena, 300 A. Philip Randolph Blvd.

When: 7:30 p.m. Dec. 16

Cost: \$36 to \$86

Information: ticketmaster.com/transsiberian-orchestrachristmas

Jacksonville Symphony's Handel's Messiah

Where: Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts, 300 Water St.

When: 7:30 p.m. Dec. 18; 3 p.m. Dec. 19

Cost: \$36 to \$86

Information: jaxsymphony.org

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer: The Musical

Where: Florida Theatre, 128 E. Forsyth St.

When: 7 p.m. Dec. 21

12 days of Christmas Concerts

Where: St. Anastasia Catholic Church

When: Dec. 26 through Jan. 6

Cost: Free except for Dec. 31 and Jan. 2 (see below); parking is free.

Details: Twelve Days of Christmas events will include:

Dec. 26, Peter and Helen Morin, piano and violin, 5 p.m. in the church.

Dec. 27, Tim Tuller, organist share Christmas organ masterworks, 2 p.m. in the church.

Dec. 28, Christmas from Hollywood to Broadway will include music and dance featuring selections from The Polar Express, A Charlie Brown Christmas, The Grinch Who Stole Christmas, Elf, and more. 7 p.m. in St. Jude Celebration Hall.

Dec. 29, Christmas Vespers with candlelight presentations of music, readings and carols. 7 p.m. in the church.

Dec. 30, Christmas Spirituals nationally recognized artists Lisa Lockhart, Edward Washington and Gregory Sheppard perform 7 p.m. in the church.

Dec. 31, New Year's Eve Sock Hop featuring dance music of the 50s and 60s and today's family-friendly pop hits. Snacks, cakes, door prizes, non-alcoholic drink cash bar. Tickets \$10 at the door. Free admission for children who must be accompanied by an adult. 8 to 10 p.m. in St. Jude Celebration Hall.

Jan. 1, Baroque Christmas Concert featuring soprano Carolyn "Cal" Brown, bass Joe Colsant, Jacksonville Symphony trumpet player Michael Harper, Helen Morin's string quartet and Maestro Morin on the harpsichord perform music by Bach, Vivaldi, Pachelbel and Handel. 7 p.m. in the church.

Jan. 2, "Amahl the Night Visitors" fully staged performance with ensemble accompaniment, soloists Lisa Lockhart, Dirk McCoy, Gregory Sheppard and Edward Washington joined by Gus Crouch of Ponte Vedra in the role of Amahl. 5 p.m., in St. Jude Celebration Hall. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased online or at the parish office.

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Jan. 4, The Dance Company performs excerpts from the winter Spectacular Snow. / p.m. in St. Jude Celebration Hall.

Jan. 5, St. Augustine Ballet perform highlights from "The Nutcracker". 7 p.m. in St. Jude Celebration Hall.

Jan. 6, Epiphany Lessons and Carols. The Twelfth Day of Christmas series will conclude with a concert of sacred readings, Christmas and Epiphany carols and anthems lead by the choirs of St. Anastasia Catholic Church. 7 p.m. in the church.

Web site: 12daysofChristmas.info

Add your event to our list. Email details to cpitzer@jacksonville.com.

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A First Timer's Guide to Dickens on Centre

November 24, 2021 By Caroline Eubanks — Leave a Comment

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Photo booth at Dickens on Centre

Amelia Island, Florida is one of the most wonderful places to spend the holiday season, especially during the annual Dickens on Centre festivities. Held annually over a weekend in December, the downtown area of Fernandina Beach is transformed into a Victorian-era village, inspired by the classic Charles Dickens tale A Christmas Carol.

It's is the island's biggest holiday celebration, featuring costumed performers singing carols. Booths line the streets, selling crafts and food. Kids can write letters to Santa, see the illuminated tree, catch a holiday movie, or bring their furry friend to the Pet Parade.

The festival also has a one-mile beach fun run, Portraits with Saint Nick, live music, and the Dickens Enchanted Village, a igloo picnic experience. Read our expert advice to have the perfect experience, leaving behind any Bah Humbug attitude!

Natchitoches Christmas Festival

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Tips for Attending Dickens on Centre in Amelia Island Dress the part.

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A Christmas Carol costumes

Costumed performers will be found roaming the streets, including carolers dressed in Victorian attire and Santa. But attendees also get into the holiday spirit. In fact, the festival has its own page about accessories and attire to dress the part. For gentlemen, that might include top hats and long-tailed jackets. For ladies, bonnets and dresses are a fun look.

The Illuminated Procession is the best time to get dressed up, when attendees stroll the streets with lanterns. **Dickens After Dark** is another fun event for those 21 and over, which includes **beer** and wine, appetizers, entertainment, and a ghost tour.

Shop for local gifts.

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Booths at Dickens on Centre

During Dickens on Centre, many of the shops stay open later and vendors set up in tents along the main street. It's the perfect opportunity to do your holiday shopping, especially while supporting local businesses. You might find jewelry, home decor, clothing, and more. **The Book Loft** and **Trailer Park Collectibles** are a few of our favorites.

Make dinner reservations.

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Sushi bar at the Ritz Carlton

Dickens Dining Week is a part of Dickens on Centre and encourages attendees to enjoy the local restaurants that are participating. But these restaurants are far from the only places to dine while in Amelia Island. It's a good idea to make a reservation, especially after popular events like the Illuminated Procession.

Some of our favorites include the Lobby Bar at the Ritz-Carlton, Cucina South, and Timoti's Seafood Shack.

Book your accommodations early.

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Amelia Schoolhouse Inn.

Amelia Island doesn't have as many hotel options as other Southern destinations, especially if you want to be in the heart of it all in Fernandina Beach. But the ones that are there book up early, so plan ahead! Amelia Schoolhouse Inn is a former school that has its own bar.

Hampton Inn & Suites Amelia Island is also in the heart of Fernandina Beach with an onsite fitness center, business center, free breakfast, free WiFi, and free parking.

The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island is a AAA Five Diamond hotel set on 13 miles of coastline with an award-winning restaurant, a spa, an 18-hole golf course, and direct beach access. Seaside Amelia Inn - Amelia Island is a 46-room boutique hotel right on the ocean with daily breakfast, WiFi, and parking.

The 400-room Omni Amelia Island Plantation Resort was built in the 1970s and has residences and vacation accommodations a short drive from Fernandina. It has 10 restaurants and decked out with gingerbread houses during the holiday season. Privacy - Terms

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About Caroline Eubanks

Caroline Eubanks is the editor of this website, a Lowell Thomas award-winning travel writer, and the author of This Is My South: The Essential Travel Guide to the Southern States. Her stories from the South have appeared in National Geographic Traveler, Afar, Thrillist, Roads and Kingdoms, and BBC Travel.

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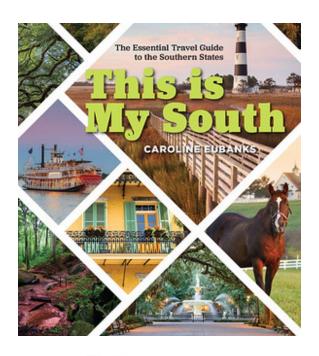
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