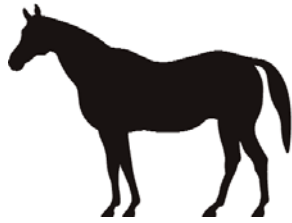


IDEA GUIDE



LEXINGTON CONVENTION
AND VISITORS BUREAU

301 East Vine Street
Lexington, KY 40507-1513
(859) 233-7299 or (800) 845-3959
www.visitlex.com

HOLIDAY DELIGHTS 2011

*Brighten Your Season With a Festive
Getaway to Lexington and the Bluegrass*

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

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

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

A Horsey Highlight

Lexington is the “horse capital of the world,” so it shouldn't seem too surprising that the holiday season features some equine enchantment.

At **Southern Lights: Spectacular Sights on Holiday Nights** at the Kentucky Horse Park, horses of light “race” in front of a cheering crowd, clear a steeplechase fence, and graze in Bluegrass pastures. The unique horse scenes help make Southern Lights one of the most distinctive lights festivals anywhere. And with tens of thousands of shimmering lights, it's Kentucky's largest lights festival and an 18-year tradition.

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

holiday characters as you drive along the three-mile route through the park.

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

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

November 18 through December 31. Admission is \$15 per car (\$20 on Fridays and Saturdays), \$30 per extended van, \$50 per mini-bus, \$75 per school bus and \$125 per motorcoach. This year, admission to the “The Horse” a special exhibit at the International Museum of the Horse, is included. *The indoor attractions are closed on*

Thanksgiving Day, and December 24-31, but the drive-through portion

remains open every night through the 31st. (859) 255-5727.

Bluegrass Note: This year Southern Lights at the Kentucky Horse Park features the 10th Annual **Southern Lights Stroll/5K Run benefiting local charities.** On November 17, the night before opening to the public, participants will run, walk or stroll three miles along light displays. Back at the Visitor Center, awards and door prizes await. Call (859) 259-4219 or (859) 259-4280 for information.

The Glow of Holidays Past

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

In Lexington

Christmas on the Estate. This year the Henry Clay Estate will open its doors for two **Holiday Candlelight Tours** on Sunday, December 4 and Monday, December 26 from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. with the last admission at 7:30 p.m. Enjoy live music on self-guided tours of the mansion and refreshments in the Keeper's Cottage. This year's theme is "A Dickens Christmas at Ashland." Mistletoe from the Ashland Estate will be on sale. Reservations are not required. \$15 for adults, \$5 for children 6 and under.

Also on December 4, a live 100 foot, 100 year old Norway Spruce will be lit for the holiday season on the lawn of the Estate. The ceremony begins at 5:00 p.m. and is free and open to the public. (859) 266-8581.

Antebellum Christmas. At **Waveland State Historic Site**, you can see what the holiday season was like on a Bluegrass plantation.

Antebellum decorations, music, refreshments and costumed historic presenters will be featured at this year's **Christmas Candlelight Tours** from 6 to 9 p.m. December 10-11. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors and \$4 for students. (859) 272-3611.

In the Region

Simple Gifts. The simple beauty of the Shaker celebrations takes on special significance during special holiday events at the restored **Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill** near Harrodsburg. Among the many special offerings, see Christmas Shaker traditions in holiday vignettes come to life during the **Pleasant Hill Singers Christmas Choral Concert** on December 3 at 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Learn Shaker songs, make paper chains and string popcorn for old-fashioned tree decorating. Also on December 3, the village will host **Shaker Community Christmas Caroling** beginning at 7 p.m.; admission for this event is a donation of canned goods. Visit with Mrs. Santa Claus and help light the tree. Tours November 26 - December 31 celebrate "The Simple Gifts of Christmas"--Shaker life, music and Christmas customs. Admission is \$7.00 for adults and \$3 ages 6 - 12 (free for ages 5 and under). (800) 734-5611.

Landmark Christmas. Visit beautiful Ward Hall for a **Christmas Open House and Holiday Market**. Open the first weekend of December, the 3rd and 4th; Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Sunday 12 p.m. - 5 p.m. This elegant Greek Revival home, built around 1855 is located on US 460, west of downtown Georgetown. (859) 879-0303.

Harrodsburg Holiday Homes. Six Harrodsburg homes from the 19th and early 20th century and an historic Mercer County church will open their doors for the 18th Annual **"Come Home to Christmas"** holiday homes tour, December 3 from 1 to 8 p.m. The event is sponsored by the Harrodsburg Historical Society. Purchase \$15 tickets (\$11 for Seniors) and begin the tour at the Historical Society's office, 220 Chiles Street. (859) 734-5985 or the Tourist Commission at (800) 355-9192.

Bluegrass Note: Looking for some natural gift ideas? Try the Lexington Farmers Market, open Saturdays on Vine Street in downtown Lexington through November. You'll find garlic braids, apple and pumpkin butters, and herbal products as well as homemade ornaments and gift baskets. The market moves indoors to Victorian Square in December.

Festive Foods

Spirited Cooking. Enjoy a Kentucky gourmet lunch at the historic Woodford Reserve Distillery in Woodford County during **Holidays at Woodford Reserve**, November 25 through December 23. Enjoy a traditional Kentucky holiday buffet with a contemporary twist prepared by Chef Ouida Michel. In the past guests have enjoyed selections such as roasted loin of pork, bourbon-glazed chicken, slow-roasted sweet potatoes with cinnamon, pumpkin cheesecake and Woodford Reserve cake. Lunch will be served Wednesdays through Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and Sundays 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Cost is \$25.00 plus tax per person. Reservations recommended. The gift shop will be open and full of holiday gift ideas. (859) 879-1953. (Closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.)

Family Fun

In Lexington

Love a Christmas parade? Wave to Santa and other celebrants at the **Lexington Christmas Parade**, December 10, beginning at 10 a.m. The state's largest holiday parade begins at Main and Midland, and proceeds along Main Street to Mill Street. Free. (859) 425-2593.

Light and lively! Lexington officially kicks off the holiday season with the lighting of the city tree — a local tradition that dates to 1913. This year the activities will take place during the second annual **Winter Festival** on November 25 at Triangle Park. Festivities begin at 3:00 p.m. and continue through the afternoon with the traditional tree lighting at 6:00 p.m. Bring your ice skates! The new rink at Triangle Park will be ready. (859) 425-2593.

Super Sing-Along. The **Kentucky Christmas Chorus**, December 13 at the Singletary Center in Lexington, is caroling on a grand scale. The Lexington Singers and the Kentucky Christmas Chorus Orchestra will lead the singing as the community gets together to sing all the traditional carols along with some new ones. Warm up your voice: it's broadcast live! Doors open at 6:00 p.m.; the singing begins at 7:40 p.m. Admission is free, but a ticket is required. (859) 257-5030.

In the Region

A Country Christmas. Renfro Valley (located off I-75, exit 62, about 35 miles south of Lexington) has something for all ages at its Christmas show November 11 through December 17. **Christmas in the Valley** features a large light display, Santa's workshop, strolling carolers and clogging elves and an original music performance. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays at 7:00 p.m. (800) 765-7464.

Christmas Skywatch. Hummel Planetarium in Richmond, Ky. is one of the largest planetariums in the United States, and one of its most popular events is the annual holiday show. **"Story of the Star"** explores the winter season from a celestial perspective -- including cultural, religious and historic traditions. The show opens November 25 and runs through December 17 with shows on Fridays at 6:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. and Saturday shows at 2:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Admission is \$4 for adults, \$3.50 for seniors and students, \$3 ages 12 and under. (859) 622-1547.

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

Holiday Express. Climb aboard the Bluegrass Scenic Railway's **Santa Claus Special** for a scenic holiday train excursion past holiday scenes, elves and Bluegrass countryside. The 45-minute excursions leave from Woodford County Park on December 10-11 and 17-18. Departure time is 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Tickets are \$12 adults, \$11 seniors and \$10 ages 2-12. You can purchase tickets online at www.bgrm.org. (859) 873-2476.

Classic Performances

Messiah Magic. If it's just not Christmas without the Messiah, we've got it covered! The **Lexington Philharmonic** with the Lexington Chamber Chorale performs at Tates Creek Presbyterian Church on December 1 and at Calvary Baptist Church on December 2. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. (859) 233-4226. Enjoy the holiday classic Handel's Messiah performed at 7:30 p.m. on December 2 by the **Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys and the Cathedral Girl's Choir**, accompanied by the Lexington Baroque Ensemble. Tickets are \$15 to \$35. 166 Market Street. (859) 254-4497. You may also hear a performance of Handel's Messiah at 8 p.m. on December 18 performed by the **Lexington Singers** at the UK Singletary Center for the Arts. Tickets are \$15 to \$20. (859) 233-4226.

Winter Blast. Head to the atrium of Victorian Square on December 11. The UK Opera Theatre will breathe new life into many Christmas standards at their annual **Holiday Celebration of Song**. Here's your chance to sing along with award-winning vocalists. Free. (859) 257-9331.

Toe Tapping Family Fun. The Lexington Philharmonic Family Series presents a **Candy Cane Concert** on December 11 at 3:00 p.m. at the Singletary Concert Hall. Don't miss the Mad Cap Puppets and the Taggart Irish Dancers and a visit from you-know-who. Adults \$14 and children \$8.

Holiday Ballet. It wouldn't be Christmas without **"The Nutcracker."** At The Lexington Opera House

you can see Kentucky Ballet Theatre's interpretation December 9-10 and 16-18. For ticket information call (859) 252-5245. See the Lexington Ballet's version at the EKU Center for the Arts on December 10 and 12. For information call (859) 233-3925.

Yes, Virginia, there really was a Mrs. Santa Claus! Studio Players presents "**Looking for Mrs. Santa Claus**" November 17-20 and 25-27 as well as December 2-4 and 9-11. Inspired by a real-life "Mrs. Claus," this world-premiere musical tells the tale of a wise elf and a kind-hearted woman who find magic by simply believing in the power of a child's wish. Admission: Adults \$11, Students \$10. 154 West Bell Court. (859) 225-0370

Holiday Spirits

Bourbon Traditions. On December 1 at 7 p.m. Buffalo Trace Distillery in Frankfort kicks off another holiday season. Come out to the gardens of Buffalo Trace for their annual **Lighting of the Trace**. Cookies, hot chocolate and coffee will be available in the clubhouse, and Santa will stop by for a photo. While you are there you can visit the George T. Stagg Gallery featuring historic photos and bourbon artifacts. And, of course, the Gift Shop! (502) 696-5957.

After the Harvest. Sample the newest wine releases from Equus Run Vineyards at their **Holiday Gala** on December 3 from noon to 4:00 p.m. Enjoy the scenic drive to Midway and wrap up your Christmas shopping with wine-themed gifts from the gift shop. (859) 846-9463.

Shopper's Delights

Oh, Christmas Tree! Looking for the perfect pine, the best balsam, the most fabulous fir? You can find it — already beautifully decorated, to boot — at **Trees of Life: A Festival of Trees**, November 18 through December 4 downtown at The Shops at Lexington Center. (859) 277-8259.

Simpler Shopping. Escape the hectic pace of mall shopping and drive to Shaker Village for the **Pleasant Hill Craft Store Holiday Open House** on December 3 from 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. A village admission ticket is not required to shop in the two craft stores. After shopping and visiting with craftsmen, enjoy a meal or tea in

the Trustee's Office dining room. (800) 734-5611.

Stocking Stuff-a-rama. Gift shops at Lexington's top attractions are great places to find that special something with a Kentucky connection. The gift shop at the **Kentucky Horse Park**, 4089 Iron Works Pike, has everything for the horse lover. Many items are Kentucky-made. Another haven for equine themed gifts is the gift shop at **Keeneland Race Course**, which carries items ranging from jewelry to kidstuff to Keeneland logowear. **The Museum Shop** at Ashland, The Henry Clay Estate on Richmond Road, has julep cups, cookbooks, and a host of items relating to life in the Victorian Era. Visit the new **Kentucky Proud Market** at the Lexington Shops in our convention center to find food products, Kentucky wines, jewelry, housewares and even Kentucky-made pet treats. Open Monday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Bluegrass Note: Many Bluegrass communities woo shoppers with unique shops, refreshments and entertainment during the holiday season. Enjoy carriage rides and caroling at "Downtown Frankfort Candlelight Tour" in Frankfort November 10-13. (502) 223-2261. In Georgetown, explore antiques shops and enjoy refreshments, art displays and kids activities during the annual "Holiday Market" in November and December. Call (502) 863-2547 for details. Pick up a piece of Kentucky heritage at the Berea College Crafts Holiday Sale on November 19 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (859) 985-3220.

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

**For more information contact
the Lexington Convention and Visitors Bureau
at 800-845-3959.**

*By Teresa Day, a freelance travel writer based in Georgetown, KY
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