

KEY TO THE GOOD LIFE
{ from the road }



Courtesy of Oro Valley
Holiday Festival



Courtesy of
Visit Tucson

TUCSON TURNS UP THE HOLIDAY HEAT

The Old Pueblo blends classic cheer with only-here Baja traditions

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Picture-perfect Southwestern weather ushers in an enchanted holiday season in Tucson. And the Sonoran borderlands traditions in Arizona's second-biggest city have a twist all their own. Try these merry and bright happenings with widespread appeal for the whole family.

MINI TIME MACHINE MUSEUM: **NOV. 23–JAN. 9**

The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures in Tucson is one of those off-the-beaten path attractions. It's a whimsical place year-round, but it really shines during the Wee Winter Wonderland. Exquisitely detailed, dollhouse-sized rooms depict global holiday traditions throughout time: the Southwestern Casita Bonita, the Edwardian Alderly Manor, a Kwanzaa celebration, a German Christkindlmarket, a Japanese farmhouse and many more. Both kids and adults will be equally charmed. There are discounts for students, military members and seniors; children under 3 get in free.

theminitimemachine.org



Courtesy of Mini Time Machine Museum

ZOOLIGHTS: **NOV. 26–DEC. 15**

Reid Park Zoo is ablaze during the annual Zoolights. While most critters have the evening off, the family-friendly event features lighted animal sculptures, thousands of sparkling lights, jingle bells and Santa Claus. Cookies and hot cocoa are for sale. Children under 2 are free and discounts for seniors apply.

reidparkzoo.org

JINGLE BELL ROCKIN' REVUE AT THE GASLIGHT MUSIC HALL**NOV. 26–DEC. 24**

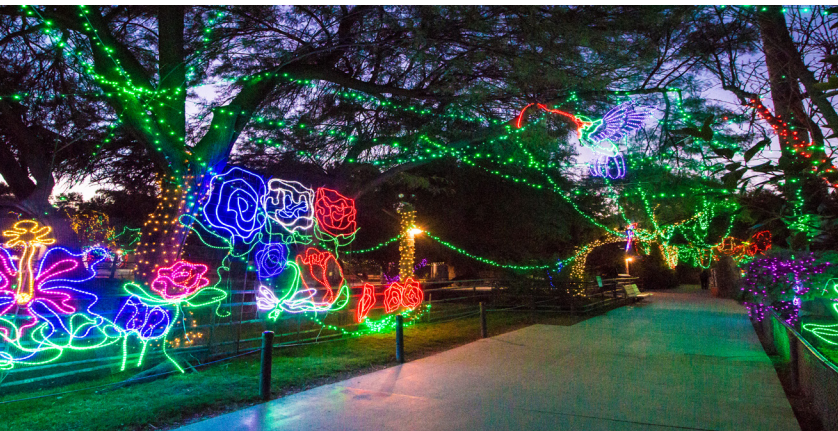
Longing for a bit of holiday nostalgia? The Gaslight Music Hall's holiday production of Jingle Bell Rockin' Revue is a toe-tapping good time. The intimate dinner theater in Oro Valley presents an all-star cast of singers and showband, along with dancing elves and singing reindeer sure to boost your holiday spirit. Come hungry and nosh on pizza, salads and malts. Santa himself has been known to pop in. gaslightmusicall.com

ORO VALLEY FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS & HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING**DEC. 4–5**

This family-friendly event is a vibrant two-day celebration of art and community. More than 150 artisans will be on hand, along with performances from students and local musicians. In addition, there will be food trucks, a special appearance by Santa and s'mores. The crowning event, the lighting of the towering holiday tree, takes place on Saturday evening. It's held in conjunction with the Southern Arizona Arts & Cultural Alliance and sponsored by local businesses. And wait till you see jaw-dropping views of the Catalinas' Pusch Ridge from the Oro Valley Marketplace in the northern Tucson suburbs. Admission is free. saaca.org

ENCHANTED SNOWFALL AT LA ENCANTADA: FIRST WEEKEND OF DECEMBER

Tucson's toniest shopping destination, La Encantada, creates climatic magic during the holidays. Perched high on Skyline Drive above the glittering lights of Tucson, the open-air center showers shoppers twice nightly with faux snow. Carolers often stroll the grounds and some shops offer treats. Craving the real thing? Take the gorgeous, one-hour drive up to Mount Lemmon. At 9,200 feet in elevation, a White Christmas is all but assured. laencantadashoppingcenter.com



Courtesy of Zoo Lights at Reid Park Zoo

16TH TUCSON TAMAL & HERITAGE FESTIVAL**DEC. 4**

Tamales are beloved by Tucsonans. The masa cakes wrapped and steamed in a corn husk are a staple of Mesoamerican cuisine. Time-consuming to make, they bring families together in a cherished culinary ritual passed down through time. Casino Del Sol's AVA Amphitheater is the site for this free gathering that features local entertainment and artisan booths, along with a selection of savory tamales. casinodelsol.com

71ST ANNUAL WINTERHAVEN FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS**DEC. 11–26**

The Winterhaven Festival of Lights is the granddaddy of all holiday events in Tucson. Generations of residents have proudly transformed the leafy Midtown neighborhood with twinkly lights and lawn exhibits as a gift to Tucson. You can experience the fun on foot or as a drive-through event. Or better yet, reserve a hayride wagon, board the trolley, or pedal on a group bike. The festival is free, but canned donations for the Community Food Bank are encouraged. winterhavenfestival.org

FOURTH AVENUE WINTER STREET FAIR**DEC. 10–12**

Looking for unique gifts for your loved ones? Bring your shopping list to The Fourth Avenue Winter Street Fair. Now in its 51st year, this is one of the biggest arts and shopping events in Tucson. Fourth Avenue shuts down to cars for the weekend, as more than half a million people take to the streets. The lively atmosphere includes hundreds of artists, musicians and street performers, along with a wide variety of food vendors. Kids can enjoy face-painting and balloons. Free shuttle service is provided from the Pennington Street Garage or ride the Sun Link Streetcar to the action. fourthavenue.org

HOLIDAY NIGHTS AT TOHONO CHUL**DEC. 10–11 & 17–18**

Tucked into the lovely Casa Adobes neighborhood in northern Tucson, Tohono Chul Park morphs into a winter wonderland every December during Holiday Nights as a million lights blaze and luminarias glow along the garden's winding footpaths. A timeless tradition, it includes live music, holiday treats and unique shopping. Don't miss the desert-inspired snowman. tohonochul.org ❄️