

# Holiday Guide



THE ORACLE



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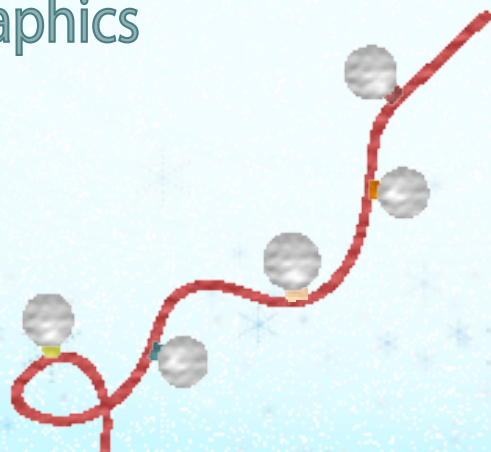
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# Theme park holiday celebrations to visit

By Camila Gomez  
STAFF WRITER

As people get into the holiday spirit, amusement parks across Florida have lined up holiday entertainment for those wishing to celebrate. From parades to live performances and firework shows, Floridians will be able to make the most of this holiday season.

## Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party

Running from November to December, Disney's Magic Kingdom hosts a special holiday event called "Mickey's Very Merry Christmas."

The celebration features fireworks, a snow filled parade on Main street, stage shows and other entertainment. The lineup for this year's celebration includes: Mickey's Most Merriest Celebration, Minnie's Wonderful Christmastime Fireworks, Mickey's Once Upon A Christmastime Parade, A Totally Tomorrowland Christmas, Storybook Circus Disney Junior Jingle Jam and Club Tinsel in Tomorrowland.

To watch fireworks and sing along to your favorite holiday songs, check out Minnie's Wonderful Christmastime Fireworks. Starting at 10 p.m. This show is offered on certain nights starting Nov. 8 until Dec. 22.

If you choose to check out Mickey's Once Upon A Christmastime Parade, you'll get to watch dancing gingerbread men, toy soldiers and wave hello to some of your favorite Disney characters. The parade starts at 8:30 p.m. in Frontierland and ends at 11 p.m. on Main Street.

Tickets can be bought online

or by calling 407-939-4240 with prices ranging from \$149 to \$199. Though tickets are currently sold out, it is possible that tickets become available with last minute cancellations or capacity changes.

## Christmas at Universal Studios

Over in Orlando, Universal Studios' Christmas celebrations feature events in both parks to cater to those feeling in the holiday spirit. The celebrations start as soon as Nov. 12 and end on Jan. 1.

If you are a Harry Potter fan, you might want to check out Christmas at Diagon Alley. Fireworks and holiday decorations will mark the streets of Hogsmeade and the walls of Hogwarts this season. While you sip on hot butterbeer, you can listen to the Frog Choir and Celestina Warbeck and the Banshees as they bring some holiday cheer with their performances.

Music lovers should check out live performances from Mannheim Steamroller on Dec. 3, 4, 10 and 11 at 7 p.m.

You can also enjoy Universal's Holiday Parade featuring Macy's this Christmas season. The parade features 15 handcrafted floats and spans over 26 miles throughout the park. You should expect appearances from popular characters such as Minions from "Despicable Me" and Dreamworks' "Shrek" and "Madagascar" movies. The parade is open during park hours from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

For some nostalgia, Seuss Landing will be decorated with the charm of Whoville alongside visits from resident Whos and the Grinch himself. To watch a live retelling of the



From Orlando's Universal Studios and Disney's Magic Kingdom to Tampa's own Busch Gardens, these celebrations are not a sight to miss. SPECIAL TO THE ORACLE/UNSPLASH

tale starring the Grinch, you can visit the Grinchmas Who-liday Spectacular. This celebration will be located in Seuss Landing in Universal's Islands of Adventure and will be open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Admission for the events are included with your theme park ticket or annual pass. If you are looking for a more exclusive visit, Universal Studios also offers an add-on for the Universal Holiday Tour for \$79.99 per person.

The add-on includes meet and greets with the Grinch and Santa Claus, reserved seating for the Grinchmas Who-liday spectacular, small meals, priority access to one attraction and an after-hours showing of The Magic of Christmas at Hogwarts Castle.

## Busch Gardens' Christmas Town

If you are looking for celebrations closer to home in Tampa, Busch Gardens' Christmas Town will get you in the holiday spirit with fun rides and festive shows like the Holly Jolly Express and Christmas on Ice.

Busch Gardens' longest running classic holiday show Christmas on Ice will open again this year at The Moroccan Palace Theater. World-class skaters will put on a show featuring holiday-themed costumes and songs. The show will run every two hours starting at 1 p.m. until 8 p.m. for those who wish to check it out.

The Holly Jolly Express allows you to take in Busch Gardens' views while listening to holiday

songs. Guests will witness the giraffes, rhinos and zebras living in the park as they celebrate the holiday season.

For a colorful sight, make sure to check out Holidays in the Sky: A Fireworks Spectacular, which features holiday tunes and a Christmas-colored fireworks display. The shows are offered on Saturdays for the months of November and December starting at 9 p.m., with the exception of Christmas Eve when fireworks will begin an hour earlier. You can also celebrate the new year with some explosive fireworks at 12 a.m. at Busch Gardens.

Guests will be able to visit Busch Gardens' Christmas Town until Jan. 9 with their park ticket, valid Fun Card or annual pass.

# How to feel the holiday spirit in sunny Florida

By Julia Saad  
CORRESPONDENT

Floridians rarely experience cold weather, so here are five ideas for tropical residents who are craving snow during these winter holidays.

Nothing says “’tis the season to be jolly” like a good holiday movie, but maybe find ways to add to that experience. Set your thermostat a little lower and use the environment in your favor, by setting fire crackling sounds on your favorite music streaming app or YouTube. If you are a student on a budget, this is a perfect plan to gather your friends and share snacks.

Why watch Hallmark movies while decorating a tree when you can feel like you are part of the plot? Enchant, presented by the Hallmark Channel, is a proper winter wonderland experience at the Tampa Bay Rays Stadium in St. Petersburg. Tickets run for \$35, which includes access to a maze of Christmas lights and a 1,000-foot tree, an ice skating path around the stadium and a conglomerate of artisan shops called The Village.

Wanting to feel the spirit from the comfort of your car while listening to Michael Buble? Tampa Bay’s Festival of Lights held in the Greater Hillsborough County fair consists of a 2-mile drive-thru featuring over a million different lights. The tickets vary from \$20 to \$25 with up to eight people per car. The drive-thru is available from

Thursday to Sunday after 6 p.m., when the lights are officially on.

While the main idea is to escape the heat and relish in the cold weather, if you are looking to embrace Florida’s tropical aspects, the Edgewater Park Holiday Boat parade in Dunedin is a free event held Dec. 2 and 3 from 6-9 p.m. The boat show will bring Christmas cheer while still welcoming the Floridian waterfront, the perfect holiday crossover.

A winter experience presented by Tampa’s own hockey team, the Tampa Bay Lightning, winter village at Curtis Hixon Park might be the right thing for you. While the park on Riverwalk completely changed to match the Holiday colors and light, from now until Jan. 4 the ice rink is accessible to all ages and the \$17 tickets also cover the ice skate rental.

Whether you are looking for a full winter experience or a single magical moment to share with friends and family, there is no need to leave a warm and inviting Florida to experience a classic white Christmas.



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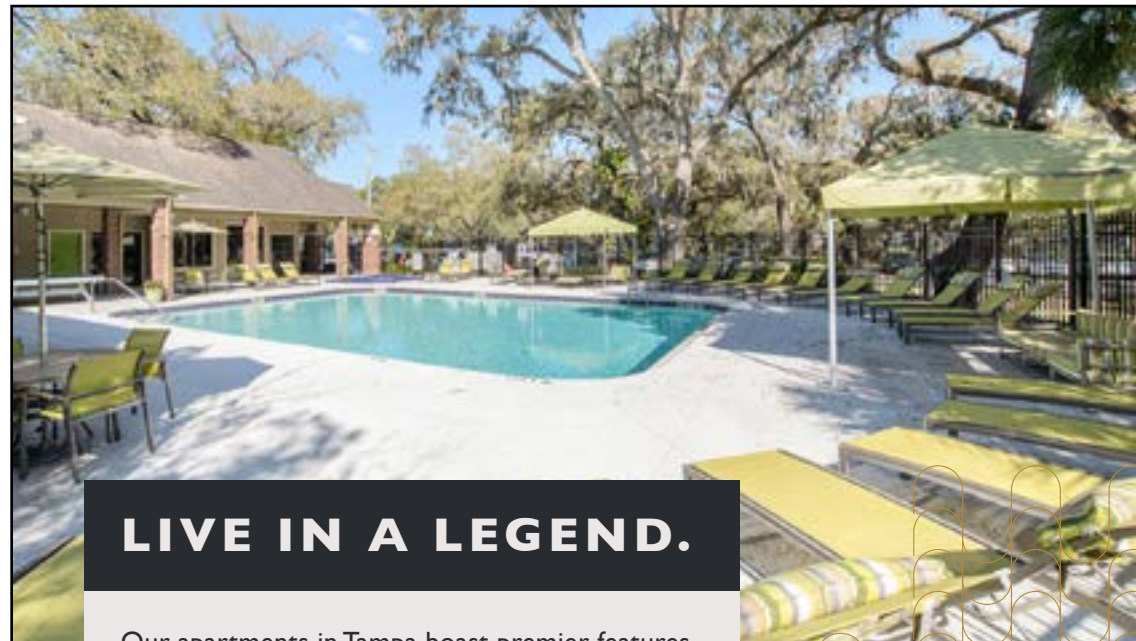
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# Three ways to deal with the holiday blues

By Hannah Wagner  
NEWS EDITOR

The holidays are usually considered to be a time of joy and excitement, but for some individuals, the added stress of the season may contribute to increased feelings of depression and anxiety.

Whether it be monetary struggles, not being able to return home to family or dealing with seasonal depression, seeing the holiday cheer of others can be emotionally draining for those going through a difficult time in their lives.

Seasonal depression affects 6% of the total U.S. population, with another 14% of adults suffering from a lesser form of depression known as “winter blues,” according to the National Institute of Health.

These struggles can often worsen during sudden times of change such as the New Year and holiday celebrations, which usually require extensive planning and present challenges with planning events among family and friends.

Many factors can contribute to the sadness around the holidays, such as overwhelming yourself with tasks or not prioritizing your own personal needs. With some practical tips, however, you can reduce the stress that accompanies the holiday season.

Here are three ways to deal with the holiday blues:

## **Prioritize your personal well-being**

It's important to acknowledge that just because the season is jolly doesn't mean you have to be. Holiday celebrations might be joyous occasions, but it's also not healthy to force yourself to be happy just for the sake of others.



Although the holiday season can be overwhelming, practicing mindfulness can help reduce unnecessary stress. SPECIAL TO THE ORACLE/ISTOCK

If you're not able to travel home to see family and friends or someone close to your heart has recently passed away, realize that experiencing anxiety, sadness, or grief is normal in such situations.

To prioritize your personal well-being, practice mindfulness during the holidays. If you feel isolated or lonely during the season, try to seek out activities around you, whether they be on campus or within your local community. If you're feeling unwanted stress, it may also be useful to talk to family members and friends — don't be afraid to host a FaceTime or Zoom party to get together if you're unable to see everyone in person.

## **Accept that as seasons change, so do you**

As families and friend groups change and grow, traditions and rituals often change alongside them. As a college student, change is not a stranger, however, adopting new traditions can be scary. If you are unable to return home for the holidays or experiencing grief, try to hold onto a few rituals of your own and allow yourself to be open to creating new ones.

For example, if you are unable to travel home for the holidays, find new ways to celebrate with friends and family, whether it be through phone or video call, sharing photos, email or videoing.

Or if you are experiencing the loss of a loved one, try to find ways to honor and celebrate the memory of the person who passed, such as continuing holiday traditions you enjoyed with them.

## **Plan in advance**

If you're partaking in holiday festivities, it may be useful to create a schedule in advance to reduce stress. For example, setting aside certain days for shopping, cooking and going out with friends can help in getting a clearer idea of what needs to be done while also allowing you to set aside time for yourself.

Planning out your menus and creating shopping lists can

prevent you from forgetting last minute ingredients if you plan on cooking. To beat the holiday shopping rush, you can also check to see whether your local stores offer online shopping, such as mobile pick-up, for your items.

Most importantly, don't forget to plan for unexpected challenges you might meet with friends and family. While unwanted, emotionally preparing yourself for surprises might help with reducing anxiety. It's easy to become overwhelmed with the hectic nature of the holiday season, so setting boundaries for yourself and lowering expectations of others can be a form of self-care.

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# Holiday movies to watch this season

By Karen Medina  
CORRESPONDENT

The most wonderful time of the year is finally here and with it, the time to do all of your favorite holiday activities, including watching all of your favorite movies.

Whether you're sitting around the living room with your family sipping hot cocoa while watching or spending the holidays alone, holiday movies are one of the best ways to get into the festive spirit.

### “A Christmas Story”

No holiday movie marathon would be complete without the classic that is “A Christmas Story.” Based on the writings of author Jean Shepherd, this classic holiday movie follows the life of young Ralphie Parker played by Peter Billingsley, who spends most of his time running away from his bullies and daydreaming of his ideal Christmas gift, a “Red Ryder air rifle.”

### “Gremlins”

“Gremlins,” written by Chris Columbus, follows the story of a young man who receives a mysterious creature as a Christmas gift and after ignoring the instructions given by the salesman unleashes a gang of gremlins that tear up the town.

### “It’s a Wonderful Life”

James Stewart stars as the aptly named George Bailey, who has a lot of psychological problems and is contemplating ending it all.

One night, he goes to a nearby



Ensure holiday cheer by watching one of these holiday movies. SPECIAL TO THE ORACLE/UNSPLASH

bridge, but before he can jump, his patron saint Clarence jumps into the river to save him. When George wishes he had never been born, Clarence shows him a world in which he was never born. It’s guaranteed to make you shed a few tears but it reminds you of the beauty of the holidays and spending time with family.

### “Elf”

Will Ferrell stars as Buddy the Elf, a human who was accidentally transported to the North Pole as a baby and raised among Santa’s elves. In search of his place in the world, he travels to New York to find his real father. This classic comedy

movie is sure to make you laugh out loud.

### “Home Alone”

Macaulay Culkin features as bratty 8-year-old Kevin McCallister. He wants his family gone after an argument with his mother the night before a trip to Paris.

When the McCallister’s mistakenly leave Kevin for the airport, and Kevin wakes up to find the house empty, he thinks his wish to be with his family has come true. But his excitement starts to wane when he realizes two crooks plan to rob McCallister’s house, leaving him alone to protect the home.

### “Tokyo Godfathers”

If you want something a little different from the classic holiday flicks, check out this heartfelt anime from Japan. “Tokyo Godfathers,” which premiered in 2003, is about a homeless man, a transgender woman, a runaway teenager and a middle-aged alcoholic who walk through the streets of Tokyo on Christmas Eve when they discover a newborn baby.

### “A Christmas Tale”

This French film was nominated for an Academy Award. It follows matriarch Junon Vuillard who, after

learning she has leukemia, asks at a family Christmas gathering if her children and grandchildren are eligible bone marrow donors.

This causes deep friction in the family, especially between her daughter Elizabeth and son Henry, who had an otherwise uneventful relationship. Junon’s sickness also recollects the traumatic loss of their brother Joseph when they were children.

Whether you are looking to laugh, cry or feel inspired, one of these holiday movies will give you a great time during the holidays.





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Dec. 3rd 4:30pm-6:30pm

**Dade City**

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Dec. 18th  
2pm and 7pm

**Water Street Tampa**  
**Holiday Promenade**  
Dec. 8th 5:00pm - 8:00pm

**Hillsborough Fair-**  
**grounds**  
**Festival of Lights**  
Until Jan. 1st

**Busch Gardens Tampa Bay**  
**Christmas Town**  
Now through Jan. 9th

**Downtown Dunedin**  
**Holiday Parade**  
Dec. 10th 4:00 pm - 9:00  
pm

**Sparkman Wharf**  
**Winter Wonder Wharf**  
Until Dec. 17th

**Curtis Hixon Park**  
**Winter Village**  
Now through Jan 4th

**Gentennial Park Ybor**  
**Jingle Bell Bazaar**  
Dec. 11th 12:00pm - 6:00pm

**Tropicana Field**  
**Enchant Christmas**  
Until Jan. 1st

**Tampa Riverwalk**  
**Holiday Spectacular**  
Now through January

**Tampa Riverwalk**  
**Lighted Boat Parade**  
Dec. 17th 6:00 pm

**Tampa Theatre**  
**Holiday Classic Showings**  
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**COOL! I'LL DEFINITELY DO THAT! THIS IS SO EXCITING! I CAN'T WAIT FOR THEIR NEXT EVENT!**

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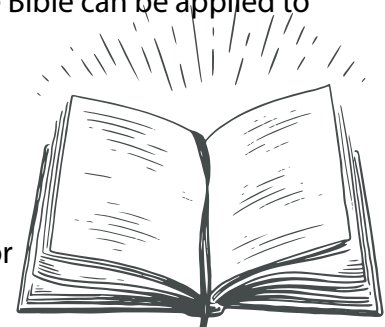
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