



Four Christmas Destinations Worth a Visit This Season

(September 12, 2023) We may have just unofficially closed out the summer season last week, but MBPR’s client destinations are eager to “deck the halls” in anticipation of welcoming plenty of holiday guests this year.

On the fourth day of Christmas, someone’s true love gave to them four calling birds ... and it just so happens that MBPR is made up of four team members – your proverbial “calling birds” – and we have four fantastic places where visitors can get “wrapped up” in the Christmas spirit this year. If any of these places piques your interest, please let us know. We’re happy to jingle all the way to your inboxes with more information!



*Jack Frost leads a townwide snowball fight during the Storybook Holiday event in Frostburg, Maryland.
Credit: mdmountainside.com*

Allegany County, “The Mountain Side of Maryland”

Frostburg, Maryland, is a place where townspeople transform into elves! Yes, you read that right. An event that started in 2004 with the intent of creating a small winter holiday celebration to emphasize the importance of reading has evolved into a beloved tradition for townspeople and visitors alike. Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, “[Storybook Holiday](#)” is scheduled for

Saturday, December 2. The annual event features the ever-popular Elf Olympics, in which teams of elves compete in such “elf skills” as wrapping presents, tossing baked goods and decorating trees. Other highlights include a parade that’s lead by Jack Frost (fitting for a town named Frostburg), story times for kids, interactions with elves and Santa, a proper Christmas market, and even “Cocoa with the Po-Po,” which is hot chocolate stand operated by the town’s police department. The afternoon ends with a townwide snowball fight – led by Jack Frost, who’s riding a fire truck through the downtown area.

While Storybook Holiday takes place on just one weekend each year, the destination is decked out for the entirety of the season. Elsewhere in town, the [Western Maryland Scenic Railroad](#), which travels between the historic depots in Frostburg and the neighboring town of Cumberland, offers riders a fun and festive way to get into the holiday spirit with Polar Express™ train rides. These one-hour rides, inspired by the hit movie, begin on November 24 and continue on select dates through December 24. Of course, passengers are invited to wear their favorite pajamas for the experience.

Speaking of neighboring Cumberland, that town will host a Winter Holiday Market featuring artisans and vendors on three consecutive Saturdays (November 25, December 2 and 9). In short, this region of Western Maryland is everything you think of when you’re imagining a Hallmark movie!



Located in the heart of Branson’s Entertainment District, the Branson Wheel is electrified with more than 144,000 individual lights that all “dance” to classic Christmas tunes.

Photo Credit: Explore Branson

[An Ozark Mountain Christmas](#) in Branson, Missouri

You’re not going to find a more Christmassy place on the planet than [Branson, Missouri](#). The citizens go all-out as they transform their Ozark Mountain town into a winter wonderland, and we’re sharing just a few examples today.

We’ll start with the place that boasts the highest concentration of lights in Branson. The internationally award-winning theme park [Silver Dollar City](#) hosts *An Old Time Christmas* from November 4 through December 30*. During this incredibly festive time of year, the park features

more than 6.5 million lights, an eight-story animated tree, Broadway-style live holiday productions, a light parade, plenty of holiday foods and lots of rides.

With more than 1,500 Christmas trees, Branson's Christmas Tree Trail is truly spectacular. New this year, the most unique landmark Christmas tree displays in the destination – including a new community tree themed “Ever Green and Ever Glowing” – will be part of a GPS-based treasure hunt app for visitors.

Located in the heart of Branson’s Entertainment District, the [Branson Wheel](#) is a giant Ferris wheel that’s electrified with 16,000 LED fixtures holding more than 144,000 individual lights that all “dance” to classic Christmas tunes. The light show takes place every hour on the hour once night falls. There are also museums in the Entertainment District that are perfect for exploring at this time of year: If you ever wished for a toy under the tree but didn’t get it, you’ll probably find it at [World’s Largest Toy Museum](#), a repository of more than a million dolls, trains, teddy bears, action figures and collectibles.

Finally, Branson is known as a live music show capital, and in November and December dozens of shows get into the holiday spirit by adding themed song-and-dance numbers to their repertoire ... or creating dedicated Christmas shows.

*Silver Dollar City’s *An Old Time Christmas* is closed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Please check the [online calendar](#) for the full operating schedule.



*Dollywood’s Smoky Mountain Christmas begins on November 4.
Photo Credit: The Dollywood Company*

[Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee](#)

From November 4 through January 6*, Dolly Parton’s theme park ushers in the spirit of the season during Dollywood’s Smoky Mountain Christmas, which will be brighter and more brilliant than ever before. In addition to the starlit mountain skies, more than 6 million twinkling lights are strewn throughout the 160-acre park, which is nestled in the heart of the Great Smoky Mountains. A unique way to see all those lights is during a tour aboard the *Dollywood Express*, a classic train that plays Christmas tunes. Heartwarming seasonal shows, a chance to find out if you’re on Santa’s “naughty or nice” list, Christmas shopping, and more await visitors during this festive time of year.

For a warm and welcoming Christmas stay, in addition to on-site lodging at [Dollywood's DreamMore Resort and Spa](#), this year overnight guests can also book a room at the brand-new [HeartSong Lodge & Resort](#), which is hosting its grand opening in conjunction with the start of Smoky Mountain Christmas.

*Dollywood's *Smoky Mountain Christmas* is closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Please check the [online calendar](#) for the full operating schedule.



Put a visit at *The Reindeer Farm* in Bowling Green on the top of your list this year.

Photo Credit: VisitBGKY

[Bowling Green, Kentucky](#)

Bowling Green is home to unique holiday shopping and experiences, including one we're really excited about (as if the picture above didn't give it away). The destination is home to Kentucky's only reindeer farm that features an immersive experience, and it's easy to see why it's such a popular holiday stop. The family-owned [Reindeer Farm](#) offers the unique opportunity to see these majestic creatures up close while ensuring an authentic, respectful animal encounter.

Reindeer encounters allow guests to enter the pen with the animals to learn about them (and take pictures, of course). In addition to seeing the reindeer, guests can enjoy train rides, breakfast with Santa, hot cocoa, an indoor playground and more. The Reindeer Farm's 2023 season begins on November 17 and continues on select dates through Saturday, December 23.

If you're looking for the perfect gift while supporting local businesses, a stop at [Gypsy Moon Marketplace](#) is a must. This multi-day barn sale is run by a mother- and daughter-in-law duo and features approximately 80 vendors selling handmade items. The winter market will take place on November 9-11 this year.

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