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**REDISCOVER HOLIDAY JOY AND CHEER IN SANTA BARBARA**

***The South Coast shines with winter festivities, holiday boutiques and more***

**Santa Barbara, Calif. (Nov. 24, 2015)** —Looking for a unique way to celebrate the winter holidays? Escape to Santa Barbara to rediscover your joy and cheer. Thanks to Southern California’s temperate clime, holidays in the “The American Riviera” are always merry and bright. Play by the seashore instead of the snow, or linger over a glass of local sparkling wine. You might just glimpse monarch butterflies on their annual migration — if not reindeer! How’s that for holiday enchantment?

Come together with loved ones at Santa Barbara’s many festive gatherings and experience traditions new and old, from the famous Parade of Lights with its sparkling boats to tasty Christmas tamales. The South Coast’s stroll-able scale and welcoming community make it easy to remain true to the spirit of the season. And if you need to get your shopping done, artisanal holiday boutiques and area shopping centers offer crowd-pleasing gift options. Read on for more ideas.

**ICONIC SANTA BARBARA HOLIDAY EVENTS:**

* **SANTA BARBARA PARADE OF LIGHTS
Sun., Dec. 6, 5:30 p.m., Santa Barbara waterfront**

Santa Barbara’s annual Parade of Lights celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2015. More than 30 boats adorned with thousands of lights and festive decorations will illuminate the waterfront as they navigate through the Santa Barbara Harbor and around Stearns Wharf. This year’s theme, “A Red, White and Blue Holiday,” honors past and present military veterans. Festivities start at 3 p.m. with Santa’s Village at the City Pier on Santa Barbara Harbor, featuring 10 tons of snow, elves with goody bags and visits with Santa. It all ends with a bang in a fireworks show launched from West Beach immediately following the boat parade. FREE. [www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/ParadeofLights](http://www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/ParadeofLights)

* **DOWNTOWN SANTA BARBARA HOLIDAY PARADE
Fri., Dec. 4, 6:30 p.m., State Street (from Sola to Cota street intersections)**

Families won’t want to miss the 63rd annual Downtown Santa Barbara Holiday Parade, led by very special Grand Marshal R2D2 (the droid from “Star Wars”)! More than 65,000 spectators will gather along State Street to cheer on a colossal contingent of high-stepping marching bands, fabulous holiday floats, spectacular performance groups, the Holiday Prince and Fairy, and Santa Claus atop his festive sleigh*.* This year’s theme is “World A’Glow.” Before the parade, join Santa for photos from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at Paseo Nuevo Center Court. FREE. [www.DowntownSB.org](http://www.DowntownSB.org)

* **“UNA NOCHE DE LAS POSADAS"**

**Fri., Dec. 11, 7 p.m., starts at El Presidio de Santa Bárbara State Historic Park, 123 E. Canon Perdido St.**

Experience one of Santa Barbara’s oldest holiday traditions during “Una Noche de Las Posadas,” presented by the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation.The evening begins with a performance of holiday songs in the candlelit Presidio Chapel, followed by a procession that reenacts Mary and Joseph’s nine-day journey to Bethlehem in search of lodging (at “posadas” or inns). Stroll to historic Casa de la Guerra, where festivities continue with more singing, traditional refreshments and piñatas. FREE. [www.sbthp.org](http://www.sbthp.org)

* **CHRISTMAS AT THE CASA**

**>Holiday tours throughout December, Casa del Herrero, 1387 E. Valley Road, Montecito**
There’s nothing like enjoying Casa del Herrero (the “house of the blacksmith”), a historic 11-acre estate in Montecito, when it’s decked out in finery for the holidays. During a special tour, get a glimpse of what Christmas in 1930s Montecito might have looked like. Visitors are invited to enjoy a cup of hot spiced cider while touring the gardens and rooms, which some liken to a miniature Hearst Castle for their splendor. A limited number of holiday tours in December are available by advance registration.

**>“Christmas at the Casa” soirée, Sat., Dec. 5, 5 to 8 p.m., Casa del Herrero**

In addition, Casa del Herrero’s year-long 90th anniversary celebration culminates with its annual “Christmas at the Casa” soirée, Sat., Dec. 5. History and interior design buffs won’t want to miss these rare treats. Ticket prices and more information: 805-565-5653 or <http://www.casadelherrero.com>

* **SNOW LEOPARD FESTIVAL & SLEDDING AT THE ZOO
Sun., Dec. 6, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Santa Barbara Zoo, 500 Niños Drive**

It’s a winter wonderland beneath palm trees at the Santa Barbara Zoo’s Snow Leopard Festival. More than 75 tons of snow are used to fashion sledding runs, create children’s play areas and placed in exhibits for snow leopards, gorillas, meerkats, otters and other animals. Kids can zoom down the zoo’s hilltop, play in the fresh powder and learn about these endangered creatures. Also offered are face painting, a California Condor Climbing Wall, photos with Santa and arts and crafts. FREE with zoo admission ($10-$15), $3 snow-area access. <http://www.sbzoo.org/event/snow-leopard-festivalsledding-at-the-zoo/>

**HOLIDAY PERFORMANCES**

* **“MERRY-ACHI CHRISTMAS”
Sun., Dec. 6, 3 p.m., The Granada Theatre, 1214 State St.**

“Merry-Achi Christmas” is a colorful and traditional Mexican holiday celebration full of seasonal songs and merriment. Headlining the exciting extravaganza is the twice Grammy-nominated Mariachi Sol de México de José Hernández. Joining the group on stage is America’s first all-female, Grammy-nominated mariachi band, Mariachi Reyna de Los Angeles. Tickets start at $28. <http://ticketing.granadasb.org/single/PSDetail.aspx?psn=5775>

* **“THE CHRISTMAS REVELS”
Sat., Dec. 19 and Sun., Dec. 20, shows both days at 2 and 7 p.m., Lobero Theatre, 33 E. Canon Perdido St.**

Santa Barbara Revels presents “The Christmas Revels: In Celebration of the Winter Solstice.” Subtitled “The Treasures of Spain,” this year’s engaging performance transports audiences to the crossroads of Andalusia in southern Spain, where indigenous Iberian, Moorish and Sephardic traditions converge. The costumed company performs lively dances and glorious music from more than four centuries of Spanish culture, accompanied by a brass ensemble and a troupe of traditional string and wind instruments. Tickets start at $15. <https://www.lobero.com/events/sb-revels-2/>

* **“A SKY FULL OF HOLIDAY STARS ON ICE”**

**Sat., Dec. 19, 12:30 and 5 p.m., Ice in Paradise, 6985 Santa Felicia Drive, Goleta**

Ice in Paradise, the brand new 46,500-square-foot recreational ice rink that opened in October, presents its inaugural holiday ice show. The seasonal spectacular features ice skating champions from around the U.S. and the world, including Olympian Brendan Kerry, plus members of the rink’s Figure Skating Club. A VIP Dessert Party follows at the Bacara Resort & Spa. Tickets start at $15. <http://www.iceinparadise.org/>

* **TWO “NUTCRACKERS”!**

**>Santa Barbara Festival Ballet: Sat., Dec. 12 at 2:30 and 7 p.m. and Sun., Dec. 13 at 7 p.m., Arlington Theatre, 1317 State St.**

**>State Street Ballet: Sat., Dec. 19, 7:30 p.m., The Granada Theatre, 1214 State St.**

No Christmas is complete without that time-honored tradition, “The Nutcracker” ballet, and Santa Barbara has two versions of the family favorite to choose from. Santa Barbara Festival Ballet’s production includes a cast of more than 100, including guest artist Russell Janzen of the New York City Ballet (as Cavalier), and live music by the Santa Barbara Symphony. State Street Ballet’s performance features Gustafson Dance students with live accompaniment by Opera San Luis Obispo Orchestra. Ticket prices vary.

Santa Barbara Festival Ballet: <http://thearlingtontheatre.com>

State Street Ballet: <http://ticketing.granadasb.org/single/EventDetail.aspx?p=5890>.

**HOLIDAY SHOPPING AND TOURING**

* **LA ARCADA CHRISTMAS WALK
Wed., Dec. 2, 5 to 8 p.m., La Arcada Court, 1114 State St.**

Bring the whole family for holiday fun and merriment during the 21st annual La Arcada Christmas Walk. Built in 1926, La Arcada Court is one of Santa Barbara's oldest open-air shopping malls — and an architectural treasure. Enjoy live music by strolling carolers and local performing groups while munching on fresh-popped popcorn and other holiday goodies. Photos with Santa will be available from 5 to 7:30 p.m. FREE admission. <http://www.laarcadasantabarbara.com/>

* **HOLIDAY LIGHTS PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR**

**Tuesdays through Saturdays through Dec. 19, 5 to 7:30 p.m., downtown Santa Barbara**

Take a walking tour of downtown Santa Barbara focusing on the holiday splendor of State Street, starting at La Arcada Plaza, and learn to take successful photos at night with your cellphone or camera. Night photography can be challenging, but Eye See Santa Barbara will teach you to use flash, proper exposure and already illuminated subjects in a scene to reduce blurry images, as well as other techniques you can use year-round. Capture festive portraits while learning about iconic Santa Barbara landmarks, including theaters in the Historic Theatre District. $55. [eyeseesantabarbara.com](file:///%5C%5Cserver%5Cdata%5CPUBLIC%20RELATIONS%5CPress%20Releases%5CWinter%20holidays%20in%20SB%5Ceyeseesantabarbara.com)

* **SANTA BARBARA PUBLIC MARKET HOLIDAY FESTIVAL
Sat., Dec. 5 and Sun., Dec. 6, Santa Barbara Public Market, 38 W. Victoria St.**

Celebrate the most magical time of the year during the second annual Holiday Festival. Join the fun with free cookie decorating, visits with Santa and caroling on Saturday. Then come back for more on Sunday, with $5 tasting passports, ornament making, a holiday dessert cooking class, live entertainment and more. Holiday arts and crafts classes will take place both days. <http://sbpublicmarket.com/events/2nd-annual-holiday-festival/>

* **FOLK & TRIBAL ARTS MARKETPLACE**

**Fri., Dec. 4 through Sun., Dec. 6, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (open to 6 p.m. Friday), Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 2559 Puesta del Sol**
The 30th annual Folk & Tribal Arts Marketplace, the largest folk art show in Southern California, is a goldmine for treasure seekers. This shopping extravaganza features unique and exotic treasures sourced from 50 different countries, including Peru, Indonesia, Spain, Turkey, and more, with a fantastic selection of baskets, décor, ethnographic art, furniture, jewelry, pottery, rugs and sculpture. FREE admission. <http://www.sbnature.org/about/497.html/>

* **YES STORE, ORIGINAL ARTISTS’ GIFT GALLERY**

**Open seven days a week, now through Thurs., Dec. 24, 807 State St.**
A Santa Barbara tradition since 1968, the Yes Store is *the* original pop-up boutique for one-of-a-kind arts, crafts, jewelry, clothing and accessories handmade by local artisans. Among the store’s offerings, you’ll find wooden cutting boards, ceramic housewares, tooled leather purses, ornaments, printed cards, pendants, photography, wall art and more. Last-minute shoppers take note: the Yes Store is open through Christmas Eve. [www.facebook.com/theYesStore](http://www.facebook.com/theYesStore)

* **PASEO NUEVO “SNOWFALL,” SANTA AND MORE**

**Fri., Nov. 27 through Thurs., Dec. 24, 651 Paseo Nuevo**

Holiday festivities at one of downtown shoppers’ favorite malls kick off Black Friday, when many stores open early at 7 a.m. (and several the night before). Highly anticipated nightly “snowfall” takes place each evening in Paseo Nuevo’s Center Court, Monday through Saturday at 7 and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 5 and 6 p.m., beginning Fri., Nov. 27. Sing along to classic wintery songs. Snap photos with Santa (every child gets a free gift!) and visit with his elves Fri., Nov. 27 through Thurs., Dec. 24. Photo packages start at $22. More than 20 live entertainment ensembles will serenade shoppers nearly every day, including costumed carolers and holiday brass. <http://paseonuevoshopping.com/pec-events/>

**RESTAURANT AND HOTEL OFFERS**

* **BACARA RESORT & SPA**

Goleta’s premier luxury resort celebrates the holidays with special activities throughout December. In the week leading up to Christmas, join the resort for nightly **tree lighting ceremonies** in the lobby and enjoy a cup of hot cider and cookies. With a theme of “A Coastal Christmas,” this year’s centerpiece is a one-of-a-kind art holiday installation of Agave Americana, a native plant that blooms only once in its lifetime. You can carol your way through the resort’s beautiful grounds on **festive jitney carts** in the evenings. Snuggle up in your pajamas and head to the resort’s Screening Room to sip hot cider and watch **screenings of classic holiday movies**, including “Miracle on 34th Street,” “Christmas Story” and more, most Friday and Saturday evenings in December. On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, let The Bistro’s chef do the cooking and savor an exquisite **four-course dinner** with favorite holiday dishes. <http://www.bacararesort.com/best-santa-barbara-dining/thanksgiving-christmas-nye/>

* **FOUR SEASONS RESORT THE BILTMORE SANTA BARBARA**

Head to the Montecito resort for its beloved **Teddy Bear Tea**, Sun., Dec. 13 at 3 p.m. An annual holiday tradition that benefits local children’s charities, the Four Seasons’ special tea time is designed for parents and children and is the stuff of cherished memories. The hotel’s acclaimed Bella Vista Restaurant serves a festive **Christmas Eve dinner** created by Executive Chef Alessandro Cartumini and the next day offers a **Christmas Buffet**, featuring an extensive selection of traditional dishes and gourmet items including seafood, salad, pasta and carving stations. <http://www.fourseasons.com/santabarbara/dining/holidays_and_events/holidays/>

* **BELMOND EL ENCANTO**Throughout the month of December, Belmond El Encanto’s lobby is transformed into a winter wonderland with hot apple cider and holiday cookies ready to welcome guests. The **“Season of Serenity” package** (available now through the end of 2015) includes bungalow accommodations, daily breakfast for two and a reinvigorating peppermint foot scrub in Belmond El Encanto’s resplendent spa. Plus, seasonally inspired treats and a custom-blended bottle of pinot noir welcome your arrival. The resort’s Dining Room and Terrace features an **à la carte menu** on **Christmas Eve**, with festive live music by crooner Luca Ellis. Then on **Christmas Day**, chefs will create a special **three-course à la carte menu** designed to bring guests the best of the season.
* **THE CANARY SANTA BARBARA**
Centrally located downtown, The Canary offers a **“Santa Barbara Holiday Cheer Package”** (Nov. 25 through Jan. 4). In addition to deluxe accommodations, the package includes family-friendly treats, such as “make your own cocoa” bar, DVDs and more. Guests can also enjoy quality family time in the heart of Santa Barbara by renting complimentary public bikes from the hotel for a ride through town and down to the beach. Let the hotel dazzle you with its **stunning holiday suites** (Nov. 25 through Jan. 4). Each is decked out with a beautifully decorated tree, festive ornaments and a special Santa Barbara ornament boxed under the tree for you to bring home. If you stay a **minimum of eight nights** Dec. 1 through Dec. 31, you’ll receive eight special Santa Barbara gifts. <http://www.canarysantabarbara.com/>
* **HOTEL MILO**This holiday season, thaw out in the sun in Santa Barbara with Hotel Milo’s **“Holiday in Paradise” package** (available through Dec. 24). Enjoy trolley rides, ice skating and sunny beach days for the best of both worlds this winter. Rates start at $201. <http://www.hotelmilosantabarbara.com/>

**ABOUT SANTA BARBARA**

Voted [“Best Beach Town”](http://www.sunset.com/travel/sunset-travel-awards-beach-town) by *Sunset* magazine in its inaugural travel awards in May 2015 and one of *Condé Nast Traveler*’s [“30 Best Small Cities in America”](http://www.cntraveler.com/galleries/2015-07-29/the-30-best-small-cities-in-america-readers-choice-awards-2014?mbid=nl_072915_Daily&CNDID=27536286&spMailingID=7943581&spUserID=NDk0OTY2MTIyMDgS1&spJobID=723886198&spReportId=NzIzODg2MTk4S0) in its Readers’ Choice Awards, Santa Barbara is located just 92 miles north of Los Angeles and 332 miles south of San Francisco, on the Pacific coastline. Visitors can arrive via scenic Highway 101, train, bus or by flying into Santa Barbara Municipal Airport (SBA) or Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). For travel and accommodation information and to request a free copy of the official *Santa Barbara Visitors Magazine*, contact Visit Santa Barbara at (800) 676-1266 or (805) 966-9222, email tourism@santabarbaraca.com or visit [SantaBarbaraCA.com](http://www.santabarbaraca.com). Visitor information is also available at the Visitor Center, 1 Garden St. (at Cabrillo Boulevard).

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**FOR MEDIA ONLY**

**PHOTOS THUMBNAILS:**



File name: ParadeofLights3\_Stearns Wharf

Caption: **Santa Barbara Harbor’s Parade of Lights features boats sparkling with holiday spirit.**



File name: ParadeofLights1

Caption: **Deck the halls, and the boat decks, with cheer at Santa Barbara Harbor’s Parade of Lights.**



File name: SBDowntownHolidayParade\_photoFritzOlenberger

Photo by Fritz Olenberger

Caption: **The Downtown Holiday Parade lights up State Street with marchers and music of the season.**



File name: EyeSeeSBtour\_LaArcada\_photobyAndreina\_Diaz

Caption: **Take a photography lesson in La Arcada, and learn how to capture the many facets of the season.**



File name: SantaBarbaraDowntownHolidayParade\_photoDSB

Caption: **The Santa Barbara Downtown Holiday Parade livens up State Street and the night.**

These and additional high-res photos available for download by media outlets at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/29ptdy2gnwcp5hb/AADgcHFqhatz1O8CV_EP4ZEEa?dl=0>.

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