



PRESS RELEASE

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10 Amazing Holiday Traditions to Discover in Illinois

CHICAGO –Illinois offers no shortage of amazing experiences for people of all ages to enjoy throughout the holiday season. With the most wonderful time of the year quickly approaching, the Illinois Office of Tourism is sharing 10 holiday traditions to cherish with friends and family.

- 1. [BMO Harris Bank Magnificent Mile Lights Festival Parade](#) in Chicago (Nov. 16-17):** Kick off the holiday shopping season along Chicago's famous Magnificent Mile and watch Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse light one million lights along Michigan Avenue. Chicago's biggest holiday parade starts on Friday, Nov. 16 at 4pm and Saturday, Nov. 17 starting at 11am and wraps up with a memorable firework show for the whole family to enjoy.
- 2. [The Inn at Irish Hollow](#) in Galena (Mid November-Jan. 31):** Looking for a romantic holiday getaway? The Inn and Irish Hollow decks the halls of each room and English-style cottage with award-winning holiday decor and features a gourmet holiday menu with ingredients grown in their own organic gardens. Ship your gifts in advance of your stay and the staff will wrap them for you!
- 3. [Illumination at Morton Arboretum](#) in Lisle (Nov. 17-Jan.1):** Walk the dazzling one-mile path and surround yourself with a spectacular show of light, color and holiday music. This year offers new twists on favorite experiences and surprising new sights, including art from HYBYCOZO – amazing new treelike sculptures that spread intricate designs of light. Guests can even warm up by one of the many crackling fires dotting the path and enjoy hot chocolate or s'mores.
- 4. [The Peninsula Sky Rink](#) in Chicago (Nov. 17 - first week of March):** Surrounded by Chicago's dazzling skyscrapers and twinkly lights, The Peninsula Sky Rink at the Peninsula Hotel is an icy white wonderland flanked by illuminated pine trees and colorful log cabins. Set four floors above Michigan Avenue, the intimate outdoor rink offers picturesque views of the iconic John Hancock building and cityscape.

5. **[Six Flags' Holiday in the Park in Gurnee \(Nov. 23-Dec. 31\)](#)**: For the first time, Six Flags Great America will remain open through the end of the year. The new Holiday in the Park celebration debuts the day after Thanksgiving, running weekends through Dec. 23 and staying open the week between Christmas and New Year's Eve. The festival will feature more than one million LED lights, Christmas trees, holiday shows, seasonal food and, weather permitting, guests will be able to ride the roller coasters.

6. **["Snowland" at Great Wolf Lodge in Gurnee \(Nov. 24-Jan. 4\)](#)**: With snow showers, twinkling lights, life-sized gingerbread houses, a visit from Santa and even enrollment in North Pole University, Great Wolf Lodge transforms into a magical winter wonderland called "Snowland" from Nov. 24 to Jan. 4. Water park passes are included in suite prices. Use promo code SNOWLAND when booking.

7. **[Polar Express in Chicago \(Nov. 30-Jan. 1\)](#)**: Set to the sounds of the motion picture soundtrack, passengers will relive the magic of the classic story as they are whisked away on The Polar Express™ at Chicago's Union Station for a magical one-hour trip through the neighborhoods along the Chicago River. Once on board, the car host will work their way through the coach and punch your golden ticket before hot chocolate and a delicious cookie are served by dancing chefs. Santa and his helpers board the train and each guest is given the first gift of Christmas – a silver sleigh bell just like in the film!

8. **[Night of Luminaria in Galena \(Dec. 8\)](#)**: Stroll down Galena's historic Main Street and watch more than 30 windows come alive with holiday-inspired animation. From Main Street to the hills overlooking Grant Park, all of Galena will be glowing. Local businesses offer extended hours so take advantage and do some holiday shopping then warm up with a candlelit dinner at one of the many restaurants.

9. **[Winter Wonderland at the Godfrey Hotel in Chicago](#)**: Every year the posh Godfrey Hotel turns their rooftop into a Winter Wonderland with heated igloos where guests can sit and sip stylish cocktails. The glowing orbs are surrounded by illuminated decor and cozy fire pits with views of Chicago's dazzling skyline. Paired with s'mores kits and chef-crafted seasonal cocktails, Winter Wonderland atop the Godfrey Hotel makes for an unforgettable date night.

10. **[Nordic Center in Galena \(mid-December weather permitting\)](#)**: The Nordic Center at [Eagle Ridge Resort](#) is home to one of the top outdoor ice skating rinks in the Midwest, according to *USA Today*. Visitors can skate around the 1.5-acre natural pond, sled down the 18th hole of the south golf course and snowshoe or cross-country ski on seven miles of groomed trails for a winter day to remember. Rental equipment is available.

For images and b-roll of these holiday traditions and amazing experiences, click [here](#).

Find more inspiration for a winter getaway in Illinois at [EnjoyIllinois.com](#)

About the Illinois Office of Tourism

The Illinois Office of Tourism is the government agency responsible for marketing Illinois to domestic and international visitors. We're Illinois – Are YOU up for amazing? For more information, visit our website at EnjoyIllinois.com

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The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Office of Tourism manages industry efforts that result in sustainable and significant economic and quality-of-life benefits for Illinois residents.