

2016



HOLIDAY

EVENTS

Carolina Beach • Kure Beach • Wrightsville Beach
Wilmington.C.
Historic River District & Island Beaches

Wilmington *Carolina Beach*
Kure Beach *Wrightsville Beach*

www.WilmingtonAndBeaches.com

866-266-9690



Go with the flow...and see where the water takes you when you experience the color and pageantry of holiday events that reflect the culture and warmth of Wilmington, North Carolina's river district and island beaches. Visitors can choose from more than 50 holiday events to create a memorable vacation in Wilmington and the beaches of Carolina Beach, Kure Beach, and Wrightsville Beach. For information about seasonal specials and experiences, visit www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/seasonal-pages. For a free official visitors guide, email us at visit@WilmingtonAndBeaches.com or call us at 1-866-266-9690. The following is a sampling of holiday events from the river to the sea.

November 19 & 26

[Kure Beach Holiday Market](#)

9am-3pm

A seaside holiday market with 30 talented artists and crafters. Free. Kure Beach Oceanfront Park, 105 Atlantic Ave, Kure Beach. (910)458-8216; www.townofkurebeach.org

November 19-December 24

[Photos with Santa](#)

Mon.-Sat. 11am-7pm (Santa breaks: 3pm-4pm); Sun. 12pm-5pm

Capture your child's holiday memory at the Santa Village. Professional photos available. Santa welcomes children, adults, and pets. See website for pricing. Mayfaire Town Center, 1055 International Dr., Wilmington. (910) 256-5131; www.mayfairetown.com

November 21-December 4

[Cape Fear Festival of Trees](#)

9am-5pm

Wander through a winter wonderland featuring trees sponsored by area businesses to benefit Lower Cape Fear Hospice. Admission charged. N.C Aquarium at Fort Fisher, 900 Loggerhead Rd, Kure Beach. (910)796-8099 ext 6; www.capefearfestivaloftrees.org

November 24

[Gallop for the Gravy 5K](#)

8am

A scenic certified 5K course. Costumes encouraged. Pre-registration required. Wilmington Family YMCA, 2710 Market St, Wilmington. (910)343-9614; www.active.com/wilmington-nc/

November 25-December 31

[Island of Lights-Light Up The Lake](#)

7pm

Light-up ceremony on Nov. 25th. Families can walk one mile around the lake to view lighted displays each night through Dec. 31st. Free. (910)458-8323; Carolina Beach Lake, Hwy 421 & Atlantic Ave, Carolina Beach. (910)458-8323; www.islandoflights.org

November 25

[Downtown Christmas Tree Lighting](#)

Entertainment 5:30pm; Lighting 6:25pm

Holiday entertainment will begin at 5:30 pm with caroling. Cape Fear Independent Film Network will be showing snippets from classic holiday films. Riverfront Park vendors will host the "Holiday Marketplace", selling unique handmade arts and crafts throughout the evening. Free. Historic Downtown Wilmington at Princess and Water Sts. www.wilmingtonnc.gov/departments/parks-recreation/events-permits/holiday-events

November 25

[Battleship Ho Ho Ho](#)

10am-12pm & 1pm-3pm

Fly an American flag with Santa, compose a retro e-card, type a Christmas wish list on a vintage typewriter, call the North Pole from the Battleship's main radio room, and track Santa's journey in the Combat Information Center. Free with Battleship Admission. Battleship *North Carolina*, 1 Battleship Rd, Wilmington. (910)251-5797; <http://www.battleshipnc.com/Events/BattleshipHoHoHo>

November 25-December 17

[Christmas by the Sea](#)

Friday, Nov 25 Kickoff & Saturdays 6:30pm-8:30pm

Family activities include Santa and hot chocolate, fire pit with storytelling, live nativity scene, caroling, holiday themed movies, puppet shows and an arts & crafts area. Free. Carolina Beach Boardwalk, Carolina Beach Ave S, Carolina Beach. (910)470-8666; www.pleasureislandnc.org

November 25-December 22

[Enchanted Airlie](#)

Thurs., Fri., & Sat. 2 sessions each night: 5pm-7pm & 7pm-9pm

Magical evenings of illumination in the gardens, along with a meet & greet with Santa. No tickets sold at gate. Advanced tickets required. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Rd, Wilmington. (910)798-7700; www.airliegarden.org/events-news/enchanted-airlie/

November 25-December 30

[Christmas Train & Light Spectacular](#)

Fri. & Sat. 6:30pm-8pm; Mon, Dec 26

Model trains at night under thousands of holiday lights and a winter wonderland. Admission charged. Wilmington Railroad Museum, 505 Nutt St, Wilmington. (910)763-2634; www.wrrm.org/

November 25-December 30

[Holiday Train Expo](#)

Fri. 6pm-9pm; Sat.-Sun. 1pm-5pm

Spectacular displays of model trains travel across miles of scale track through villages, parks and landscapes. Photo-op with Santa or Polar Express. Admission charged. Independence Mall, 3500 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. (910)231-8567; www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/events-calendar/holiday-train-expo-20161/

November 26

[WRRC Turkey Trot Trail Run](#)

9am

Runners will proceed on paved road and then enter well marked trails through pine forest and over wooden footbridges. Pre-registration required. Carolina Beach State Park Marina, 1010 State Park Rd, Carolina Beach. www.wilmingtonroadrunners.org

November 27

[11th Annual Turkey Trot](#)

8:30am

This is a 5K timed run or a 1 mile walk around the Wrightsville Beach Loop. Prizes, food and fun. Admission charged. Wrightsville Beach Park, 1 Bob Sawyer Dr, Wrightsville Beach. <https://its-go-time.com/wrightsville-beach-turkey-trot/>

November 27

[Historic Wilmington Foundation Post-Thanksgiving Tour](#)

2pm-4pm

Join architectural historian Ed Turberg for a lecture/tour with Q&A and refreshments at this year's historic home, located at 314 Colonial Drive, Wilmington. For details and tickets: (910)762-2511; www.historicwilmington.org

November 25-26

[32nd Annual North Carolina Holiday Flotilla & Day in the Park](#)

A Southeast Tourism Society Top 20 Event! Launch party starts Friday at 7pm at the Blockade Runner Beach Resort. (Tickets required for launch party.) Festival in the Park starts Saturday's activities at Wrightsville Beach Park from 10am-4pm. And the lighted boat parade starts at 6pm Saturday in Banks Channel with fireworks. Free. Wrightsville Beach. (910)256-2120; www.ncholidayflotilla.org

November 25-26, December 2-3; 9-10; 16-17

Holiday Lights Cruise

Fri. & Sat. 6pm

Cruise of the harbor with Christmas carols, holiday cocktails, and snacks. Admission charged. Wilmington Water Tours, 212 S. Water St, Wilmington. (910)338-3134; www.wilmingtonwatertours.net

November 28

The Ultimate Christmas Show

7:30pm

Three Wise Guys send-up and celebrate your favorite winter holiday traditions. Bring a wrapped Christmas gift of \$5 value (or less) to participate in the audience gift exchange. Tickets required. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St, Wilmington. (910)632-2285; www.thalianhall.org/events

November 29

Mannheim Steamroller Christmas by Chip Davis

7:30pm

This show features the beloved Christmas music of Mannheim Steamroller along with dazzling multimedia effects. Tickets required. CFCC Wilson Center, 703 N. 3rd St, Wilmington. (910)362-7999; <http://cfcc.edu/capefearstage/mannheim/>

December 1

Greenfield Lake Park Christmas Tree Lighting

6pm

Join the holiday festivities with the lighting of the City of Wilmington's Christmas tree at the World's Largest Rotary Wheel in beautiful Greenfield Lake Park! Free. Greenfield Lake Park, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. (910)341-7855; www.wilmingtonnc.gov

December 1-3; 8-10; 15-17

Star of Wonder, Star of Night Workshop & Candlelight Tours

5pm-8pm

Poplar Grove's grounds will be aglow with lights. Get in the holiday spirit with a camp fire as it blazes for roasting marshmallows, or drop a letter in the mail to Santa. Take a candle-light tour through each of the eight rooms of the Manor House. Admission charged. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Hwy 17 N, Wilmington. (910)686-9518; www.poplargrove.org/festivals/starofwonder/

December 1-4

Elf Jr. The Musical

Thurs.-Sat. 7:30pm; Sun. 3pm

This hilarious holiday comedy follows Buddy the Elf in his quest to find his true identity. Tickets required. Hannah Block 2nd. St Stage, 120 S. 2nd St, Wilmington. (910)251-1788; <http://thalian.org/2016-2017-season/elf/>

December 1-4; 8-11; 15-18

[SantaLand Diaries- Theatre](#)

Thurs.-Sat. 8pm; Sun. 3pm

Panache Theatrical Productions presents *The SantaLand Diaries* at the Red Barn Studio Theatre. The story follows a disgruntled elf named Crumpet and his misadventures working for the Macy's holiday attraction. Tickets required. Red Barn Studio, 1122 S. 3rd St, Wilmington. (910)251-1788; www.panachetheatre.com/

December 2

[Island of Lights Christmas Parade](#)

7:30pm

Extraordinary nighttime lighted parade filled with festive fun and entertainment for the entire family. Free. Lake Park Blvd/Hwy 421 S, Carolina Beach. (910)458-5507; www.islandoflights.org

December 2-3

[The Nutcracker](#)

Fri. 4pm & 7pm; Sat. 10am

This sixty-minute narrated version of the classic Christmas tale tells the story of a young girl where she journeys through the land of sweets, witnesses a daring battle, and meets the Sugar Plum Fairy. Tickets required. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St, Wilmington. (910)632-2285; www.thalianhall.org/events

December 2-3; 9-10; 16-18

[A Tuna Christmas- Dinner Theatre](#)

7pm

It's Christmas in the third smallest town in Texas. Enjoy radio station personalities Thurston Wheelis and Arles Struvie as they report on various yuletide activities. Tickets required. TheatreNow, 19 S. 10th St, Wilmington. (910)399-3669; www.theatrewilmington.com/dinner-shows.html

December 2-4

[The Holiday Flea at BAC](#)

Fri. 3-9pm, Sat. 10am-5pm, Sun. 12-5pm

Shop a wide array of vintage, retro, and upcycled treasures. Admission charged. Brooklyn Arts Center, 516 N 4th St, Wilmington. (910)538-2939; www.brooklynartsnc.com

December 3

[Battleship Alive-Christmas Edition](#)

8am-5pm

Battleship Alive brings the daily life and routine of the crew aboard the *Battleship North Carolina* to life. This special day there will be a demonstration of a 1940's Christmas in the Battleship Auditorium. Admission charged. #1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. (910) 251-5797; www.battleshipnc.com/Events/Battleship101Alive

December 3

[Island of Lights Holiday Flotilla](#)

6pm

Fishing boats and pleasure craft are electrically decorated with thousands of lights in a spectacular display. Free. Intracoastal Waterway, Snows Cut to Carolina Beach Boat Basin, Carolina Beach. (910)458-8323; www.islandoflights.org

December 3

[Dashing Through the Glow 5K and Holiday Festival](#)

3:30pm

RiverLights Community will be hosting a 5K/holiday festival with food trucks, caroling, vendors, a visit from Santa, and a 5K Running Race (5:30pm) and a 1-Mile Fun Run (5:35pm). Admission charged. RiverLights, 4410 River Road, Wilmington.

<https://its-go-time.com/riverlights-dashing-thru-the-glow/>

December 3

[Moravian Christmas Candle Tea](#)

9am-3pm

Experience beloved Moravian traditions including the Putz, historic clothing, Christmas music, and Moravian sugar cookies. Free. Covenant Moravian Church, 4126 S. College Rd, Wilmington. (910)799-9256; www.facebook.com/covenantmoravianwilmington/

December 3-January 8, 2017

[Art of Illumination 2016 Exhibition](#)

The Art of Illumination 2016 is a juried exhibition showcasing unique, hand-built lanterns from over 40 artists across the country. Admission charged. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 S. 17th St, Wilmington. (910)395-5999; www.cameronartmuseum.org/

December 3-4

[Riverfront Family Market Holiday Event](#)

9am-5pm

This family-friendly market features professional photos with Santa, more than 100 vendors, and bounce houses. Free. Battleship Park, 1 Battleship Rd, Wilmington. (910)830-5043;

www.facebook.com/events/311585512548399/

December 3-4

[City Ballet- A Carolina Nutcracker](#)

Sat. 7pm; Sun. 3pm

A Carolina Nutcracker is set in 1865 Wilmington at the Bellamy Mansion. The ballet features all the classic elements of the original Nutcracker merged with Wilmington's history. Tickets required. CFCC Wilson Center, 703 N. 3rd St, Wilmington. (910)362-7999;

<http://cfcc.edu/capefearstage/city-ballet-a-carolina-nutcracker/>

December 3-4

[Old Wilmington by Candlelight Tour](#)

Sat. 4-8pm; Sun. 1pm-5pm

Voted into the Southeast Tourism Society's Top 20 Events! Holiday candlelight tour of elegant historic homes and sites. Purchase tickets at the Latimer House. Admission charged. Latimer House, 126 S. Third St, Wilmington. (910)762-0492; www.lcfhs.org/events

December 4

[14th Annual Wilmington Holiday Parade](#)

4:55pm

Marching bands, floats, entertainers and of course, Santa Claus bring this holiday tradition to all ages. Parade will begin at N. Front and Walnut traveling south on Front to Church Street.
www.wilmingtonnc.gov

December 4

[Wrightsville Beach Museum Holiday Open House](#)

2pm-4pm

The museum will be decked-out with holiday cheer and gifts, including books, prints, t-shirts, and more. Plein Air artists will showcase their new artwork of Wrightsville Beach. Free. Wrightsville Beach Museum, 303 W. Salisbury St, Wrightsville Beach. (910)256-2569; <http://wbmuseumofhistory.com/>

December 4; 10-11;17-18

[Polar Express Holiday Show](#)

Shows 4:30pm & 5:30pm

Enjoy the telling of this wonderful holiday classic, followed by a visit from Santa, enjoy cookies and hot cocoa . Admission charged. Wilmington Railroad Museum, 505 Nutt St, Wilmington. (910)763-2634; www.wrrm.org/events.html

December 5

[Holiday Tea at the Bellamy Mansion](#)

11am & 2pm

A formal Holiday Tea in the elegant parlors of the historic Bellamy Mansion with delectable food supplied by some of the area's finest local companies. Reservations required. Bellamy Mansion Museum, 503 Market St, Wilmington. (910)251-3700; www.bellamymansion.org/calendar.html

New events are added during the season. For more events, visit www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com and click on "Holiday Events".

December 9-10

[Historic Downtown Holly Jolly Holiday Stroll](#)

Fri. 6pm-8pm; Sat. 11am-8pm

Holiday sights, sounds, flavors and activities as you stroll shops in an 'open house' setting. Merchants provide refreshments and holiday gift ideas. Street musicians and local choral groups will entertain. Activities will also take place along the Riverfront, and Santa will make appearances. Free. Various locations, Downtown Wilmington. (910)763-7349; <http://hollyjollywilmington.com/>

December 9-11

[Kure Beach Christmas Fantasy Show](#)

6:30pm

Celebrate the holidays with singing, dancing and characters galore at Kure Beach's variety show. Free. Kure Beach Fishing Pier, 101 K Ave, Kure Beach. (910)619-2050; www.townofkurebeach.org

December 10

[Island of Lights Tour of Homes](#)

4pm-9pm

Visit area homes to enjoy holiday decorations and Southern hospitality on this self-guided tour. Admission charged. (910)458-5006; Various homes on Pleasure Island. www.islandoflights.org

December 10

[8th Annual 5K Jingle Bell Run](#)

7:30am (registration), 9:00am (race)

Race participants are encouraged to dress in holiday apparel. Entry fee required. Wrightsville Beach Museum, 303 W. Salisbury St, Wrightsville Beach. (910)256-2569; www.wbmuseumofhistory.com/

December 10

[A Christmas Stroll Through the Past](#)

4pm-7pm

Join the Burgwin-Wright House, Bellamy Mansion Museum, and St. James Episcopal Church for a festive holiday evening filled with music, dancing, costumes, refreshments and more! Admission charged. Bellamy Mansion Museum, 503 Market St, Wilmington. (910)251-3700; www.bellamymansion.org/calendar.html

December 10-11

[Poplar Grove Arts & Crafts Festival](#)

Sat. 10am-5pm; Sun. 11am-4pm

A special day & evening for families with local arts & crafts show, kettle corn, hot cider, wagon rides, inflatables, and an appearance by Santa Claus. Admission charged. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Hwy 17 N, Wilmington. (910)686-9518; www.poplargrove.org/festivals/christmas/

December 11

[Handel's Messiah](#)

2pm

The 100+ voice Choral Society with soloists and chamber orchestra open their 66th Season and second year in The Wilson Center with Parts I and II from Handel's masterpiece, 'Messiah'. Tickets required. CFCC Wilson Center, 703 N. 3rd St, Wilmington. (910)362-7999; <http://cfcc.edu/capefearstage/handels-messiah/>

December 11

[Floating Lantern Ceremony](#)

4pm-7pm

Join the CAM's second Floating Lantern Ceremony. Lantern messaging/decorating begins at 4pm. No charge to attend; lanterns available for purchase. CAM Reflecting Pond, Cameron Art Museum, 3201 S. 17th St, Wilmington. (910)395-5999; www.cameronartmuseum.org/

December 13

[Fort Fisher Holiday Open House](#)

10am-4pm

Enjoy seasonal refreshments, decoration, and entertainment throughout the day. Free. Fort Fisher State Historic Site, 1610 Fort Fisher Blvd S, Kure Beach. (910)458-5538; www.friendsoffortfisher.com

December 14-15

[ELF: The Musical](#)

7:30pm

Discover your inner-elf with the PNC Broadway showing ELF The Musical. This story revolves around Buddy, a young orphan child who mistakenly crawls into Santa's bag of gifts and is transported back to the North Pole. Tickets required. CFCC Wilson Center, 703 N. 3rd St, Wilmington. (910)362-7999; <http://cfcc.edu/capefearstage/elf/>

December 16-18

[Wilmington Ballet Company Presents: Nutcracker](#)

Fri.-Sat. 7pm; Sun 3pm

Wilmington Ballet Company presents a traditional Christmas Classic. Admission charged. CFCC Wilson Center, 703 N. 3rd Street, Wilmington. (910)362-7999; www.wilmingtonballetcompany.org

December 16-23

[Holiday Lights Trolley Tour](#)

Tours depart 6pm & 7:30pm; Please arrive 15 min. early to board this festive 45-minute tour through some of Wilmington's most impressively decorated neighborhoods on an authentically reproduced trolley with music, narration, and a heated cabin. Admission charged. Wilmington Trolley, 101 Water St, Wilmington. (910)763-4483; <http://wilmingtontrolley.com/special-events/>

December 16-24

[Christmas Caroling with Santa and his "Reindeer"](#)

6pm-10pm

A very special holiday horse drawn/carriage tour caroling through downtown Wilmington. Admission charged. Departs at foot of Market and Water St, Wilmington. (910)251-8889; www.horsedrawntours.com

December 17

[Polar Express Day](#)

9am-12pm

Enjoy the magic of Polar Express Day. Warm drinks alongside story time, as well as train rides, ornament decorating and other arts and crafts. Free with museum admission or membership. Children's Museum, 116 Orange St, Wilmington. (910)254-3534; www.playwilmington.org

December 17

[Santa by the Sea](#)

4:30pm-7:30pm

Join Kris Kringle and the Aquarium's aquatic friends for a unique holiday experience with crafts, games, stories and visits with Santa—who has been known to dive alongside sharks, eels, and sea turtles. Admission charged. N.C. Aquarium at Fort Fisher, 900 Loggerhead Rd, Kure Beach. (910)772-0500; www.ncaquariums.com/fort-fisher-experiences

December 19-20

[Nights of Lights at the Bellamy Mansion Museum](#)

4pm-7pm

Experience the Bellamy Mansion decked out in its Christmas finest! Enjoy a casual stroll through the mansion and be inspired by the Victorian decorations. Free. Bellamy Mansion Museum, 503 Market St, Wilmington. (910)251-3700; www.bellamymansion.org/

December 20

[Christmas With The Celts](#)

3pm & 7pm

First there was Riverdance, then Celtic Woman, now the popular PBS Pledge show Christmas with The Celts which is touring across the U.S. Tickets required. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St, Wilmington. (910)632-2285; www.thalianhall.org/events

December 21

[6th Annual Holiday Screening of It's A Wonderful Life](#)

7pm

Frank Capra's iconic holiday film is a Wilmington holiday tradition, shown as it was meant to be seen: on the big screen. Tony Riv-enbark's famous toy collection will be on display with some seasonal treats for the whole family! Tickets required. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St, Wilmington. (910)632-2285; www.thalianhall.org/events

December 22

[NC Symphony – Holiday Pops Concert](#)

3pm & 7:30pm

Bring the family to celebrate the holidays with this sparkling holiday spectacular. Join us for carols and warm your heart with traditional holiday favorites performed by the N.C. Symphony. Tickets required. CFCC Wilson Center, 703 N. 3rd Street, Wilmington. (910)362-7999; www.ncsymphony.org

December 31

[Island of Lights New Year's Eve Celebration](#)

9pm

Celebrate New Year's Eve at the beach. This family-friendly event will feature a DJ and dancing with refreshments and party favors available for purchase. Don't miss the giant beach ball being dropped at midnight followed by an epic fireworks. Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Ave, Kure Beach. (910)458-5507; www.pleasureislandoflights.com/the-new-year-celebration.html

December 31

[New Year's Eve Gala](#)

7pm

Ring in the new year in theatrical style! Dinner, drinks, dessert, and a sensational performance of the Broadway musical "Sister Act" by Cape Fear Theatre Arts. Tickets required. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St, Wilmington. (910)632-2285; www.thalianhall.org/events

December 31

[New Year's Eve: Bacchanalia](#)

7pm

Celebrate this New Year's Eve Bacchanalia at Wilmington's first and only dinner theater! This wonderfully exciting show with a variety of performances include flame acts, aerial acts, live music, comedy and more alongside a delicious four-course indulgent meal. Tickets required. TheatreNow, 19 S. 10th St, Wilmington. (910)399-3669; www.theatrewilmington.com/dinner-shows.html

December 31

[New Year's Noon](#)

9am-12pm

This kid-friendly celebration has crafts, singing and dancing. Countdown to New Year's with streamer sticks, glittery slime and the chance to make a party crown. The event culminates with an epic confetti toss at noon in the courtyard and a juice toast! Admission charged. Children's Museum of Wilmington, 116 Orange St, Wilmington. (910)254-3534; www.playwilmington.org/events