



The Ultimate Austin & Suburbs Holiday Guide 2025-2026

Your complete resource for holiday celebrations in the Greater Austin area, covering six major Austin events and five surrounding suburbs from November through January.

Experience the Magic of an Austin Holiday Season

The greater Austin area transforms into a winter wonderland each holiday season, offering an incredible variety of festive events that celebrate community, creativity, and tradition. From the iconic Trail of Lights in Zilker Park to charming small-town celebrations in the suburbs, this guide covers everything you need to plan your perfect holiday season.

Whether you're seeking large-scale light displays, intimate community gatherings, art markets featuring local creators, or unique experiences like driving on an F1 racetrack or taking a polar plunge on New Year's Day, the Austin area delivers unforgettable holiday memories.



Best of all: The majority of these events are completely **FREE**, making it easy for families to enjoy the season without breaking the budget.

December 5-10: Peak Holiday Week

The Busiest Weekend Across Greater Austin

This is the single busiest week across the entire greater Austin area, with **NINE major events** happening simultaneously.

Austin Proper

- [Ballet Austin's The Nutcracker](#) (Opening Dec 5)
- [Downtown Holiday Stroll](#) (Dec 6)
- [Trail of Lights](#) (Dec. 10)

Georgetown

[Candyland Christmas Stroll](#) (3-day festival, Dec 5-7)

Round Rock

Light Up the Lake (Dec 5-6)

Hutto

Holiday Market & Drone Show (Dec 6)

Pflugerville

Pfestival of Lights & Parade (Dec 6)

Manor

Deck the Park Tree Lighting (Dec 5)

Holiday in Manor (Dec 6)

❏ **Planning Tip:** Consider attending Austin events on weeknights and suburban events on this peak weekend, or spread your visits across multiple weekends to avoid crowds.

Austin Trail of Lights

The Crown Jewel of Austin's Holiday Season

The Austin [Trail of Lights](#) celebrates its **61st anniversary** in 2025, making it the most iconic and longest-running holiday tradition in the city. This spectacular event transforms Zilker Park into an immersive winter wonderland with more than **2 million lights**, lighted holiday trees, and over 90 unique displays.

Visitors walk along a 1.25-mile illuminated trail featuring mesmerizing lighted tunnels, interactive displays, and photo opportunities at every turn. The event typically attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors over its two-week run.

01

Dates

December 10–23, 2025

02

Location

Zilker Metropolitan Park

03

Cost

FREE Dec 10–12 & 15–18; Tickets required other dates

04

Duration

14 consecutive days



Blue Genie Art Bazaar

Supporting Local Artists for Six Weeks



The [Blue Genie Art Bazaar](#) has become a beloved fixture of the Austin holiday season, offering a unique shopping experience that celebrates the city's vibrant creative community. This event embodies Austin's "Keep Austin Weird" ethos by providing a platform for local artists to showcase and sell their original works directly to the public.

Browse thousands of original artworks created by Austin-area artists, ranging from serious fine art pieces to fun and kitschy items perfect for gift-giving. Both in-person and virtual shopping options ensure accessibility for all shoppers.

November 14 - December 24, 2025

Longest-running event in the guide at 41 days

FREE Entry

Visit multiple times throughout the season

Direct from Artists

Connect with creators and support local economy



Armadillo Christmas Bazaar

Fine Art Meets Live Music

For 50 seasons, the [Armadillo Christmas Bazaar](#) has been Austin's premier fine art holiday market, offering a more curated and upscale alternative to other holiday shopping events. This nine-day celebration combines award-winning art with live music performances.



Award-Winning Artists

Carefully curated selection of national and local artists designed to excite collectors and first-time visitors



Live Music

Local music performances throughout each day showcase Austin's renowned music scene



December 13-21, 2025

Palmer Events Center, downtown Austin.
Admission fee required.

Downtown Holiday Stroll & Austin's New Year

Downtown Holiday Stroll December 6, 2025



The [Downtown Holiday Stroll](#) brings classic holiday celebration to the heart of Austin's downtown district, featuring a 40-foot downtown tree, holiday shopping passport activities, pop-up vendors, Mr. and Mrs. Claus appearances, and spectacular light installations.

FREE • Congress Avenue between 9th & 11th Streets

Austin's New Year December 31, 2025



Austin's official [New Year's celebration](#) to welcome 2026 offers a free, all-ages event with live entertainment, food trucks, and a spectacular midnight fireworks show over Lady Bird Lake set against the backdrop of the downtown skyline.

FREE • Auditorium Shores

Peppermint Parkway at Circuit of The Americas

Six Million Lights at the F1 Racetrack

Peppermint Parkway offers the most unique holiday experience in the Austin area by transforming the world-famous Circuit of The Americas Formula 1 racetrack into a winter wonderland. **NEW for 2025:** reimagined as a walk-through experience with optional add-ons like driving a lap on the actual F1 track.



6 Million Lights

More than any other holiday event in the Austin area—three times more than Trail of Lights



Candy Cane Cruise

Drive a parade lap on COTA's signature F1 track—unavailable anywhere else



Themed Villages

90 unique themed villages with interactive characters culminating in "Club Sleigh"



Peppermint Plaza

Meet Santa, write letters, enjoy treats, and experience new rides including thrill rides

November 21 – December 28, 2025 (select nights) • Tickets required; separate ticket for Candy Cane Cruise

Georgetown: Candyland Christmas Stroll

44th Annual Three-Day Festival

The Candyland Christmas Stroll is the centerpiece of Georgetown's holiday season, transforming the historic downtown square into a whimsical Candyland wonderland for three full days. This **FREE** event has been a beloved tradition for 44 years, drawing thousands of visitors from across Central Texas.

Friday, Dec 5

4:00–9:30 PM

Groovin' with the Grinch, Grand Illumination of holiday lights, vendor shopping

Sunday, Dec 7

10:00 AM–4:00 PM

Last-minute shopping, family activities, final performances



Saturday, Dec 6

10:00 AM–9:30 PM

Candyland Parade (10:00 AM), Santa's Village, live music, kids' activities

Features over 200 artisan and craft vendors, live entertainment on multiple stages, snow in the park (weather permitting), and whimsical Candyland-themed decorations throughout the historic square.

Round Rock: Light Up the Lake

Giant Glowing Balloons Over the Water

Light Up the Lake is Round Rock's signature holiday festival, featuring a unique display of giant glowing balloons floating over Bright Lake at Old Settlers Park. This two-day **FREE** event combines traditional holiday elements with innovative visual spectacles.

December 5–6, 2025 • Old Settlers Park

- Live music performances on the new Lakeview Stage
- Giant glowing balloons floating over Bright Lake
- Synchronized light shows
- Activities including crafts, games, and photo opportunities



☐ **Also in Round Rock:** The Light Park at Dell Diamond offers a drive-through Christmas light show with millions of lights synchronized to holiday music (November 7, 2025–January 4, 2026, tickets required).



Hutto: Holiday Market & Drone Show

European Market Meets Modern Technology

Hutto's Holiday Market combines a classic European-inspired winter market with a spectacular seasonally-themed drone show, blending cherished traditions with cutting-edge technology. **December 6, 2025** • Brushy Creek Amphitheatre • **FREE**



Winter Market

Vendors offering unique gifts, handmade crafts, holiday treats, and seasonal items



Drone Show

Hundreds of illuminated drones creating holiday-themed formations synchronized to music

What Makes It Special: Hutto is the **only Austin suburb** offering a drone show as part of its holiday celebrations. This modern technological spectacle creates a memorable experience that distinguishes Hutto's event from more traditional celebrations.

Hutto: More Holiday Magic

Tree Lighting with Cocoa and Carols

November 29, 2025 • Downtown Hutto • FREE

Traditional tree lighting ceremony in beautifully decorated Historic Downtown Hutto, featuring cocoa and carols.

Light Up Your Night

December 10–23, 2025 • Brushy Creek Amphitheatre • FREE

Interactive walking trail featuring dazzling light displays paired with festive sounds. Canned food donations encouraged.

Hippo Claus Crawl

December 13, 2025 • Downtown Hutto • Tickets Required • 21+

The ONLY adults-only holiday event across all five Austin suburbs. Festive beverage crawl with DJ entertainment and photos with Santa and Henrietta Hippo-Claus.

Pflugerville: The Most "Pfestive" Suburb

Six Events Throughout the Season

Pflugerville embraces its unique "Pf" branding throughout its holiday celebrations, offering the most events of any suburb—six total—providing options for every type of celebration from traditional parades to polar plunges.

Pfestive Pfarmers Market Every Sunday in Nov & Dec, 3:00–7:00 PM • FREE	Pfestival of Lights & Parade December 6, 4:00–7:00 PM • FREE
Menorah Lighting December 14, 5:30–7:30 PM • FREE	Winter Pfun Camp December 29–31, 7:30 AM–5:30 PM • Registration Required
Pfreeze Pflop January 1, 2026 • Gates open at 9 AM • FREE with canned food	Winter Pfest January 10, 2026, 2:00–4:00 PM • FREE

Pflugerville: Pfestival of Lights & Pfreeze Pflop

Pfestival of Lights & Parade

December 6, 2025

Pflugerville's main holiday event combines a traditional parade with tree lighting and Santa's arrival in a magical evening of community celebration.

01

4:00 PM

Festive activities begin

02

5:00 PM

Parade through downtown

03

6:00 PM

Santa lights the tree and takes photos

Downtown Pflugerville, 100 E. Main Street • **FREE**

Pfreeze Pflop

January 1, 2026



The Pfreeze Pflop is Pflugerville's most unique event and the **only polar plunge** in the Austin suburbs. Brave participants slide into frigid pool water on New Year's Day to kick off 2026 with laughter, fun, and community spirit.

Scott Mentzer Pool, 901 Old Austin Hutto Rd • **FREE** with canned food donation (benefits local food banks)

Manor: Holidays in Manor

Full Day of FREE Family Fun

Holidays in Manor is Manor's signature holiday event, offering an all-day celebration with ice skating, food trucks, live music, holiday games, crafts, and Santa photos. The all-day format allows families to arrive at their convenience and stay as long as they wish.



Ice Skating

A rare offering in Texas! Enjoy outdoor ice skating in the heart of Manor.



Food & Entertainment

Food trucks offering diverse cuisine and live music performances all day.



Activities for All Ages

Holiday games, craft stations, and photos with Santa, everything in one location.

December 6, 2025 • 12:00–8:00 PM • East Manor Development, 15317 US Hwy 290 E. • FREE



Planning Your Perfect Holiday Season



The Weekend Warrior

Focus on major events happening on weekends to maximize your holiday experience without taking time off work. Hit the busiest weekend (Dec 5–7 or Dec 12–14) for maximum options.



The Complete Experience

Visit every major event across Austin and all five suburbs for the ultimate holiday season. Start early in November and continue through New Year's Day.



The Budget-Conscious

Experience the magic without spending money on admission. Nearly all suburban events are FREE, plus Austin offers FREE dates for Trail of Lights and other events.



The Unique Experience Seeker

Focus on experiences unavailable anywhere else: F1 track driving, drone shows, polar plunge, 3-day festivals, and adults-only celebrations.