



CAPE COD CERTIFIED

CAPE COD CELEBRATIONS

Chatham Christmas Stroll Guide

A free field guide from the people who actually live here.



There is a moment on the Chatham Christmas Stroll — usually sometime Friday evening, just after the sun drops and the streetlights click on along Main Street — when the whole village seems to exhale and become exactly what a Cape Cod December should be. Horse-drawn carriages clop past storefronts wrapped in white lights. A choir somewhere is singing “O Holy Night.” The smell of cider and woodsmoke drifts out from a doorway. Children in wool coats are craning their necks looking for Santa.

It is one of the most genuinely atmospheric holiday events in New England.

What the Chatham Christmas Stroll Is

The Chatham Christmas Stroll takes place the first full weekend of December — Friday evening through Sunday afternoon. The town of Chatham transforms its Main Street corridor into a pedestrian-only holiday marketplace for the weekend. Traffic is closed to vehicles through the heart of the village. Shops stay open late. Restaurants fill up weeks in advance.

The Weekend Schedule

Friday Evening: The Magic Hour

The headline event is **Santa’s arrival by Chatham Fire Department firetruck**. Friday evening also typically includes the **Chatham Marconi Christmas tree lighting ceremony**. Bring hand warmers. Dress in more layers than you think you need.

Saturday: Peak Crowds, Peak Energy

Saturday is the main event day by volume. The horse-drawn carriage rides are one of the Stroll’s most enduring pleasures — lines build in the afternoon, so earlier is better. Ice sculptors work in public view.

Sunday: Slower, Sweeter

Sunday morning is the most relaxed window. For couples or anyone who found Saturday overwhelming, Sunday is the better day to browse the galleries and boutiques.

Where to Eat

The Chatham Squire is the essential Stroll restaurant — a genuine Cape Cod institution. Make reservations two to four weeks in advance for Friday and Saturday dinner.

Where to Stay

Chatham Bars Inn runs its own holiday programming during December and is as beautiful in winter as it is in summer. Two to four months of advance notice is not excessive for the first weekend of December.

Getting There and Parking

Main Street Chatham is closed to vehicle traffic during the Stroll. The town designates overflow parking in nearby lots and along side streets. Arrive earlier than you think you need to.

Tips From People Who Do This Every Year

- Friday evening is magical but coldest
- Saturday is peak crowds — arrive at opening
- Sunday morning is underrated
- Make restaurant reservations now
- Wear walking shoes
- Check the official schedule for exact event times

Combine It With: Sandwich Christmas Stroll

The town of Sandwich holds its own Christmas Stroll the same first weekend of December. Spending Saturday in Chatham and Sunday in Sandwich is a natural pairing.

◆ THINGS TO DO

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