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12 Things to Do For the Holidays in Toronto

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Let's face it: There should be way more than 12 Days of Christmas. After all, who can cram all that shopping, craft-making, skating and carolling into a paltry 288 hours? That's where this list comes in. By focusing on the very best of what the holiday season has to offer in and around the GTA, you can do it all — and even have time to find an adoptive home for that partridge in a pear tree.

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12 Things to Do for the Holiday Season

Stroll: Toronto Christmas Market

Starting November 20, the Distillery District's annual holiday street market embraces just about every festive theme on this list. Indeed, because there's so much to take in — local vendors and craftspeople, food stalls galore, family-friendly entertainment, a Ferris Wheel, beer gardens and, of course, Santa and his reindeer. The European-inspired extravaganza is a festive browser's delight. Holiday cheer greets you wherever your feet take you, but your cheer budget will go a bit further from Tuesday through Friday, when admission is free. Tickets for weekend dates cost \$5 and can be purchased in advance.

[Official website](#)

Events

- 14 Mon
- 15 Tue
- 16 Wed
- 17 Thu
- 18 Fri
- 19 Sat
- 20 Sun

Holiday Magic

Bloor-Yorkville B.I.A.

Andy Warhol: Stars of the...

TIFF Bell Lightbox

Kent Monkman: The Rise and Fall...

Gardiner Museum

12 Trees of Christmas

Gardiner Museum

Made in China: Cultural...

Royal Ontario Museum (ROM)

Christmas at Black Creek

Black Creek Pioneer Village

Red Bull Stratos Exhibit

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Shop: Toronto Eaton Centre

What happens when Toronto's most visited tourist attraction gets festive? With 1,722,000 square feet of retail space — that's nearly 30 football fields — there's nowhere better to check off wish lists while admiring glittery decorations. And if you want to parlay a shopping spree with a St. Nick sighting, you're in luck: Santa's Log Cabin hosts scheduled visits with the jolly old elf in adjacent Trinity Square.

[Official website](#)

[Map & Directions](#)

Skate: Natrel Rink

The completion of the Queen's Quay revitalization project makes this scenic lakefront skating venue that much more enticing. The rink is celebrating its 30th anniversary with a [Swedish Christmas Festival](#) — including an ABBA-themed DJ night, naturally — and free skate and helmet rentals on certain days. There's a heated indoor change room with lockers and washrooms, a rink-side restaurant, and last but not least, admission is always free.

[Official website](#)

[Map & Directions](#)

Shows: The National Ballet's of Canada's *The Nutcracker*

With a cast of characters including the Snow Queen and Sugar Plum Fairy, it's no wonder the National Ballet's annual staging of *The Nutcracker* is as glittery as it gets. The whole package is a true feast for the senses, with Tchaikovsky's timeless score and James Kudelka's choreography and libretto bringing out the best of some of Canada's finest ballet dancers, costume designers, set decorators and musicians.

[Official website:](#)

[Map, address, and tickets](#)

Crafts: One of a Kind Show & Sale

If you want some expert instruction on ornament creation, cookie decoration and festive photo props, the DeSerres Art School is hosting a range of workshops at North America's largest festive craft show. Or, if you'd prefer to let the experts handle the merchandise — while you take the credit — more than 800 artisans will be there to sell hand-crafted ceramics, jewellery, furniture, clothing, accessories, and plenty more besides.

[Official website:](#)

[Map & address](#)

Dine: Christmas by Lamplight Dinner, Black Creek Pioneer Village

For an old-fashioned festive evening, it's tough to beat "Christmas by Lamplight" at this open-air heritage museum. Decorated 19th-century homes and workshops, traditional folk music, carolling and choirs, old-school craft-making...the list goes on. Plus, you can add dinner to the experience with a prix-fixe menu including butternut squash soup, roasted turkey and pumpkin pie.

[Official website:](#)

[Map & address](#)

Parades: Santa Claus Parades Around Southern Ontario

Sure, it may seem a bit far-fetched that Santa would be appearing at parades all over the province in such a short period of time, but come on, this is the guy who can travel around the world in a single night! And each community joins them with their finest floats, marching bands, and more to make each of these annual parades memorable ones.

[Santa Claus Parades](#)

Lights: Cavalcade of Lights

There are light displays, and then there are *cavalcades*. Nathan Phillips Square's 49th annual kick-off to the holiday season takes place November 28, with a tree-lighting ceremony, fireworks show, live performances by the Nathaniel Dett Chorale, DJ Serious, the Zero Gravity Circus and others, and a skating party starring none other than Disney's Frozen musical characters. If you miss opening night, don't fret: Much of the fun runs throughout the season.

[Official website](#)

[Map & address](#)

Santa: Santa's Giant Storybook Experience, Sherway Gardens

Line-ups to see Santa are *so* 20th century. At the Sherway Gardens mall, families can pre-book \$15 visits to this interactive festive experience, in which good little boys and girls can help St. Nick and his reindeer save Christmas — and presumably get that much closer to having their wish list fulfilled.

[Official website](#)

[Map & address](#)

Cheer: Carols in the Tavern, Montgomery Inn

Party like it's 1899 at Montgomery's Inn. Starting in December, the historic Etobicoke establishment is hosting festive sing-alongs, serving savoury treats and pouring mulled cider. A \$20 cover charge gets you in — pre-booking is required — and there's a cash bar for more throwback beverages.

[Official website](#)



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577 Yonge Street, Toronto |  Wellesley Station

[Map & address](#)

Sing: Festival of carols

On December 9 the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir is inviting one and all to congregate in Yorkminster Park Baptist Church for a sing-along performance of traditional and contemporary carols and music for Christmas. The Choir is joined by the 30-piece Canadian Staff Band and organist David Briggs.

[Official website](#)
[Map & address](#)

Snow: Blue Mountain ski resort

Some years, GTA residents can only dream of a white Christmas. However, the odds of a winter wonderland are greatly increased if you drive two hours north to the Blue Mountain ski resort near Collingwood, where one of North America's most advanced snow-making systems can blanket the slopes if temperatures dip just below zero. Throw in a charming resort village primed for the holidays, and those dreams get closer to reality.

[Official website](#)
[Map & address](#)

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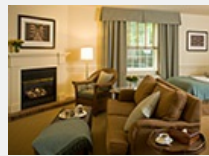
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