

## IDEA GUIDE



# VISITLEX

Lexington Visitors Center  
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[www.visitlex.com](http://www.visitlex.com)

# HOLIDAY DELIGHTS 2017

*Brighten your season with a festive getaway to Lexington and the Bluegrass Region*

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 a 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 a time honored tradition among the locals. With tens of thousands of shimmering lights, it's Kentucky's largest lights festival.

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

day characters as you drive along the four-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 17 through December 31. Admission is \$15 per car (\$25 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays), \$35 per extended van, \$60 per mini-bus, \$75 per school bus and \$150 per motorcoach. *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 16th Annual **Southern Lights Stroll/5K Run** benefiting local charities. On November 16, 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) 255-5727 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 A Kentucky Christmas at Ashland on Saturday, December 2 from 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. The illumination begins at 5:15 p.m. and is free and open to the public. Enjoy candlelight tours after the illumination of the mansion. Students \$7 and adults \$15. Vendors will set up tents on the lawn of the Estate. (859) 266-8581.

**Antebellum Christmas.** At Waveland State Historic Site, you can see what the holiday season was like on a Bluegrass plantation. This year, relive Christmas of the past with scenes from the Dicken's classic, "A Christmas Carol". Follow from room to room as the drama plays out right in front of you. Santa will be in the barn each performance, an hour before the first scheduled performance, for photos. December 1-3, 8-10 and 15-17. Children \$10 and adults \$20. Reservations required. Call for details: (859) 272-3611

**Bluegrass Note:** Looking for some natural gift ideas? Try the Lexington Farmers Market, open Saturdays at Cheapside in downtown Lexington under the pavilion all year round. You'll find garlic braids, apple and pumpkin butters, and herbal products as well as homemade ornaments and gift baskets.

### *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, enjoy a workshop on Saturday, December 31 and create a very special gift. Come to Holiday Reed Stars and learn how to weave the intricate star pattern using reed. Each participant will take home two reed stars. \$45 per person includes Village admission. You can pack your lunch or make a reservation to dine at the Trustee's Office dining room. Ages 16 and up. On December 2, 9 and 16, it's Children's Tea Time with Mrs. Claus. At 12 or 3 p.m., enjoy spiced cider, cookies and sandwiches made for little fingers. \$15 per person. On Fridays and Saturdays in December, Illuminated Evenings feature caroling choirs, roaring bonfires, twinkling lights and special visits with Mrs. Claus. Closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. (800) 734-5611.

**Landmark Christmas.** Visit beautiful Ward Hall this Christmas season. December 8-10 and 15-20 are very special times to visit. Christmas candlelight tours are offered from 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. This elegant Greek Revival home, built around 1855 is located on US 460,

west of downtown Georgetown. (502) 863-5356.

**Harrodsburg Holiday Homes.** Six Harrodsburg homes from the 19th and early 20th century and a historic Mercer County church will open their doors for the 26th Annual Holiday Homes Tour, December 2 from 1 to 7 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.

### **Family Fun**

#### *In Lexington*

**Love a Christmas parade?** Wave to Santa and other celebrants at the **Lexington Christmas Parade**, December 5, a Tuesday, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The state's largest holiday parade begins at Main and Midland, and proceeds along Main Street to Broadway. Free. (859) 335-8640.

**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 Holiday Artist's Market on November 24- at Triangle Park. Festivities begin at 3:00 p.m. and continue through the afternoon with food vendors, arts and crafts vendors, live music and more setting the mood for a delightful day downtown. The traditional tree lighting takes place at 6:30 p.m. Santa Claus will flip the switch. (859) 335-8640.

**Glide and Slide.** The Unified Trust Company Ice Rink at Triangle Park opens November 11. Bring your own skates if you'd like, but skate rentals are included in the price. The rink is open from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Kids feeling chilly? Grab some hot chocolate at the cafe beside the rink. And no worries, there are plenty of places to sit and observe if you don't want to venture out on to the ice yourself. The rink will be open through mid-January.

#### *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 December 1 through December 16. Christmas in the Valley features a large light display, Santa's workshop, strolling carolers

and clogging elves, comedy and an original music performance. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays at 7:00 p.m., plus matinees on Saturdays at 3:00 p.m. (800) 765-7464.

**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 November 25, December 9-10 and 16-17. Departure time is 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, with an added 11 a.m. excursion on December 9 and 16. Tickets range from \$13 to \$20. You can purchase tickets online at [www.bgrm.org](http://www.bgrm.org). (859) 873-2476.

## Classic Performances

**Messiah Magic.** If it's just not Christmas without the Messiah, we've got it covered! On December 16 at 8:00 p.m., hear The Lexington Chamber Chorale with The Lexington Philharmonic and guest soloists sing excerpts from Handel's Messiah in the stunning setting of The Cathedral of Christ the King on Colony Boulevard. Selections from Vivaldi and modern masters will round out the program. Call (859) 233-4226 for tickets and reservations. Hear the holiday classic performed by The Lexington Singers on December 8 at 7:30 p.m. at UK Singletary Center for the Arts. Enjoy the 150-plus voice choir with special guest tenor Gregory Turay, deemed "one of the brightest natural talents to have emerged from the US in recent years," by the London Times. (859) 257-4929. The Lexington Community Messiah Sing-Along will be held at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints December 16 at 7 p.m. The performance that features a full choir, brilliant soloists and a live orchestra will give you and your family an opportunity to celebrate Christmas by singing along. (502) 353-0597.

**Winter Blast.** Head downtown to the atrium of The Square on December 10. The UK Opera Theatre will breathe new life into many Christmas standards at their annual Holiday Celebration of Song at 3 p.m. and at 5:30 p.m. Here's your chance to sing along with award-winning vocalists. Free. (859) 257-9331.

**The Ghosts of Christmas Eve.** Rupp Arena will host

one spectacular show on Thursday, November 30 at 7:30 p.m. The Trans-Siberian Orchestra (TSO) will perform one of the group's most beloved stories in its own renowned audio visual manner. Tickets \$42 to \$72. (859) 233-3535

**Bluegrass Note:** For information on annual December Kwanzaa celebrations in Lexington, call the Martin Luther King 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.

**Toe Tapping Family Fun.** The Central Kentucky Youth Orchestra will perform side by side with the Lexington Philharmonic for the annual Candy Cane Concert on November 26 at 3:00 p.m. at the UK Singletary Concert Hall. This year's program of holiday favorites also features Englebert Humperdinck's Hansel and Gretel. Tickets \$15. (859) 233-4226.

**Holiday Ballet.** It wouldn't be Christmas without "The

Nutcracker." and Lexington offers plenty of chances to catch this seasonal favorite. The Kentucky Ballet Theatre will perform this quintessential holiday tale December 8-17 at the Lexington Opera House. Tickets range from \$20-\$37. (859) 252-5245. At Singletary Center for the Arts, you can see Bluegrass Youth Ballet's one act interpretation of this holiday classic December 15 at 7:00 p.m. and December 16 at 2:00 p.m. For ticket information call (859) 257-4929. See the Moscow Ballet's classic version direct from Russia at the UK Singletary Center for the Arts on Monday, December 18, at 7:00 p.m. For information call (859) 257-4929. Lexington Ballet's Nutcracker will be performed at ECU Center for the Arts December 2nd at 2 and 7:30 p.m. (859) 233-3925.

**Mannheim Steamroller Christmas** hits the region Wednesday December 13 at 7:30 p.m. This has been one of America's favorite holiday traditions for the past 30 years! Grammy Award winner Chip Davis has created a show that features the beloved Christmas music of Mannheim Steamroller along with dazzling multimedia effects performed at ECU Center for the Arts. (859) 622-7469.

## Holiday Spirits

**Bourbon Traditions.** On November 30 from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 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. While you are there you can visit the George T. Stagg Gallery featuring historic photos and bourbon artifacts and listen to the Kentucky State University Choir. And, of course, the Gift Shop! Arrive at 5:30 p.m. for a candlelight tour of the distillery. Santa will arrive at 6:30 p.m. Santa will stop by the Visitor Center on December 8,9 and 15,16 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in case you don't get a chance to tell him what you want on November 30! (502) 696-5930.

## Shopper's Delights

**A Nostalgic Holiday Experience.** Head to the Hillenmeyer Christmas shop for a fun and family-friendly experience where the nostalgia of the past meets today's Christmas traditions. The Hillenmeyer family celebrates 66 years of bringing holiday tradition to the Lexington community. Enjoy hot cider, marshmallow roasting, a vintage sleigh and visits from Santa. Check out their extensive assortment of freshly cut trees, custom wreaths, ornaments and more. The shop is located at 3389 Tates Creek Road, Lexington. (859) 266-6889.

**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 the 31st annual Trees of Life: A Festival of Trees, November 18 through Christmas, downtown at The Shops at Lexington Center. On November 17, attend the grand unveiling of this year's trees at The Trees of Life Gala at the Grand Reserve Event Center at 8:00 p.m. See this year's selection of beautifully decorated trees and the participants in the new Wreath Contest. There will be games, prizes, entertainment by Encore of Lexington, and food by Bluegrass Catering and Mark's Feed Store plus samplings from other area restaurants. (859) 277-8259.

**Shop for the Greater good.** Locals look forward to the annual Holly Day Market presented by the Junior League. Proceeds help further many worthwhile projects. You'll find more than 70 vendors with fabulous boutique-style items unique to the Bluegrass Region. Vendors sell jewelry, toys, books, holiday decorations, art; food and clothes for women, men and children. It's held at the Lexington Center December 1-3. Admission is \$10.

**Simpler Shopping.** Escape the hectic pace of mall shopping and drive to Shaker Village for the Pleasant

Hill Craft Store. 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.

For even more holiday events, go to [www.visitlex.com](http://www.visitlex.com) and click on the Calendar of Events.

**Bluegrass Note:** Many Bluegrass communities woo shoppers with unique shops, refreshments and entertainment during the holiday season. Enjoy carriage rides, marching bands and kids' activities at the 37th annual Candlelight Tradition in Downtown Frankfort. November 9-12. (502) 223-2261. Come Home for the Holidays in Georgetown December 2. Enjoy the Christmas parade, open houses and more. Call (502) 863-2547 for details. Pick up a piece of Kentucky heritage at the Berea College Ceramic Sale on December 9 and 11. (859) 985-3220.

**For more information contact VisitLEX,  
Lexington's convention and visitors bureau  
at 800-845-3959.**

*By Teresa Day, a freelance writer based in Lexington, KY  
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