

10 Things to do This Weekend in Phoenix: Family Edition

Written by Editorial

Monday, 19 November 2018 14:06 - Last Updated Tuesday, 04 December 2018 15:56



Welcome December this weekend (Nov. 30 to Dec. 2) in the most spirited way possible--with light displays, Santa visits and giving back.



Christmas at the Princess

Kicking off Nov. 20 with its beloved public tree lighting is the annual holiday celebration of [Christmas at the Princess](#). Through New Year's Eve, revelers are invited to step into the holiday splendor with Fairmont Scottsdale Princess' four-story musical tree, the Desert Ice Skating Rink (made of real ice), S'mores Land with the Polar Ice Glide and a Build-A-Bear Workshop, 4 million dazzling Lagoon Lights, Santa's Secret Headquarters and festive friends like Peppermint Penguin, Princess Noel, Graham the S'more, Shivers the Yeti and Selfie Elfie. The resort also offers special holiday vacation packages with added extras and exclusive character meet and greets, with a portion of the proceeds benefiting the Cox Charities and the #LoveUp Foundation for foster children.



ZooLights

This annual event is a family and Valley tradition that happens to be one of the largest light shows in the Southwest. Millions of lights are showcased throughout [Phoenix Zoo](#) as visitors admire the sights while savoring hot chocolate and kettle corn under the stars. (Don't miss the scene-stealing musical trees!) A couple new additions this year include live reindeer and a 200-ft.-long Polar Slide. This holiday classic is running from Nov. 21 to Jan. 13, 5:30 to 10:30 p.m., every night.

Saturday:



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Santa Visits Promenade Scottsdale

Saturday, Dec. 1, and Saturday, Dec. 8, the [Promenade Scottsdale](#) located at Frank Lloyd Wright Boulevard and North Scottsdale Road (festivities take place in front of Nordstrom Rack) will spread Christmas cheer by giving children the opportunity to take photos with Santa Claus. A keepsake 4-by-6 print is free when participants donate food to the food drive benefiting the Harvest Compassion Center. There will also be a free make-and-take ornament activity for kids. A face painter will be on site from noon until 3 p.m.



36th Annual Queen Creek Festival & Parade

The highly anticipated [annual parade](#) will take place on Ellsworth Road, starting near Sierra Park and concluding just past the Queen Creek Library, and the festival will feature carnival rides, live entertainment, food and beverage stations, commercial vendors, free photos with Santa and a tree lighting ceremony. Hosted by the Queen Creek Chamber of Commerce and Kiwanis Club of Queen Creek, proceeds from the festival and parade, which is expected to draw more than 10,000 local residents, will benefit both nonprofit agencies and the numerous community initiatives they support. The festival kicks off at noon, while the parade commences at 3:30 p.m.



Tumbleweed Tree Lighting & Parade of Lights

Starting at 4:30 p.m., the community is invited to celebrate the holidays in Downtown Chandler with the return of the city's annual Tumbleweed Tree Lighting & Parade of Lights. Behold the Tumbleweed Tree, visit with Santa, enjoy musical performances, partake in festive crafts, hop on amusement rides and more. At the conclusion of the parade, guests can gather in the center of the park on the west side of Arizona Avenue for the Tumbleweed Tree lighting ceremony.



The Halal Guys Opens

On Dec. 1, [The Halal Guys](#) is opening its fifth Arizona brick-and-mortar location in [Avondale \(10277 W. McDowell Suite 100\)](#). Throughout the day, guests will enjoy a hot sauce-eating contest, family-friendly activities, promotional contests and more. From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., for any guest who brings a canned food item to support St. Mary's Food Bank and buys an entree, The Halal Guys will give the guest one complimentary entree (of equal value) every month through October 2019.

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Las Noches de Las Luminarias

During the evenings of Dec. 1 through Dec. 28 (except Christmas Eve and Day), [Las Noches de Las Luminarias](#) lights up the night at Desert Botanical Garden. This year, the Electric Desert | A Light and Sound Experience by Klip Collective sets the stage for true holiday magic with more than 8,000 hand-lit luminaria bags, thousands of twinkle lights and the pulse of Electric Desert. Tickets starts at about \$30 for members and about \$35 for the general public.



The Polar Express

All aboard! The pages of Chris Van Allsburg's classic children's book come to life when both the young and young-at-heart come to relish in a holiday experience like no other. From Nov. 9 to Jan. 5, take a ride on the Grand Canyon Railway's [Polar Express](#) to indulge in hot chocolate and chocolate chip cookies while making your way to the North Pole. (Each child receives a special gift along the way, too.) For even more holiday fun, the Polar Express package is offered allowing guests to stay overnight at the Grand Canyon Railway Hotel. Tickets range from \$33 to \$79, depending on select dates and packages.

Sunday:



The Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain Holiday Tree Lighting Celebration

[The Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain](#) is looking forward to making merry at its fifth-annual Holiday Tree Lighting Celebration, a popular local charity fundraiser set to kick off this year's festive season at 5 p.m. on Dec. 2. Nearly a thousand holiday revelers will enjoy an evening of fun, live entertainment from the Tucson Boys Chorus, Santa photo ops and special activities supporting area nonprofits. \$5 per person to attend, with the evening's net proceeds to be donated to Fisher House, providing housing for area military families while their loved ones are in the hospital. Plus, each guest is invited to bring canned food items for the Marana Food Bank.



Illumination: Symphony of Light

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The world's largest animated holiday drive-through light spectacular is back for a second year in North Phoenix—and is adding a second location. [Illumination: Symphony of Light](#) is now open at its original location off the I-17 and Jomax Road as well as made its debut at Tempe's Diablo Stadium. The Phoenix outpost also features an expanded Holiday Boulevard Marketplace with snacking, sips and gifts from local vendors. Illumination will dazzle and delight guests with nearly two million glittering lights, including dancing candy canes, twirling gingerbread men and giant fluttering snowflakes synchronized to holiday tunes and festive hits played over cars' FM dials. The drive-through portion is 25 minutes long; due to popular demand, it is recommended that guests reserve a date and time for either experience through the Web site. Tickets are \$29 in advance; \$35 per car at the door.