



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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City of San Diego Kicks Off Festive Holiday Season with 47th December Nights

ANNUAL TWO-DAY CELEBRATION SHOWCASES NEWLY RENOVATED
BOTANICAL BUILDING, FAMILY ZONE FERRIS WHEEL AND MUSICAL
GUEST OZOMATLI

SAN DIEGO – Mayor Todd Gloria and the City of San Diego invite community members and visitors to share in the holiday magic of [December Nights](#) this weekend with music, festivities and lots of food in the heart of San Diego’s crown jewel, Balboa Park.

December Nights will be held over two days on Friday, Dec. 6, from 3 to 11 p.m., and Saturday, Dec. 7, from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. It is the City’s largest free event and has welcomed millions to Balboa Park for more than four decades.

“December Nights is a cherished tradition that brings San Diegans and visitors together to kick off the holiday season in the heart of our city,” said Mayor Todd Gloria. “This year’s event is even more special with the unveiling of the newly renovated Botanical Building. I invite everyone to join us this weekend and enjoy the holiday lights and festivities that make this event so magical each year.”

Adding to the excitement and wonder of this annual holiday tradition, the newly renovated Botanical Building will be opened to visitors for the first time following a \$30 million restoration project. The building was closed for three years as the pergola, arcades and Palladian windows were fully restored and technological improvements were made, including a new mister watering system, state-of-the-art lighting and new water features.

Just for this weekend, the Botanical Building and Gardens will be open on Friday from 1 to 7 p.m. and Saturday from noon to 6 p.m. Typical hours will resume on Monday, Dec. 9.

All of Balboa Park will transform during December Nights into a winter-inspired wonderland featuring more than 1,600 performers in 70 performance groups across six stages. More than 200 food and retail booths will offer up delicious flavors and goodies for sale, and museum venues will be open to the public for free during the evening hours.

To kick off the holiday festival, on Friday, at 6 p.m., Councilmember Stephen Whitburn, Assemblymember Chris Ward and event organizers will participate in a festive tree lighting ceremony on the Spreckels Organ Pavilion Stage.

“December Nights is a cherished San Diego tradition, and it’s heartwarming to see our community come together to kick off the holiday season in beautiful Balboa Park,” said Councilmember Stephen Whitburn. “I want to thank those who every year help make this event so special — our dedicated City staff, sponsors and the thousands of San Diegans who attend each year.”

To make planning a visit to the event stress free, attendees can download the [December Nights Mobile Experience](#). This mobile website will make it easy to navigate Balboa Park from a smartphone, with critical information on parking, entertainment, food, vendors and more.

Getting to and from December Nights has become even more accessible with plenty of options. Free and pre-paid vehicle parking options are available in various parking lots around Balboa Park, and free event shuttles bringing visitors directly to the entrance at El Prado and the Cabrillo Bridge from various parking lot locations downtown. In addition, the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) will offer bus rides between the City College transit hub and the event. There is limited parking at December Nights and it is highly recommended that visitors consider other transportation options.

Bike riders will find a bike valet on the west entrance of the Laurel Street bridge and another on the east side of Village Place near the San Diego Natural History Museum parking lot.

“We are thrilled to once again invite visitors to one of the most unique and family-friendly events San Diego has to offer,” said Christina Chadwick, Executive Director for the City’s Special Events and Filming Office. “There is so much to do and see, none of which would be possible without our sponsors and community partners. There is something for everyone.”

As is tradition, December Nights will include a culinary tour of tasty treats when the House of Pacific Relations International Cottages open their doors to visitors who can explore represented cultures and their foods.

December Night’s Family Zone is a spectacular draw and this year promises to be even bigger than ever. Families with children of all ages will find many reasons to explore the Family Zone. New this year, visitors can enjoy free rides on the Ferris wheel, sponsored by San Diego Community Power. Family-friendly programming includes:

- A diaper changing and lactation station courtesy of Ashley.
- Free photo opportunities with Santa and the Sugar Plum Fairy.
- Local artists, cultural performers and live entertainment on the Palms Stage, presented by SeaWorld.
- Free screening of the movies “Elf” and “Home Alone,” both nights on the lawn adjacent to the Comic-Con Museum, sponsored by Summit Subaru.
- Free photo opportunities and crafts at the Disney tent.
- Half-pipe skateboarding demos from Bones Love Milk.
- A performance stage sponsored by Altus.
- Free activities, face painting, hat making and games.

On Saturday, Dec. 7, at 9:30 p.m., visitors can venture into the 21+ Cheer Garden presented by Harrah's Resort SoCal, to enjoy a festive and warm holiday drink and listen to great live music by Southern California favorites and December Nights headliner Ozomatli.

Visitors to December Nights have an opportunity to support their neighbors during the holiday season. San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) is teaming up with [PATH](#) for a sock drive to support San Diegans experiencing homelessness. Socks will be collected at the SDG&E booth in the Plaza de Panama. Additionally, San Diego County Toyota Dealers is partnering with the [San Diego Rescue Mission](#) to collect socks and underwear in their Toyota Sienna Sleigh for families in need of support.

Safety at December Nights is a priority. The San Diego Police Department (SDPD) offers the following tips to provide visitors with an enjoyable and safe experience:

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Keep valuables and cellphones in front pockets.
- Never leave bags or purses unattended.
- Keep children nearby and within sight.

The San Diego Police and Fire-Rescue departments will have recruiting teams on site to meet potential applicants and share information about joining their teams.

KUSI News and FOX 5 and KUSI are official media partners for the event. Local Media San Diego (91X, 100.7 BIG-FM, Z90 and Magic 92.5) will have booths on-site, with fun giveaways for visitors. XEWT will also have a booth with a prize wheel and giveaways.

To view a full schedule of attractions and entertainment, along with maps and parking information, visit DecemberNights.org.

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