THE 2026 EDITION

The Pittsburgh HOLIDAY *Guide*



Light Up Night, the markets, the lights worth the drive, and the traditions Pittsburgh is known for.

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TIM SELLS PITTSBURGH, LLC · EXP REALTY LLC · NOVEMBER 2026



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Tap a line to jump there. On any page, tap Details or Map to open it, and the footer to come back.

CHAPTER 01

The calendar

The dated nights, Nov 15 to New Year's Day. Tap a day to jump to it.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Nov 15 The rink opens	16	17	18	19	20 Market opens Phipps opens Gingerbread	21 **Light Up Night** **Oakmont parade** **Carnegie Trees**
22	23	24	25	26 *Thanksgiving*	27 Beaver lights up Zoo Lights Santa Trolley	28 Small Business Saturday
29 Troy Hill tree	30	Dec 1	2	3 Beverly Brite Nite	4 Sewickley Canonsburg Nutcracker Hanukkah begins	5 **Six towns light up** **Handmade Arcade**
6 Nationality Rooms Handmade Arcade	7 Chanukah Festival	8 Downtown menorah Leslie Odom, Jr.	9	10	11 Holiday Pops Christmas Carol opens Winter Heat	12 Cookie Tour Holiday Pops I Made It!
13 Holiday Pops	14	15	16 Wonderful Life in Concert	17 Holiday Brass	18 Holiday Pops Market till 10	19 Holiday Pops Market till 10
20 Holiday Pops	21	22 B.E. Taylor tribute	23 Christmas Carol ends	24 Christmas Eve Market shuts at 3	25 *Christmas Day*	26 *Kwanzaa begins*
27 Nutcracker ends	28	29	30	31 **First Night** **Noon Year's Eve**	Jan 1 *New Year's Day*	2

ALREADY ON

Oglebay's lights since Nov 5. Kennywood since Nov 13, on select days.

AFTER NEW YEAR'S

Kennywood, Zoo Lights, Oglebay and Clayton end Jan 3. Phipps and Winter Glow end Jan 10. The rink runs to Feb 28.

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING

The Holiday Market in Market Square. It's a must-do for me every year, the one holiday tradition I never miss.

EVERY WEEK: READ THE PULSE

Dates from the organizers and local press, checked November 2026. "Select days" means check the calendar before you go.

CHAPTER 02

Three plans

Short on time? Pick one and go. Every stop has its own page.



Before you go: hours shift near the holidays. Tap Details on the stop's page the day you go.

NOV 21 TO DEC 23, EXCEPT THANKSGIVING

One night Downtown

1. **The Holiday Market.** Market Square. Open to 8, to 9:30 Fridays and Saturdays, to 6 Sundays.
2. **The rink.** Next door at PPG Place, around the tree.
3. **The Horne's tree.** Penn and Stanwix.
4. **Winter Glow.** Arts Landing, dusk to 10. Free.
5. **One drink.** Two of the pop-up bars are on Market Square.

Downtown, page 6. Bars, page 15.

A DAY, OAKLAND TO DOWNTOWN

Family in town

1. **Phipps Holiday Magic.** Oakland. Book tickets ahead.
2. **Carnegie Trees.** Also in Oakland: five firs in the museum's Hall of Architecture.
3. **The Strip.** Cheese at Penn Mac, fish for Christmas Eve. Expect lines.
4. **Downtown at dusk.** The market, the trees and the Crèche.
5. **The overlook.** Up the Duquesne Incline for the skyline, lit.

Indoors, page 13. The table, page 16. The overlook, page 10.

A WEEKEND DAY TO DEC 20

With kids under 6

1. **Santa's House.** Heinz Hall Courtyard, on select days.
2. **The Selfie Garden.** Same courtyard, with Daniel Tiger.
3. **Holiday KidsPlay.** 219 Forbes, 2nd floor: crafts, giant games, story time.
4. **The gingerbread houses.** At the City-County Building.
5. **Zoo Lights.** From the car, 5 to 10 PM on select nights. $45 a carload.

With kids, page 11. Gingerbread, page 13. Zoo Lights, page 7.

Built from the pages that follow. Hours from the Downtown Partnership and the Pittsburgh Zoo, checked November 2026. Photo: Cbaile19, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons.

CHAPTER 03

Getting around

Park once. The market, the rink, the trees and the theaters are a few blocks end to end.



Free ride: the T costs nothing between Downtown and the North Shore.

GETTING DOWNTOWN

- The T is free between six stations: First Avenue, Steel Plaza, Wood Street, Gateway, North Side and Allegheny. TRANSIT ↗
- On Light Up Night, 50 bus routes detour from 4 PM. DETOURS ↗
- The Downtown Partnership points drivers to four garages: Third Avenue, Etage, 6th and Penn, and Fort Duquesne and 6th. PARKING ↗
- ParkPGH shows how full each garage is, live. PARKPGH ↗
- POGOH bike share is another way into town. POGOH ↗
- On Light Up Night the stage areas are paved, with marked accessible viewing at the Highmark and Xfinity stages. Access vehicles drop off on Stanwix between Forbes and Fourth.

WHERE THINGS ARE

Market Square
The Holiday Market, and two pop-up bars — MAP

PPG Place
The rink and its tree — MAP

Heinz Hall Courtyard
Santa's House and the Selfie Garden. 600 Penn Ave — MAP

219 Forbes Ave
Holiday KidsPlay, on the 2nd floor — MAP

Penn and Stanwix
The Horne's tree — MAP

Arts Landing
Winter Glow, dusk to 10 — MAP

City-County Building
The city's tree, the gingerbread houses, the menorah. 414 Grant St — MAP

U.S. Steel Tower plaza
The Crèche — MAP

The Convention Center
Handmade Arcade, Dec 4 to 6. 1000 Fort Duquesne Blvd — MAP

The three theaters
The Benedum Center, the Byham Theater and Heinz Hall — MAP

From Pittsburgh Regional Transit and the Downtown Partnership's Getting Here page, checked November 2026. Photo: Christmas in the subway, 2023, Cbaile19, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons.

CHAPTER 04

Downtown

Light Up Night flips the switch. The square stays lit until Christmas Eve.



Tim's tip: for the 9:30 finale, stand on the Rachel Carson Bridge. It turns 100 this year and gets its own party.

HIGHMARK LIGHT UP NIGHT

Saturday, Nov 21

the 65th

- 4:00 The stages open. The Pirate Parrot and Pierogies on Stanwix St.
- 5:00 **The city's tree** and rooftop fireworks, City-County Building.
- 6:30 **The PPG Plaza tree** lights up.
- 7:00 **The Highmark tree** and more fireworks, Stanwix and Penn.
- 8:00 **The Sister Bridges** light up over the Allegheny.
- 8:30 **Daya** headlines the Holiday Jam at Arts Landing.
- 9:30 **The finale.** Zambelli's supersized show over the river.

FULL SCHEDULE ↗ PARKING AND TRANSIT

GOOD TO KNOW

- Free on Light Up Night: the Symphony plays Heinz Hall at 6:30, 7:15 and 8:00. No tickets. DETAILS ↗
- Santa's House opens Light Up Night, then shuts until Black Friday.
- The market's late nights: Dec 18 and 19, open till 10.
- Christmas Eve, the market closes at 3.
- Santa photos are a suggested $10 donation to the food bank.

ALL SEASON

Holiday Market DETAILS ↗ MAP
Market Square, back for year 15. Nov 20 to Dec 24.

The ice rink DETAILS ↗ MAP
The UPMC Rink at PPG Place, Nov 15 to Feb 28.

Santa's House DETAILS ↗ MAP
Heinz Hall Courtyard, plus the Selfie Garden. More on the With kids page.

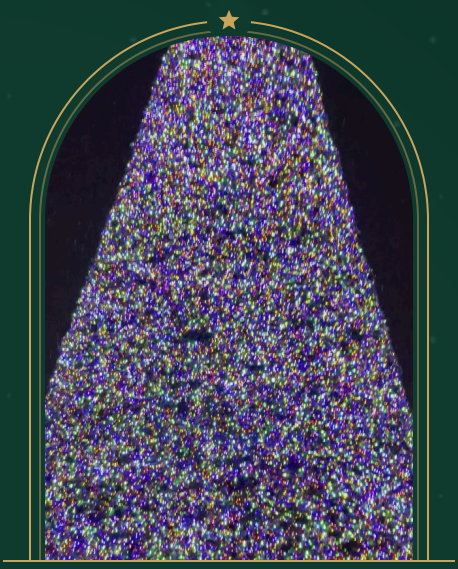
KidsPlay DETAILS ↗ MAP
Mister Rogers crafts, 219 Forbes, weekends.

Schedule and dates: Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, downtownpittsburgh.com/holidays, and the rink's own site, checked November 2026. Photo: Light Up Night 2015, Dllu, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

CHAPTER 05

The lights

Walk through them or drive through them, from the zoo to Wheeling.



★ **Tim's tip:** the zoo charges by the car, not the person. $45 for a family of four is under $12 each.

Walk through *bundle up*

A WEST MIFFLIN DETAILS ↗ MAP

Kennywood Holiday Lights

Select days, Nov 13 to Jan 3

3 million lights, what Kennywood calls Pennsylvania's tallest Christmas tree, Santa and 20+ rides.

Prices change weekly: check the site

★ Rain? Tickets come with a free return if the weather gets in the way.

B OAKLAND DETAILS ↗ MAP

Phipps Holiday Magic

Nov 20 to Jan 10

This year's theme is Botanical Brilliance, plus the outdoor Winter Light Garden and a fairies-and-gnomes garden railroad.

★ Tickets are booked ahead. Closed Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.

C ARTS LANDING DETAILS ↗ MAP

Highmark Winter Glow

FREE

Nov 21 to Jan 10, dusk to 10 PM daily

New this year: light installations across the riverfront park in the Cultural District.

★ Pair it with the market and the rink in one night: they're a few blocks apart.

Drive through *heat on, radio up*

D HIGHLAND PARK DETAILS ↗ MAP

Zoo Lights Drive-Thru

Select nights, Nov 27 to Jan 3, 5 to 10 PM

Glowing animals, holiday scenes and Pittsburgh icons through the zoo.

$45 a car, $40 for members

★ Closed Nov 30, Dec 1, 7, 8, 14, 15, 24, 25, 31 and Jan 1.

E GREENSBURG DETAILS ↗ MAP

Overly's Country Christmas

Select nights: the schedule is on the site

Volunteer-run since 1956, with a Christmas village at the end of the drive.

$25 a carload, up to 8 people

★ Skip the car line: park and walk the village for $5 a person.

F WHEELING, WV DETAILS ↗ MAP

Oglebay Festival of Lights

Nightly, Nov 5 to Jan 3, dusk to dawn

A 6-mile drive past 100+ displays.

Guided trolley: $20 Mon to Thu, $30 Fri to Sun and holidays

★ Tune to 1700 AM: some displays are set to music.

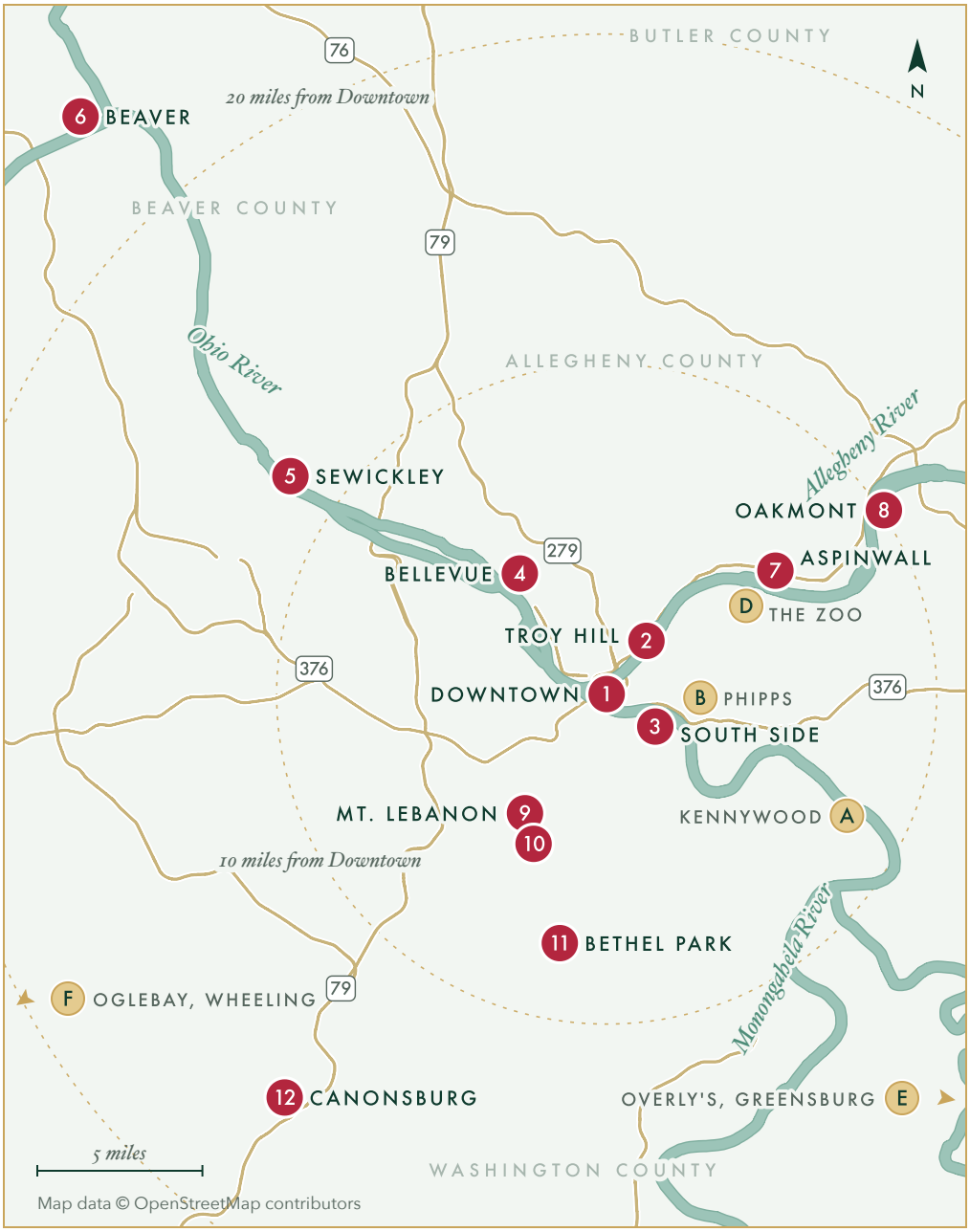
Also: Winter Wonderlights at the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden in Oakdale, select dates Nov 27 to Jan 2, tickets ahead, shuttle from Settlers Cabin. WONDERLIGHTS ↗

Dates and prices from the organizers and local press, checked November 2026. The letters match the map, page 8. Photo: Kennywood Holiday Lights, my own video, 2021.

CHAPTER 06

The map

Every light-up night and light show, from Beaver to Canonsburg.



1 Light-up nights, by area: page 9. A The lights: page 7. C, Winter Glow, is Downtown.

Distances are straight lines from Market Square. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.

CHAPTER 07

Light-up nights

Twelve nights and days out, by area. The numbers match the map.



★ **The big weekend:** Dec 4 to 6. Sewickley and Canonsburg on Friday, six towns on Saturday, the Nationality Rooms on Sunday.

THE CITY

1 Downtown DETAILS ↗ MAP
Sat, Nov 21, from 4 PM
Light Up Night. Fireworks at 9:30.

2 Troy Hill DETAILS ↗ MAP
Sun, Nov 29, 3 to 5 PM · 2 miles
Tree lighting, Lowrie and Ley Streets

3 South Side DETAILS ↗ MAP
Sat, Dec 5, hours to come
Winter Fest and tree lighting

DOWN THE OHIO

4 Bellevue DETAILS ↗ MAP
Sat, Dec 5, 5 to 9 PM · 4 miles
Light Up Bellevue on Lincoln Avenue

5 Sewickley DETAILS ↗ MAP
Fri, Dec 4 · 12 miles
Tree lighting, carriage rides, fireworks

6 Beaver DETAILS ↗ MAP
Fri, Nov 27, from 5 PM · 24 miles
Light Up Fest. The parade starts at 6.

UP THE ALLEGHENY

7 Aspinwall DETAILS ↗ MAP
Sat, Dec 5, 6 to 7 PM · 6 miles
Light Up the Wall. Fireworks at 7.

8 Oakmont DETAILS ↗ MAP
Sat, Nov 21, 3 to 7 PM · 10 miles
Hometown Christmas and its parade

SOUTH

9 Mt. Lebanon DETAILS ↗ MAP
Thu, Dec 3, 7 to 8:30 PM · 4 miles
Beverly Brite Nite, with Santa. Free.

10 Mt. Lebanon DETAILS ↗ MAP
Sat, Dec 5, noon to 5 PM · 5 miles
Uptown Winter Market, by day, with Santa. Free.

11 Bethel Park DETAILS ↗ MAP
Sat, Dec 5, 3 to 7 PM · 8 miles
Tree lighting and a petting zoo. Free.

12 Canonsburg DETAILS ↗ MAP
Fri and Sat, Dec 4 and 5 · 16 miles
Old Fashioned Christmas, Pike Street. Free.

NEIGHBORHOOD DAYS

Nationality Rooms open house
Sun, Dec 6, noon to 4, at Pitt. Free.
DETAILS ↗ MAP

Chanukah Festival
Mon, Dec 7, 5 PM, Beacon St at Murray Ave, Squirrel Hill. Free, all welcome; register on the site.
DETAILS ↗ MAP

The Downtown menorah
Tue, Dec 8, 5 PM, City-County Building
DETAILS ↗ MAP

Lawrenceville Cookie Tour
Sat, Dec 12. Free cookies at marked shops.
DETAILS ↗ MAP

Each one was confirmed for 2026 with the town, its chamber or a local listing, checked November 2026. Miles are straight lines from Market Square. For date order, see the calendar, page 3. Photo: Benjamin Hollis, CC BY 2.0.

CHAPTER 08

Drive and look

Trees to walk between, a skyline, and houses that open their doors.



Free: the tree walk, Winter Glow and the overlooks. The incline, the drive-throughs and the house tours charge.

THE DOWNTOWN TREE WALK

1. **The city's tree** — City-County Building, Grant Street — MAP
2. **The Crèche** — U.S. Steel Tower plaza, up Grant Street — MAP
3. **The PPG Plaza tree** — With the rink around it — MAP
4. **The Horne's tree** — Penn and Stanwix — MAP
5. **Winter Glow** — Arts Landing, dusk to 10 — MAP

BY CAR

Zoo Lights, Overly's and Oglebay are drive-throughs: page 7. The Clinton Christmas Light-Up is a one-mile drive near the airport.

FROM ABOVE

Grandview Avenue — Mt. Washington. The whole skyline, lit. — MAP

The Duquesne Incline — A cable car up to the overlook from West Carson Street. Exact cash only. — DETAILS ↗ MAP

West End Overlook — The same skyline from the other side. — MAP

HOUSES THAT OPEN THEIR DOORS

Clayton — Henry Clay Frick's house, decorated. Nov 20 to Jan 3, Tuesday to Sunday. Book ahead. — DETAILS ↗ MAP

Old Allegheny Victorian Christmas House Tour — Dec 4 and 5 in Allegheny West. Sold out this year: join the list for next year's presale. — DETAILS ↗

HOMEMADE DISPLAYS

They change every year, and this guide doesn't print home addresses. Kidsburgh and City Paper have published lists. KIDSBURGH ↗ CITY PAPER ↗

From the Downtown Partnership, the Frick and the Allegheny West Civic Council, checked November 2026. Photo: Daderot, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons.

CHAPTER 09

With kids

Santa, trains, skating and a countdown that ends at noon.



Free: Light Up Night, Winter Glow, the Mt. Lebanon and Bethel Park town nights, and the cookies on the Lawrenceville Cookie Tour.

DOWNTOWN DETAILS ↗ MAP

Santa's House

Nov 21 to Dec 24, select days

One-on-one with Santa and a printed photo, in the Heinz Hall Courtyard. Suggested $10 to the food bank. Closed Nov 22 to 26.

HIGHLAND PARK DETAILS ↗ MAP

The zoo, three ways

Nov 27 to Jan 3

Zoo Lights from the car, $45 a carload. Brunch with Santa on select dates, Dec 5 to 20. Noon Year's Eve on Dec 31, 9:30 AM to 1 PM.

NORTH SHORE DETAILS ↗ MAP

The Miniature Railroad

Kamin Science Center, with admission

Hundreds of tiny animated scenes and the trains that run through them. A holiday tradition since 1919.

DOWNTOWN DETAILS ↗ MAP

Skating at PPG Place

Nov 15 to Feb 28

The rink circles the plaza's tree. It's open Christmas Day too, 10 AM to 8 PM.

DOWNTOWN DETAILS ↗ MAP

Holiday KidsPlay

Weekends, Nov 21 to Dec 20

Make a Mister Rogers sweater ornament, play giant games, stay for story time. 219 Forbes Ave, 2nd floor. The Selfie Garden, with Daniel Tiger, is by Santa's House.

WEST MIFFLIN DETAILS ↗ MAP

Kennywood Holiday Lights

Select days, Nov 13 to Jan 3

Santa at Celebration Station, Rudolph and friends in Christmastown, model trains in the Penny Arcade and 20+ rides.

OAKLAND DETAILS ↗ MAP

Phipps Garden Railroad

Nov 20 to Jan 10

This year it's fairies and gnomes, inside Holiday Magic. Tickets are booked ahead.

CULTURAL DISTRICT TICKETS ↗ MAP

A gentler Nutcracker

Sunday, Dec 6

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's sensory-friendly performance at the Benedum Center.

From the Downtown Partnership, the Pittsburgh Zoo, Kennywood, the Kamin Science Center, Phipps, the rink and PBT, checked November 2026. Photo: Cbaile19, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons.

CHAPTER 10

On stage

Three holiday shows worth dressing up for, all in the Cultural District.



Tim's tip: make a night of it. All three stages are a short walk from the market in Market Square.

THE BIG THREE

Dec 4 to 27

BENEDUM CENTER

TICKETS ↗ MAP

The Nutcracker

PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

The last year of this production: a new Nutcracker arrives in 2027. A sensory-friendly show is Sunday, Dec 6.

Dec 11 to 23

BYHAM THEATER

TICKETS ↗ MAP

A Musical Christmas Carol

PITTSBURGH CLO

Dickens with songs, CLO's holiday standard. CLO merges with Pittsburgh Public Theater in January 2027.

Dec 11 to 13 and 18 to 20

HEINZ HALL

TICKETS ↗ MAP

Highmark Holiday Pops

PITTSBURGH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The symphony's holiday concert, with the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh.



ALSO ON STAGE

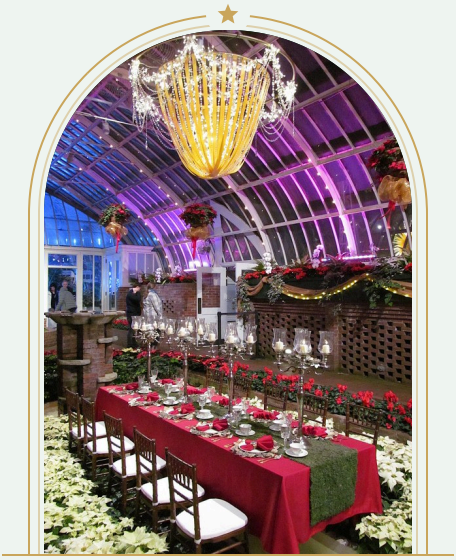
- **Yuletide! A Holiday Spectacular.** A new musical previews on Light Up Night, 5:30 PM, at the Pittsburgh Playhouse.
- **Finding Christmas.** Kennywood's new ice-skating stunt show, at Holiday Lights.
- **More at Heinz Hall.** Leslie Odom, Jr., Dec 8. It's a Wonderful Life in Concert, Dec 16. Holiday Brass, Dec 17. Feel The Love, a B.E. Taylor Christmas tribute, Dec 22. DATES ↗

Dates from Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Pittsburgh CLO, the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Downtown Partnership and Kennywood, checked November 2026. Photos: Cbaile19, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons.

CHAPTER 11

Indoors

Trees, trains and gingerbread, for the days it's 20 degrees.



With admission: the Aviary's Saturday photo days and the Miniature Railroad at the Kamin cost nothing extra once you're in.

OAKLAND DETAILS ↗ MAP

Carnegie Trees

From Saturday, Nov 21

Five Fraser firs in the Hall of Architecture at the Carnegie Museum of Art. The Neapolitan Presepio, a nativity set in 18th-century Naples, is in Scaife Gallery 9.

DOWNTOWN DETAILS ↗ MAP

The gingerbread houses

Nov 20 to Jan 8

The 24th annual display, at the City-County Building. Sunday and Monday 11 to 6, Tuesday to Saturday 11 to 8.

NORTH SIDE DETAILS ↗ MAP

The National Aviary

Nov 27 to Jan 4

Jingle Bell Flock, a holiday bird show, daily except Tuesdays at 11 and 2: a $5 add-on, $4 for members. On Saturdays to Dec 19, 10 to 2, photos with the Grinch. Santa takes his place on Dec 12.

WASHINGTON, PA DETAILS ↗ MAP

The Santa Trolley

Nov 27 to 29, then weekends to Dec 20

Ride a trolley with Santa at the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum, 9 to 5. Its toy train layout runs on select days to Jan 8.

GIBSONIA DETAILS ↗ MAP

The holiday train display

Open since Nov 7

The 38th at the Western Pennsylvania Model Railroad Museum. Check its days before you drive.

INDIANA, PA DETAILS ↗ MAP

It's a Wonderful Life

1 PM, Nov 20 to mid-January

The Jimmy Stewart Museum, in his hometown, screens it at 1 on every day it's open. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

Also indoors: Phipps, page 7. The Miniature Railroad, page 11. Clayton, page 10. The Nationality Rooms, page 9.

From the Carnegie Museum of Art, the City of Pittsburgh, the National Aviary, the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum, the model railroad museum and the Jimmy Stewart Museum, checked November 2026. Photo: Cbaile19, CC0.

CHAPTER 12

Markets and gifts

Where to buy from the people who made it.

DOWNTOWN DETAILS ↗ MAP

Peoples Gas Holiday Market

Nov 20 to Dec 24

Market Square. Monday to Thursday 11 to 8, Friday and Saturday to 9:30, Sunday to 6. Closed Thanksgiving. Christmas Eve till 3.

DOWNTOWN DETAILS ↗ MAP

Handmade Arcade

Dec 4 to 6

More than 275 makers at the Convention Center. Saturday and Sunday 11 to 6, with a preview party Friday night.

MT. LEBANON DETAILS ↗ MAP

I Made It! for the Holidays

Saturday, Nov 21, 10 to 4

At the Galleria of Mt. Lebanon.

SOUTH SIDE DETAILS ↗ MAP

I Made It! Merry & Bright

Sunday, Dec 6

At SouthSide Works.

ROBINSON DETAILS ↗ MAP

I Made It! Last Minute Market

Saturday, Dec 12

At Robinson Town Centre. The I Made It! shop at the Mall at Robinson is open to Dec 24.

MT. LEBANON DETAILS ↗ MAP

Uptown Winter Market

Saturday, Dec 5, noon to 5

Shopping, music, Santa and the 911 Chili Showdown in Uptown Mt. Lebanon. Free.

BETHEL PARK DETAILS ↗ MAP

Tree lighting and indoor market

Saturday, Dec 5, 3 to 7

Local vendors inside the Community Center, a petting zoo outside. Free.

CANONSBURG DETAILS ↗ MAP

Old Fashioned Christmas

Dec 4 and 5

More than 60 Christmas craft vendors along Pike Street. Free.

Also: Small Business Saturday is Nov 28. The Lawrenceville Cookie Tour is Dec 12, page 9. The Strip, for the food: page 16.

From the Downtown Partnership, Handmade Arcade, I Made It! Market, Mt. Lebanon, Visit Pittsburgh and Visit Washington County, checked November 2026.

CHAPTER 13

Pop-up bars

Christmas from floor to ceiling, and a drink to go with it.

MARKET SQUARE DETAILS ↗ MAP

Miracle on 7th

On the square this season

A Christmas pop-up with holiday cocktails. 25 Market Square.

MARKET SQUARE DETAILS ↗ MAP

Sippin' Santa

Next door to Miracle

Miracle's tropical spinoff. 24 Market Square.

LAWRENCEVILLE TICKETS ↗ MAP

The Jingle Bar

December, by ticket

At 11th Hour Brews. Regular sessions are 21 and over, and some sessions are for all ages. Cocktails and Carols on Wednesdays.

DOWNTOWN DETAILS ↗ MAP

The Glitzmas Bar

At the Omni William Penn Hotel, 530 William Penn Place.

CULTURAL DISTRICT DETAILS ↗ MAP

Rudolph's Rooftop

On the roof at Il Tetto, Sienna Mercato. 942 Penn Ave.

CULTURAL DISTRICT DETAILS ↗ MAP

The Aspen

At The Spritzery, 960 Penn Ave.

NORTH HILLS DETAILS ↗ MAP

A Very Barry Christmas

At Barry's Pub, 9566 Perry Highway.

OAKLAND DETAILS ↗ MAP

Winter Heat

Friday, Dec 11, 8 PM to midnight

A night at the Carnegie Museum of Art, 21 and over.

Before you go: check opening nights and hours. Where a bar has no page of its own for the pop-up, Details opens Visit Pittsburgh's list, which has more bars too. THE FULL LIST ↗

The lineup is from Visit Pittsburgh's 2026 list, the Jingle Bar and the Carnegie Museum of Art, checked November 2026.

CHAPTER 14

The holiday table

What's on the table, and where to shop for it.

Dec 24 CHRISTMAS EVE

The Feast of the Seven Fishes

DETAILS ↗ MAP

An Italian Christmas Eve tradition: fish, course after course. In the Strip, Penn Avenue Fish fillets its way through the Christmas orders.

Two hours GIVE OR TAKE

The cheese line

DETAILS ↗ MAP

At Pennsylvania Macaroni Company in the Strip, people wait two hours or more at the cheese counter before Christmas. The line is part of it.

Twelve DISHES

The Holy Supper

Vilija, or Wigilia: a meatless Christmas Eve supper of pirohi and twelve dishes.

Jan 1 FOR LUCK

Pork and sauerkraut

An old Pennsylvania rule for New Year's Day. Pork, because a pig roots forward. Sauerkraut, for a long life.

Dec 12 LAWRENCEVILLE

The Cookie Tour

DETAILS ↗ MAP

The 30th annual. Shops with a gingerbread man in the window hand out free cookies, and a free shuttle runs between stops.

Any day THE STRIP

Candy from before

DETAILS ↗ MAP

Grandpa Joe's Candy Shop stocks the vintage brands people remember from Christmases past.

Sources: CBS Pittsburgh; Lawrenceville Together; Pittsburgh Magazine; Visit PA; checked November 2026.

CHAPTER 15

Only in Pittsburgh

Six things locals will tell you.



1953 PENN AND STANWIX

The Horne's tree

MAP

The giant tree on the corner started as a string of lights on the old Horne's department store. Highmark lights it now, at 7 on Light Up Night, but most people still call it the Horne's tree.

1919 KAMIN SCIENCE CENTER

The Miniature Railroad & Village

DETAILS ↗

A Pittsburgh holiday tradition for over a century: hundreds of tiny animated scenes of life up to 1940. It's at the old Carnegie Science Center, now the Kamin, and comes with admission.

New Castle PA

The fireworks are local

Zambelli, the self-named "first family of fireworks" behind Light Up Night's shows, is a family business out of New Castle.

1982 EVERY SEASON SINCE

The Eat'n Park star

DETAILS ↗

A little star can't reach the top of the tree, so the tree bends down to help. The ad has run every year since 1982, and it debuts during the Thanksgiving parade.

1 of 1 U.S. STEEL TOWER PLAZA

The Pittsburgh Crèche

MAP

Organizers call it the only authorized replica of the Vatican's nativity in St. Peter's Square, built bigger than the original. Up from Nov 20 into the new year, around the clock.

Snow day SINCE THE 1950S

The parking chair

After a big snow, chairs show up in shoveled-out spots. No law backs it, but Pittsburgh's rule is simple: if you didn't shovel it, don't park in it.

Sources: Post-Gazette; CBS Pittsburgh; Eat'n Park; Kamin Science Center; Pittsburgh Magazine; Zambelli Fireworks; checked November 2026. Photo: Cbaile19, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Six more

Things you can say at the table and be right.

Shadyside TO DEC 27

The Nutcracker is set here

TICKETS ↗

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's Nutcracker opens at a Christmas party in turn-of-the-century Shadyside. The clock over the stage is modeled on the Kaufmann's clock, and the snow falls on a view from Mt. Washington. This is the production's last year.

1954 CANONSBURG

Home for the Holidays

MAP

Perry Como was the first to record it, on Nov 16, 1954. He was born in Canonsburg in 1912 and worked in a barber shop there as a boy. His statue stands in town.

Up MIDNIGHT, DEC 31

The ball rises

Other cities drop a ball. At First Night, Pittsburgh raises one: the Future of Pittsburgh Ball. More on page 20.

2020 FILMED HERE

Happiest Season

The Christmas movie with Kristen Stewart and Mackenzie Davis was shot in Pittsburgh from Jan 21 to Feb 28, 2020.

Jan 1 THE MON WHARF

The plunge

MAP

The Pittsburgh Polar Bear Club starts the year by jumping into the Monongahela. Hundreds went in on Jan 1, 2026, to raise money for winter coats.

1900s GIVE OR TAKE

The cookie table

Pittsburgh weddings come with a table of cookies. The Heinz History Center's Andy Masich dates the custom to the early 20th century, and nobody is sure where it began. Youngstown claims it too.

Sources: Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre; Wikipedia; Visit Pittsburgh; CBS Pittsburgh; the Salvation Army; WPXI; checked November 2026.

CHAPTER 16

Christmas week

Family in town? What's open, what's closed, and the nights to save.



Tim's tip: Christmas Eve closes early. The market shuts at 3 and Phipps at 5.

THE RUN-UP, AND THE WEEK

Sat to Sun, Dec 19 to 20 THE LAST FULL WEEKEND	**Holiday Pops** closes Sunday. The market stays open till 10 on Saturday. It's the last weekend for KidsPlay and the Santa Trolley.
Mon to Wed, Dec 21 to 23 THE HOME STRETCH	The market runs 11 to 8, and to 8:30 on the 23rd. **A Musical Christmas Carol** ends Wednesday.
Thu, Dec 24 CHRISTMAS EVE	**Last call Downtown:** the market and Santa's House close at 3. Phipps closes at 5. Zoo Lights and the Frick are closed. The rink is open 10 to 8.
Fri, Dec 25 CHRISTMAS DAY	Phipps, the Frick and Zoo Lights are closed. The rink at PPG Place is open 10 to 8, and **Oglebay's lights run every night, dusk to dawn.**
Sat to Sun, Dec 26 to 27 THE WEEKEND	**The Nutcracker's final shows** are this weekend, the last of this production. Phipps and Zoo Lights are back.
Mon to Wed, Dec 28 to 30 IN BETWEEN	Skating at PPG Place, the lights at Phipps, and the Miniature Railroad at the Kamin Science Center.

LAST CHANCES

Today's hours: MARKET ↗ PHIPPS ↗ ZOO ↗ RINK ↗

Dec 27
The Nutcracker

Jan 3
Kennywood, Zoo Lights, Oglebay and Clayton

Jan 10
Phipps Holiday Magic and Winter Glow

Feb 28
The rink at PPG Place

From the Downtown Partnership, Phipps, the Frick, the Pittsburgh Zoo, Oglebay, PBT, the rink and the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, checked November 2026. New Year's is next. Photo: Cbaile19, CC0.

CHAPTER 17

New Year's

A ball that goes up, a countdown at noon and a very cold river.

New Year's Eve *Thursday, Dec 31*

CULTURAL DISTRICT DETAILS ↗ MAP

Highmark First Night

Lineup due in mid-December

Last year almost all of it was free. It started at 7, with children's fireworks at 8 and the Future of Pittsburgh Ball raised at midnight.

HIGHLAND PARK DETAILS ↗ MAP

Noon Year's Eve at the zoo

9:30 AM to 1 PM

A countdown that ends at noon, for little kids. Included with zoo admission.

NORTH SIDE DETAILS ↗ MAP

The Children's Museum

Date to come

It usually counts down to noon too. This year's wasn't posted when this went out.

Closed tonight: Zoo Lights. The Holiday Market ended on Christmas Eve.

New Year's Day *Friday, Jan 1*

THE MON WHARF MAP

The Polar Bear Plunge

New Year's morning

Hundreds jumped into the Monongahela last Jan 1, at about 9:30, for the Polar Bear Club's coat drive.

DOWNTOWN DETAILS ↗ MAP

Skating at PPG Place

10 AM to 11 PM

The rink keeps long hours on New Year's Day.

STATE PARKS DETAILS ↗

First Day Hikes

New Year's Day

Pennsylvania's state parks lead free guided hikes on Jan 1, and the 2027 list is up. Raccoon Creek and Moraine are the closest to Pittsburgh. Raccoon Creek asks you to register.

Open: Phipps. **Closed:** the Frick and Zoo Lights. **For luck:** pork and sauerkraut, page 16.

STILL ON IN JANUARY

Jan 3	Jan 4	Jan 8	Jan 10	Feb 28
Kennywood, Zoo Lights, Oglebay and Clayton	Jingle Bell Flock at the Aviary	The gingerbread houses, and the toy trains at the Trolley Museum	Phipps Holiday Magic and Winter Glow	The rink at PPG Place

From Visit Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh Zoo, the rink, Phipps, the Frick, CBS Pittsburgh, the Salvation Army and Pennsylvania DCNR, checked November 2026.

THAT'S THE SEASON

See you out there.



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READ THE PULSE

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THE FINE PRINT

Credits and sources

Where the photos and dates came from.

PHOTOS

Cover	The Horne's tree, 2019. Cbaile19, CC0
Contents	Downtown in snow, 2015. Cbaile19, CC0
Three plans	PPG Place tree, 2023. Cbaile19, CC0
Getting around	Christmas in the subway, 2023. Cbaile19, CC0
Downtown	Light Up Night fireworks, 2015. Dllu, CC BY-SA 4.0, cropped
The lights	Kennywood Holiday Lights, 2021. My own video
Light-up nights	Cathedral of Learning, 2003. Benjamin Hollis, CC BY 2.0, cropped
Drive and look	Clayton, 2012. Daderot, CC0
With kids	PPG Place tree and rink, 2019. Cbaile19, CC0
On stage	Heinz Hall lobby, 2014; Benedum Center, 2025. Cbaile19, CC0
Indoors	Phipps Sunken Garden, 2024. Cbaile19, CC0
Only here	Fifth Avenue Place wreath, 2019. Cbaile19, CC0
Christmas week	PPG Place tree, 2023. Cbaile19, CC0
Stay in touch	PPG Place tree, 2023. Cbaile19, CC0
The map	© OpenStreetMap contributors, ODbL

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WHERE THE DATES CAME FROM

Downtown	Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership; City of Pittsburgh; the rink; the Cultural Trust
Lights	Kennywood, Phipps, Pittsburgh Zoo, Overly's, Oglebay, Pittsburgh Botanic Garden
Light-up nights	Each town, chamber or organizer; Pitt; Lawrenceville Together
On stage	PBT, Pittsburgh CLO, Pittsburgh Symphony
Getting around	Pittsburgh Regional Transit; Downtown Partnership
Drive and look	The Frick; Allegheny West Civic Council; Duquesne Incline
Indoors	Carnegie Museum of Art, City of Pittsburgh, National Aviary, Pennsylvania Trolley Museum, Jimmy Stewart Museum
New Year's	Visit Pittsburgh; the zoo; Pennsylvania DCNR; CBS Pittsburgh
Markets, bars	Handmade Arcade; I Made It! Market; Visit Pittsburgh; the Jingle Bar
Traditions	CBS Pittsburgh; Pittsburgh Magazine; WPXI; Wikipedia; Visit PA

HOW TO READ ALL THIS

Checked November 2026. Dates, hours and prices change. Check the organizer's site before you go.

No endorsements. The places and events here aren't affiliated with this guide and didn't review it.

Deemed reliable, not guaranteed. I checked what I could; sources can be wrong.

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