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**CHICAGO PARENT**

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# **HOLIDAY GUIDE**

Dive into family fun in Chicagoland



**HOLIDAY LIGHTS**

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**CHRISTMAS  
TREE FARMS**

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**HOLIDAY MARKETS**

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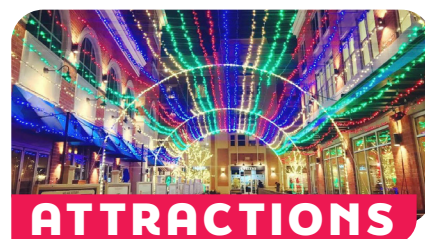
Cover photo: Adobe stock / AnaGost

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# Savor the Season with Chicagoland's Best Pies

With the holidays approaching, we can't help but think about all the yummy desserts – cookies, cakes and, of course, pie. If you're looking for the perfect pie in Chicagoland, we've got you covered! **BY KARI ZAFFARANO**



## Bang Bang Pie & Biscuits

2051 N. California Ave., Chicago

Pie menu includes apple raspberry, key lime, German chocolate, pumpkin goat cheesecake and apple cider doughnut. Gluten-free and vegan options available.

Photo by Julie Morelli

## First Slice Pie Cafe

4664 N. Manor Ave., Chicago;  
5357 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago;  
1969 W Montrose Ave., Chicago

Pie flavors include Michigan sour cherry, balsamic raspberry pear, apple, French silk, chocolate peanut butter pie, coffee toffee pie and key lime pie.

## Hoosier Mama Pie Company

1618 W. Chicago Ave., Chicago;  
749 N. Chicago Ave., Evanston

This artisanal bakery offers different pies each day, including apple, pumpkin, Hoosier sugar cream, chocolate cream and apple blueberry with walnut crumble.

## Justice of the Pies

8655 S. Blackstone Ave., Chicago

Flavors include salted caramel peach pie, caramel apple crumble pie, bleu cheese praline pear pie, Bourbon pecan pie and German chocolate pecan pie.



Photo by Molly Svec

## Spilt Milk Pastry

811 South Blvd., Oak Park

This bakery in the Hemingway District is co-owned by a sister team. Their flavors are key lime and Heirloom apple pie, but they offer many others.



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# 9 Dazzling Displays You Have to See

Light up your holiday with all that's merry and bright. Bundle up and sip some hot chocolate while exploring these holiday light shows.

BY KARI ZAFFARANO

## Lightscape at Chicago Botanic Garden

Nov. 15, 2024-Jan. 5, 2025

1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe

\$32-\$39/adults, \$17-\$24/ages 3-12, free/2 and under

See thousands of twinkling lights while walking through the Winter Cathedral and a reimagined fire garden.

## Illumination: Tree Lights at Morton Arboretum

Nov. 16, 2024-Jan. 4, 2025

4100 Illinois Route 53, Lisle

Ticket prices coming soon

Enjoy seasonal music, captivating light designs along a one-mile paved pathway and roasting s'mores on a fire at this outdoor event.



## ZooLights at Lincoln Park Zoo

Nov. 15, 2024-Jan. 5, 2025

2100 N. Clark St., Chicago

\$7-\$10/Tuesdays-Sundays, free/select Mondays; fees for additional encounters and activities

Festive activities include visits with Santa, a holiday pop-up bar, sweet treats of all kinds, and more. They also have a sensory-friendly event on Dec. 4.

## Willow Hill Lights at Willow Hill Golf Course

Nov. 22, 2024-Jan. 5, 2025

1350 Willow Road, Northbrook

\$40/car

The holiday lights show features a 2.5-mile route. It includes over one million lights, three drive-thru tunnels, and a 30-foot Christmas tree.





## Holiday Magic at the Brookfield Zoo

Nov. 22-24, 29-30;  
Dec. 1, 5-8, 12-15, 19-22, 26-31, 2024

8400 W. 31st St., Brookfield

\$29.95-\$34.95/ages 12-64,  
\$20.95-\$24.95/ages 3-11, free/2 and under

See more than two million twinkling LED lights, and this year, there will be a new holiday market and two new themed lighting areas. Advanced tickets required.

## Cosley Zoo Festival of Lights

Nov. 29-Dec. 30, 2024

1356 N. Gary Ave., Wheaton

Free; donations appreciated

See twinkling lights, an amazing selection of Christmas trees and wreaths and greenery at this holiday lighting event. Lights come on at 3 p.m.

## Holiday Lights in Lilacia Park

Dec. 8, 2023-Jan. 1, 2025

150 S. Ave., Lombard

Free; Bring an unwrapped and unused toy for donation

Experience tree decorations, magical light shows, a gingerbread house and more. Kids can visit with Santa every Friday-Sunday from 6-8 p.m.

## Winter Lights at Central Park

Nov. 22, 2024-Jan. 5, 2025

1510 Forest Gate Road, Oak Brook

Free

Enjoy a half-mile walk to see the holiday lights through Central Park. See musical hearts, colorful rainbow arches, cascading snowflakes and more.

## Naper Lights in Downtown Naperville

Nov. 28-Dec. 31, 2024

Downtown Naperville

Free; donations are welcome

Wear 3D glasses and have fun at a special holiday lights event hosted by Rotary Club of Naperville Sunrise. Santa will be by the big tree Nov. 24-26 and Dec. 23.



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# Where to Cut Your Own Christmas Tree Near Chicago

Skip the fake Christmas trees and instead get a fresh, sappy one with that one-of-a-kind pine smell direct from the ground. Take the drive to these local farms where you can cut down your own tree.

BY CHICAGO PARENT EDITORIAL



## **A** Abbey Farms 2855 Hart Road, Aurora

Cut your own tree or buy pre-cut. Choose from a Scotch Pine, White Pine, Austrian or Spruce trees.



## **B** Anderson Tree Farm 508 IL-126, Plainfield

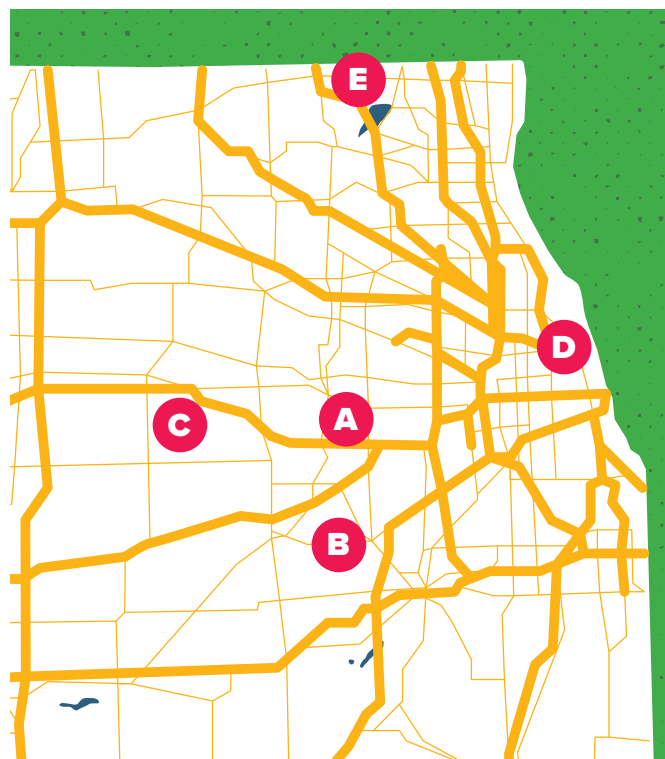
U-cut trees include Douglas Fir, White Pine, Balsam Fir, Colorado Spruce and Norway Spruce. Pre-cut options are Fraser Firs from North Carolina.



## **C** Camelot Christmas Tree Farm

16380 S. Somonauk Road, DeKalb

This family-run business is not commercial. That's by design, and makes it easy to focus on finding the ideal tree.



## **D** Ivy's Christmas Trees 1013 W. Roscoe St., Chicago

Offers the "Rolls Royce of Christmas Trees," the Fraser Fir from the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. Online ordering, pick-up and delivery available.



Courtesy of Richardson Christmas Tree Farm

## **E** Richardson Christmas Tree Farm

9407 Richardson Road, Spring Grove

Enjoy weekend wagon rides, and they'll even haul your tree. Types include Blue Spruce, Douglas Fir, Fraser Fir, White Pine, Canaan Fir and Concolor Fir.



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OF Lights



# 11 Santa Sightings to Make Your Holiday Bright

Are you looking for a unique event for your kids to visit Kris Kringle? If so, check out these fun Santa experiences in Chicagoland.

BY CHICAGO PARENT EDITORIAL



## **A** Photos with Santa at ZooLights

Nov. 15-Dec. 23, 2024

Lincoln Park Zoo,  
2001 N. Clark St.,  
Chicago

**\$7-\$10/person**

While enjoying the lights, take a photo with Santa in the Pepper Family Wildlife Center from 4:30-9 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 4 is Sensory-Friendly Night.



## **B** Christmas Town

Nov. 16-Dec. 22, 2024  
(Saturdays-Sundays  
and Friday, Nov. 29)

Summerfield Farm and  
Zoo, 3088 Flora Road,  
Belvidere

**\$16/person,  
free/ages 1 and under**

Visit Santa's Reindeer Barn and Santa Claus himself. Earn a "stable elf" diploma and take part in baby reindeer flight school. Online reservations are required.



## **C** Magical Christmas Drive-Thru Experience

Nov. 29-Dec. 23, 2024

Santa's Village,  
601 Dundee Ave.,  
East Dundee

**\$35/vehicle**

At the end of this one-of-a-kind drive through experience, park your car and meet and take a photo with Santa Claus. Online reservations are required.



## **D** Santa's Workshop

Dec. 2-22, 2024

441 Aurora Ave.,  
Naperville

**\$10/resident family,  
\$15/non-resident family**

Families can enjoy a unique visit with Santa Claus inside his magical workshop. Bring your own camera. Dress for the weather. Advanced registration is required.



Courtesy of Fox Valley Park District



## **E** Holiday Express

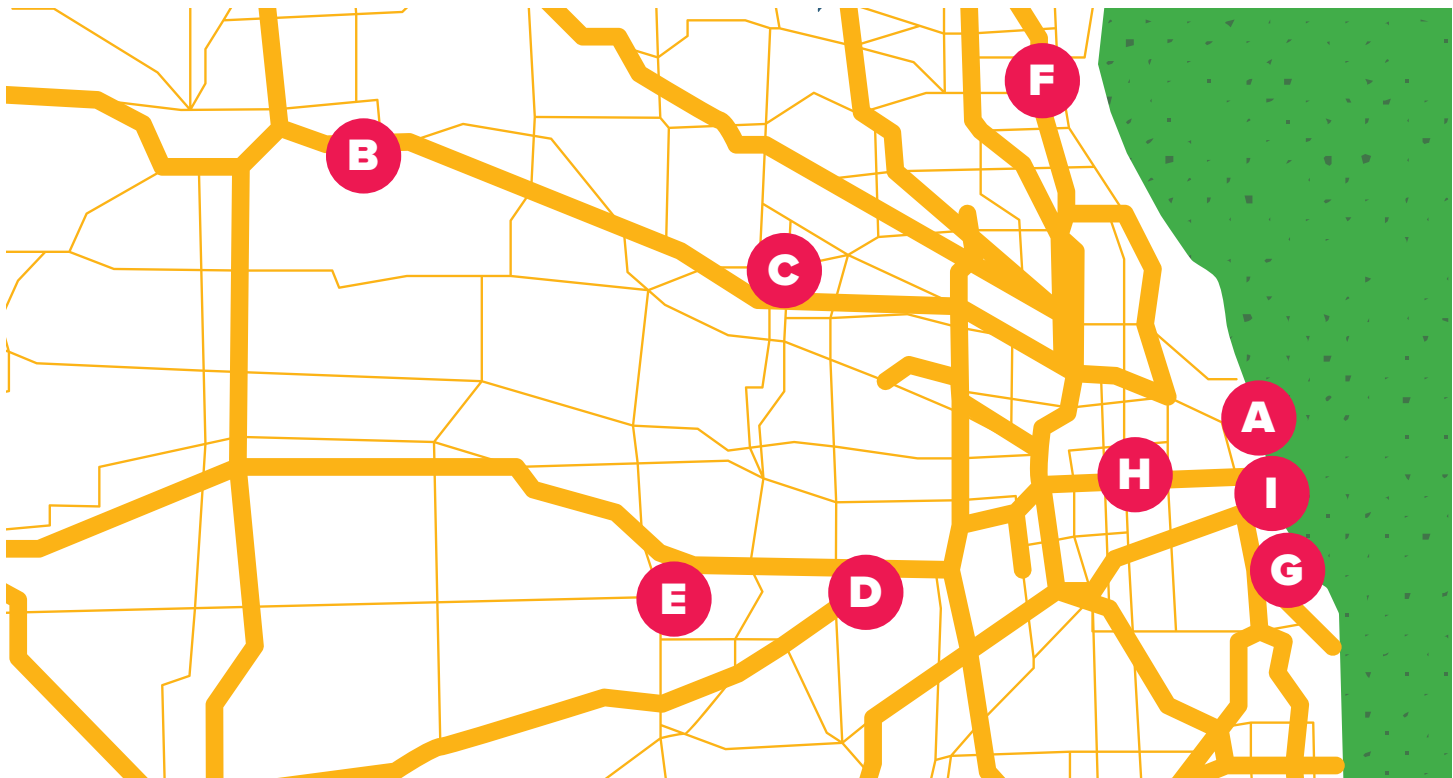
Dec. 6-8, 13-15, 20-22, 2024

Blackberry Farm,  
100 S. Barnes Road, Aurora

**\$10**

See Santa and his elves at Blackberry Farm for pictures. Special Needs Night is Friday, Dec. 6 from 5-8 p.m.





## **F Breakfast with Santa**

Dec. 7-8, 14-15, 2024

Lambs Farm,  
14245 W. Rockland Road,  
Libertyville

**\$18.95/person,**  
**\$7.95/ages 24 months**  
**and under**

Enjoy brunch at Magnolia Café & Bakery and visit and take photos with Santa. Kids can choose a gift, make sand art and more. Advanced reservations required.



## **G Hyde Park Holly-Day**

Dec. 7, 2024

**Locations vary by event**

**Free**

Enjoy a day full of holiday activities including visits from characters like Buddy the Elf, Soul Santa and Mrs. Claus.



## **H Winterfest & Cookie Walk**

Dec. 7, 2024

**Downtown Oak Park area**

**\$30/tin**

Participate in the cookie walk, visit with Santa, enjoy live carolers and performances from local groups, a free holiday film at Lake Theatre and more.



## **H Home for the Holidays**

Dec. 21, 2024

**Downtown Oak Park area**

**Free**

Families and friends can head down to Lake Street & Marion Street for horse-drawn carriage rides, visits with Santa, hot cocoa and more.



## **I Santaland at Macy's**

Through Dec. 24, 2024

**Macy's State Street,**  
**111 N. State St., Chicago**

**Free admission; photo packages**  
**start at \$39.99**

Go over your wish list with Jolly Old St. Nick. This location is great when enjoying more holiday activities in The Loop. Reservations are required.



Courtesy of Lambs Farm



# 9 Festive Performances Lighting Up the Stage

Feel the holiday spirit in the air by seeing your favorite films and stories come to life. Be sure to check out these holiday performances this season.

BY KARI ZAFFARANO

## Irving Berlin's White Christmas

Oct. 30-Dec. 29, 2024

Marriott Theatre

10 Marriott Drive, Lincolnshire

\$60-plus

Enjoy this holiday performance that features hits such as "Blue Skies," "Count Your Blessings," "I Love a Piano" and the title song, "White Christmas."



## A Christmas Carol

Nov. 16-Dec. 30, 2024

Goodman Theatre

170 N. Dearborn St., Chicago

\$25-plus

Ages 5 and up can join Ebenezer Scrooge through his past, present and future, with plenty of musical numbers, costumes and "Bah Humbugs!" along the way.

## The Joffrey Ballet's The Nutcracker

Dec. 6-28, 2024

Lyric Opera House,

20 N. Wacker Drive, Chicago

Cost: \$36-plus



Journey to Chicago's 1893 World's Fair with Christopher Wheeldon's holiday masterpiece. Magic is on the horizon for young Marie and her mother as they prepare for their annual holiday celebration.

## **NUTCRACKER! Magical Christmas Ballet**

Dec. 8, 2024

Rosemont Theatre

5400 N. River Road, Rosemont

**\$31-plus**

This nutcracker performance features jaw-dropping acrobatics, larger than life puppets and stunning hand-crafted sets and costumes.

## **The Hip Hop Nutcracker**

Dec. 10-15, 2024

CIBC Theatre, 18 W. Monroe St., Chicago

Tickets coming soon

This holiday performance is a re-mixed and re-imagined version of the classic, and features hip-hop dance and Tchaikovsky's timeless music together.

## **Ballet Chicago's 30th Anniversary: The Nutcracker**

Dec. 13-15, 2024

Athenaeum Center for Thought & Culture

2936 N. Southport Ave., Chicago

**\$20-plus**

All ages can enjoy an unforgettable journey with young Marie as she travels from her home on Christmas Eve to the Kingdom of Snow and the Land of the Sweets.



## **Beyond the Nutcracker by School of Ballet 5:8**

Dec. 21-22, 2024

Lincoln-Way East High School,  
201 Colorado Ave.,  
Frankfort

**\$10-\$35**

Beyond the Nutcracker features over 300 students alongside the Ballet 5:8 Second Company. There will be three performances.

## **Fairytale of New York**

Dec. 17-18, 2024

Broadway Playhouse  
at Water Tower Place,  
175 E. Chestnut St., Chicago

**\$41.50-plus**

This holiday performance transports audiences to the emerald hills of Ireland during Christmas time with dancing, singing and 'craic.'

## **Rocky Mountain High Experience: A John Denver Christmas**

Dec. 19-22, 2024

Broadway Playhouse at Water  
Tower Place  
175 E. Chestnut St., Chicago

**\$56.50-plus**

Travel back to the '70s with John Denver's music, including hits such as "Rocky Mountain High", "Sunshine On My Shoulders" and more.



# Deck the Stalls with Unique Gifts and Seasonal Cheer

Get your holiday shopping done in a fun way this year. Whether you're on the quest to find a one-of-a-kind gift or simply want to treat yourself, these holiday markets are sure to inspire. **BY KARI ZAFFARANO**



## Christkindlmarket at Daley Plaza

Nov. 22-Dec. 24, 2024  
50 W. Washington St., Chicago  
Free admission

At Daley Plaza, Christkindlmarket offers a unique shopping experience, family-friendly events & intercultural activities.

## Randolph Street's Holiday Market

Nov. 16-17, 2024  
1340 W. Washington Blvd., Chicago  
\$12/general admission,  
\$50/family pack,  
free/ages 12 and under

Shop from 125 vendors, enjoy craft cocktails and fancy food, kids crafts, a DJ, informal modeling and more. Onsite gift wrapping and parking is available.

## Julmarknad

Dec. 7-8, 2024  
Swedish American Museum,  
5211 N. Clark St., Chicago  
\$6/adult, \$4/children, students and seniors,  
\$15/2 adults and 3 children under 18

Visit the Swedish American Museum for Swedish treats, visits and performances from Tomten and a wide variety of vendors to shop from.

## One of a Kind Holiday Show at THE MART

Dec. 5-8, 2024  
222 W. Merchandise Mart Plaza, Chicago  
Tickets coming soon

Shop handmade items and gifts from over 600 makers, artists and designers. The show is held on the 7th floor.

## Christkindlmarket at RiverEdge Park

Nov. 22-Dec. 24, 2024  
360 N. Broadway, Aurora  
Free admission

In Aurora, Christkindlmarket Offers a unique shopping experience, family-friendly events & intercultural activities.



# Ring in 2025 with These Kid-Friendly Celebrations

The New Year is just around the corner! Make memories at these fantastic events perfect for families.

BY KARI ZAFFARANO



Courtesy of Blue Man Group

## Blue Man Group Chicago New Year's Eve Performances

Dec. 31, 2024  
Briar Street Theatre  
3133 N. Halsted St., Chicago  
\$54-plus

Blue Man Group invites guests to celebrate with four festive New Year's Eve performances. The 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. shows are for families with young children.

## Countdown to Fun

Dec. 31, 2024  
Discovery Center Museum,  
711 N. Main St., Rockford  
Free w/museum admission

Families can enjoy an early countdown celebration for the New Year with confetti drops every hour. Make 2025 party hats, noisemakers and sparklers.



## Bubble Bash New Year's Eve

Dec. 31, 2024  
DuPage Children's Museum  
301 N. Washington St., Naperville  
\$20-\$25/member ticket, \$30-\$35/  
non-member ticket, free/children under 1

Create memories by taking part in special activities, grooving to good music, exploring the museum's hands-on exhibits and counting down to the new year!

## Family New Year's Eve

Dec. 31, 2024  
Recreation Center Gym,  
3 S. 260 Warren Ave., Warrenville  
\$16/resident, \$21/non-resident

Bring the whole family to enjoy a rockin' DJ, bounce houses, snacks, party favors and a balloon drop at noon. Registration required.

## Noon Year's Eve

Dec. 31, 2024  
Sachs Recreation Center,  
455 Lake Cook Road, Deerfield  
Free

Join Sachs Recreation Center in counting down to 2025 with games, a DJ dance party, music, a balloon drop and more. For ages 4-8. Registration required.





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# 4 Frosty Weekend Escapes Perfect for Families

It's cold outside, but don't let that keep you hibernating all winter! Here are some exciting winter getaways to get your plans started.

BY CORTNERY FRIES



## Indianapolis, Indiana

See the redone Dinosphere exhibit at the world's largest children's museum, tackle an interesting sport at the Fowling Warehouse, or find your groove at the world's only interactive drum and percussion museum, Rhythm Discovery Center.



## Frankenmuth, Michigan

Visit Michigan's Little Bavaria for The Christmas Experience. Shop at Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland, the world's largest Christmas store, or clip-clop around in horse-drawn carriages to the 40-foot tree with 23,000 synchronized lights.

## Madison, Wisconsin

Check out the Frozen Assets Festival on Feb. 3-9, 2025, held on frozen Lake Mendota in a celebration of winter fun, including pond hockey, sleigh rides and ice skating.

## Lake Forest, Illinois

Stay at the Deer Path Inn located by an adorable, walkable downtown. Visit during the holiday season to see it all decked out with holiday décor, including a gingerbread replica of the hotel! Then, warm up at Pinkies for afternoon tea.





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