

Search

How do I find it?

Subscribe to paper



Home News Travel Money Sports Life Tech Weather

Travel » Destinations City Guides Country Guides 10 Great Deals



Williams, Ariz.: It's like *The Polar Express* as Santa boards the train with special gifts and every child gets a sleigh bell.

The Grand Canyon Railway

Today's top travel deals

What's this?

\$116/nt+: Deluxe San Francisco hotel w/free night • TIG Global

Free nts + spa credit at luxe Aruba resort • Occidental Grand Aruba

\$790+: Stowe Vermont 4-nt ski trip w/flight • Travelocity

Advertisement



10 great places to catch up with Santa

Updated 1d 9h ago | Comments 3 | Recommend 6

E-mail | Save | Print | RSS



Enlarge Legoland California Resort

Carlsbad, Calif.: At Legoland, Santa's larger than life and is made of ... you guessed it.

Santa is not only coming to town, he's at parks, parades and museums nationwide. Teresa Plowright, mother of three and editor of About.com's Family Vacations (travelwithkids.about.com), talks with Kathy Baruffi for USA TODAY about her favorite places to visit jolly ol' St. Nick.

Mix it

Other ways to share:

Yahoo! Buzz

Digg

Newsvine

Reddit

Facebook

What's this?

The Polar Express (Grand Canyon Railway)
Williams, Ariz.

"This brings the classic children's book, *The Polar Express*, to life," Plowright says. "Santa gives each child a sleigh bell, just like in the book." Kids wearing their pajamas and fuzzy slippers have hot chocolate and cookies while listening to the audio book on the northbound train trip. No one gets off at the North Pole, but you can glimpse Santa's village from the window as he boards the train with a special gift. 800-843-8724; thetrain.com/polarexpress

INTERACTIVE MAP: Find a Santa near you
ARCHIVE: Read more '10 Great' columns

Gaylord Opryland Resort
Nashville

"ICE! is a giant, indoor Winter Wonderland with 2 million pounds of sculptured ice," Plowright says. "Guests get parkas when they enter." ICE! features a presentation of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* as part of an overall celebration at the resort called "A Country Christmas." The Radio City Christmas Spectacular with 40 dancing Santas is among dozens of other shows and attractions. See Santa at the Winter Wonderland and have breakfast with one of the Grinches. 888-999-6779; christmasatgaylordopryland.com

Featured Advertiser

What's this?

Elegance. Style. Value.
Now explore incredible cruise fares to worldwide destinations. Experience Holland America . www.HollandAmerica.com



FLIGHTS, HOTELS AND MORE

Flights Cars Hotels

From (city or airport) To (city or airport)

Leave Return

Submit



More search options

Christmas Town
Bethlehem, Conn.

"Kids can go to the local post office here and cancel their holiday cards with a 'Bethlehem' postmark," Plowright says. Visit Santa on the Village Green and sing along with carolers strolling Main Street at the

lantern-lit Christmas Town Festival Dec. 5-6 in this small country town. And don't miss the Gregorian chants of the Benedictine nuns at the Abby of Regina Laundis. The nuns also sell wreaths and Christmas trees. 203-266-5557; geocities.com/bethlehemct/festival.htm

Celebration in the Oaks

New Orleans

"Schools have tree-decorating competitions for this big celebration in City Park, and Santa visits every night until Christmas," Plowright says. The park also has a train and one of the oldest operating carousels in the nation. The original "Mr. Bingle," a little snowman from a 1950s Maison Blanche department store window display, is now part of the park's holiday decorations. 504-483-9415; celebrationintheoaks.com

Legoland California Resort

Carlsbad, Calif.

"Kids are welcome to climb on this bigger-than-life-size Lego Santa," Plowright says. They can also join him in his sleigh, drawn by Lego reindeer, to take photos. Other holiday touches in the park throughout December include smaller Lego Santas in Mini-land, a stilt-walking toy soldier and strolling carolers 760-918-5346; legoland.com

Santa on the Chimney!

Chimney Rock Park, N.C.

On Dec. 6 and again on Dec. 13, "Santa takes a 26-story elevator to the top of Chimney Rock, then rappels down," Plowright says. "After visiting with the crowd, he goes back up again." Santa is available for photo ops at the Sky Lounge and when he reaches the parking lot. Enjoy hot chocolate, spiced cider and cookies while listening to holiday music. 800-277-9611; chimneyrockpark.com

An Old-Fashioned Christmas

West Chester, Pa.

"Visit with Santa after the parade on Dec. 5, when he lights up the Community Tree in front of the courthouse in this hip, historic town near Philadelphia," Plowright says. Join St. Nick for breakfast at the Chester County Historical Society on Dec. 6, and don't miss the dollhouse exhibit there. The downtown, which looks much as it did a century ago, offers plenty of shopping opportunities. 610-696-4046; gwcc.org/christmas_events_name.php

Santa's Village

Jefferson, N.H.

"You'll see Santa with real woodland caribou, better known as reindeer, and lights strung everywhere at this outdoor theme park (weekends through Dec. 28)," Plowright says. "Make sure you bundle up and wear your boots and hats." Ride the monorail, Skyway Sleigh and the Christmas Carousel, where reindeer substitute for horses; then view the White Mountains from the top of the Ferris wheel. Decorate your own cookies at the Gingerbread Bakery or order a dozen to take home and decorate later. 603-586-4445; santasvillage.com

Stone Mountain Park

Near Atlanta

"Two million lights twinkle throughout the village where this holiday event takes place (various dates through Dec. 30). There is a Christmas parade with Santa and Mrs. Claus riding in their sleigh," Plowright says. Meet Santa later at his workshop. Then look skyward as the snow angel flies overhead, bringing snowfall and fireworks. 800-401-2407; stonemountainpark.com

Celebration Crossing

Indianapolis

"This exhibit (through Dec. 24) at the Indiana State Museum is part of the '12 Free Days Of Indy Christmas' celebration, during which admission is free on each day at specific Indianapolis museums and other attractions," Plowright says. The museum's walk-in Santa house is modeled after a traditional holiday display at L.S. Ayres, a former department store in Indianapolis. Children too shy to visit Santa can peer in the windows of this imaginary town or ride the child-scale train around a small track. 317-232-1637; indianamuseum.org/ism/fall/ism_fall_2008.html

Share this story:

 [Yahoo! Buzz](#) [Digg](#) [Newsvine](#) [Reddit](#) [Facebook](#) [What's this?](#)

Posted 5d 1h ago

Updated 1d 9h ago

[E-mail](#) | [Save](#) | [Print](#) | [RSS](#)

To report corrections and clarifications, contact Reader Editor **Brent Jones**. For publication consideration in the newspaper, send comments to letters@usatoday.com. Include name, phone number, city and state for verification.

Guidelines: You share in the USA TODAY community, so please keep your comments smart and civil. Don't attack other readers personally, and keep your language decent. Use the "Report Abuse" button to make a difference. [Read more.](#)

You must be logged in to leave a comment. [Log in](#) | [Register](#)