A HOLIDAY GUIDE FROM THE ROOTED REALTOR®

A Rooted Christmas

in Orange County

2026 FAMILY-FRIENDLY HOLIDAY GUIDE

Parades • Santa visits • Christmas lights • Markets

Free family fun • Crafts • Special seasonal experiences

Local events and ideas with clickable event links

STAY ROOTED. THINK GLOBAL. GROW TOGETHER.

Compiled November 25, 2026 • Check event links for changes before heading out.

Welcome to a Rooted Christmas

If you know me, you know I'm the crazy Christmas lady. I put this guide together so you can spend less time looking for plans and more time making memories across Orange County. Inside you'll find Santa stops, parades, lights, markets and hands-on holiday fun around Orlando, Winter Park, Winter Garden, Maitland, Oakland, Ocoee, Apopka and Lake Nona.

The event links take you to schedules and registration where available. Check the latest hours, prices, parking and photo details before leaving home.

A few favorites to put on your calendar

DEC 4 Downtown Orlando and Winter Garden

Start the weekend with a tree lighting and a walk downtown.

DEC 5 Parades, Santa and crafts

Choose a morning parade, a family craft workshop or a Santa visit.

DEC 12 A full day of holiday outings

Catch the Apopka parade, Ocoee's tree lighting festival or the Winter Park boat parade.

Merry Christmas, Wendy

Wendy Wagner • The Rooted REALTOR®

Broker / Owner • EXIT Global Realty • 407-947-6879

RootedRealtor.com

Holiday calendar | Dec 2 through Dec 4

DEC 2 Crochet a Holiday Wreath Ornament

Winter Garden Branch Library • 11:30 AM • Registration required

An intermediate crochet workshop with a seasonal ornament to take home.

Event details / registration

DEC 2 Book Ornaments

Alafaya Branch Library • 2–3 PM • Ages 18 and up

Make a small ornament inspired by a favorite book.

Event details / registration

DEC 3 Christmas in the Park

Winter Park • Central Park

The Morse Museum and City of Winter Park host a seasonal evening of music and illuminated Tiffany windows.

Event details / registration

DEC 4 Winter on the Avenue

Winter Park • Park Avenue • 5–9 PM

An evening kickoff to the city's Christmas parade weekend.

Event details / registration

DEC 4 Light Up Winter Garden

Historic Downtown Winter Garden • 6–9 PM

Gather near City Hall for the 6:15 PM lighting and stay for live entertainment and holiday activities.

Event details / registration

DEC 4 Apopka Tree Lighting

Kit Land Nelson Park • 6–8 PM

The city lights the park for the holidays.

Event details / registration

Holiday calendar | Dec 4 and Dec 5

DEC 4 Orlando Tree Lighting and Merry Market

Orlando • Lake Eola Park

The downtown kickoff begins a season of markets, light shows, holiday train rides and visits to the Grinch's Lair. Check the city calendar for individual hours.

Event details / registration

DEC 5 Winter Park Christmas Parade

Park Avenue • 9 AM

Marching bands and community groups make their way down Park Avenue, with Santa joining the parade.

Event details / registration

DEC 5 Winter Garden Christmas Parade

Historic Downtown Winter Garden • 10 AM

Bring a chair or blanket for the parade through downtown. Look for Santa near the end.

Event details / registration

DEC 5 Free Winter Family Day

Art & History Museums–Maitland • 10 AM–1 PM • Free

Clay winter scenes, hands-on craft stations and a scavenger hunt. Check registration availability.

Event details / registration

DEC 5 Holiday Craft Day

Leu Gardens, Orlando • 10 AM–1 PM • With garden admission

Make an ornament or mini wreath and try a snowball slime activity.

Event details / registration

DEC 5 Santa's Lane

Oakland Town Center Circle • 1–5 PM

Santa photos, holiday gifts, face painting and a strolling magician at 230 N. Tubb St.

Event details / registration

Holiday calendar | Dec 5 through Dec 13

DEC 5 Holiday Night Market and Golf Cart Parade

Downtown Winter Garden • Market 4–8 PM • Parade 6 PM

Shop local vendors and watch decorated golf carts travel down West Plant Street.

Event details / registration

DEC 5 Season of Light

Lake Lily Park, Maitland • 5–8:30 PM

Browse vendors, enjoy live music and games, and watch the tree lighting at 701 Lake Lily Drive.

Event details / registration

DEC 5 Avalon Aglow

Downtown Avalon Park

Santa, train rides, a snow slide, performances and fireworks.

Event details / registration

DEC 6 Holiday Pops

Central Park Main Stage, Winter Park • 6 PM

An outdoor holiday concert by the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra.

Event details / registration

DEC 12 Apopka Christmas Parade and Holiday Concert

Parade 10 AM–noon • Concert 5–7 PM

Catch the parade on Park Avenue and the free concert at Kit Land Nelson Park.

Event details / registration

DEC 12 Jolly Jamboree and Tree Lighting

Downtown Ocoee • 1–7 PM • Free

The city's celebration includes a kids' zone and a tree lighting.

Event details / registration

Holiday calendar | More December outings

DEC 12 Winter Park Holiday Boat Parade

Winter Park • Dinky Dock Park viewing area

An evening of decorated boats. Check the city's holiday lineup for viewing and schedule details.

Event details / registration

DEC 13 Downtown for the Holidays Sensory Night

East Lawn at Lake Eola, Orlando

A low-stimulation evening for visitors with sensory sensitivities.

Event details / registration

DEC 14 Nutcracker Family Cooking Night

The Kitchen House, Orlando • 6–8 PM • Ticketed • Ages 8+

Prepare and share a themed meal. The listing shows $40 per child and $60 per adult.

Event details / registration

DEC 5, 12, 19 Holiday Movies at Lake Eola

East Lawn, Orlando • 7 PM • Free

The Grinch on Dec. 5, Elf on Dec. 12 and A Christmas Story on Dec. 19.

Event details / registration

DEC 16 The Polar Express at Luminary Green

Luminary Green Park, Orlando

A seasonal movie night paired with the Luminary Market.

Event details / registration

SELECT DATES Holiday Movies at the Garden Theatre

Winter Garden • Check schedule for showtimes

December screenings include It's a Wonderful Life, Elf and How the Grinch Stole Christmas.

Event details / registration

Meet Santa | Photos and special visits

STARTS DEC 5

Santa at the Eola House

Lake Eola Park, Orlando • Select evenings • Free visit

See the official calendar for the individual evenings and visiting hours.

Event details / registration

DEC 12 & 19

Santa at the Winter Garden Farmers Market

Downtown Pavilion • 9 AM–noon • Free

Visit Santa and make a letter to take along. The market continues until 1 PM.

Event details / registration

SELECT DATES

Winter Garden Fire Rescue Santa Run

City neighborhoods • 5:45–9 PM on designated nights

Check the city schedule to find the right night and route for your neighborhood.

Event details / registration

STARTS DEC 4

Santa's Cottage

Lake Nona Town Center • Select dates • From $35 per person

A reserved visit with the Clauses includes a story, sing-along and digital photos.

Event details / registration

THRU DEC 24

Santa at Disney Springs

Marketplace, Lake Buena Vista

Check Disney's current arrival and queue instructions before you go.

Event details / registration

SELECT DATES

Santa Photos at Orlando Shopping Centers

Mall at Millenia • The Florida Mall • ICON Park

Check the linked roundup for the individual reservation pages, photo pricing and seasonal hours.

Event details / registration

Holiday lights | Make an evening of it

THRU JAN 3 Dazzling Nights

Harry P. Leu Gardens, Orlando • Ticketed

Walk through illuminated garden displays. Check available dates and entry times.

Event details / registration

THRU JAN 3 Colorful Christmas

Crayola Experience at The Florida Mall • Ticketed

Indoor holiday crafts, a scavenger hunt and a mailbox for letters to Santa.

Event details / registration

THRU DEC 31 Frontyard Holiday Festival

Dr. Phillips Center, Orlando

Free nightly snowfall. Check the venue schedule for other activities.

Event details / registration

SELECT NIGHTS A Merry Winter Garden Light Show

Downtown Winter Garden • 6–9 PM

The city lists select evenings through Dec. 27. Pair your visit with a downtown stroll.

Event details / registration

STARTS DEC 4 Heritage Square Holiday Projection Show

Orange County Regional History Center, Orlando • Free

A light projection on the History Center, with mini-markets and activities on select evenings.

Event details / registration

THRU JAN 3 Holidays at Universal Studios Florida

Orlando • Park admission required

See Universal's holiday parade featuring Macy's and Christmas in the Wizarding World.

Event details / registration

From my home to yours...

Make the memories.
The season goes by quickly.

Whether you love glittering Christmas lights, a small-town parade, a photo with Santa, or simply seeing the excitement on a little one's face, I hope this guide helps you find something wonderful close to home.

Wendy Wagner | Broker / Owner

EXIT Global Realty • The Rooted REALTOR®

407-947-6879 • wendy@exitglobalrealty.com

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