

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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December Nights Returns to Balboa Park for a Weekend of Holiday Magic

FESTIVE ANNUAL EVENT SHOWCASES MUSICAL GUEST FRANKIE J,
FREE FERRIS WHEEL RIDES AND THE NEW APRÈS TAVERN

SAN DIEGO – Now in its 48th year, December Nights will once again transform Balboa Park into a sparkling wonderland with holiday decor and lighting, music and cultural entertainment, hundreds of food and retail offerings and free holiday fun for all ages.

As the City of San Diego's signature holiday celebration, December Nights will be held over two days on Friday, Dec. 5, from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m., and Saturday, Dec. 6, from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Attracting an estimated 350,000 over two days, the event has become the largest free holiday festival in California. It has welcomed millions to Balboa Park over the years.

"December Nights has been part of San Diego's story for nearly five decades, bringing families, neighbors, and visitors together to share the season's joy," said Mayor Todd Gloria. **"I love seeing Balboa Park come alive with music, food, and the energy of hundreds of thousands of people. I'm grateful to City staff and everyone who works behind the scenes to make this tradition shine, and I'm looking forward to a weekend that reminds us why San Diego is such a special place to call home."**

Platinum-selling artist, actor and San Diego native Frankie J is the music headliner at December Nights. The Grammy-nominated performer attended Southwest High School and developed his talents into a bilingual musical career spanning multiple decades. Frankie J will perform live in the Plaza de Panama on Saturday, Dec. 6, at 7 p.m.

December Nights will feature a new Après Tavern in the Plaza de Panama next to the main entertainment stage, making this new holiday hangout the perfect spot to catch Frankie J. The holiday-themed, adults-only spirits lounge is also perfectly situated to enjoy a new holiday light show illuminated on the Museum of Art facade. The light show will happen at least once per hour throughout the weekend. The 21+ Après Tavern gives adults a chance to step out of the bustle into a warm alpine haven with elevated decor, holiday cocktails and pub-style games.

Balboa Park will transform during December Nights into a winter-inspired wonderland featuring more than 1,600 performers in 70 performance groups across five entertainment 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.

The holiday festival will kick off Friday, Dec. 5 at 6 p.m. with the annual tree lighting ceremony on the Spreckels Organ Pavilion stage. The ceremony will be led by Mayor Gloria and City Council President Joe LaCava, emcees from KUSI News and FOX 5 San Diego, and the City's leadership team.

“December Nights is a cherished San Diego tradition, and it is a unique opportunity for all of us to come together to kick off the holiday season,” said Council President Joe LaCava. **“I want to thank those who make this event so special — dedicated City staff, cultural organizations, vendors, sponsors, and each and every San Diegan.”**

Keeping with tradition, visitors can enjoy global cuisine as 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 more fun. Families with children of all ages will find lots of reasons to explore the Family Zone. Family-friendly programming includes:

- Free Ferris wheel rides and a light show display on the Museum of Art facade, thanks to San Diego Community Power.
- New DIY holiday art projects for kids in the Municipal Gym, sponsored by Home Depot.
- Activities for children and families provided by Disneyland, in recognition of its 70th anniversary.
- A new Food Truck Alley located at Village Place.
- Movies on the lawn featuring “Ice Age” and “Frozen.”
- Hundreds of local artists, cultural performers and live entertainment on five entertainment stages located throughout Balboa Park.
- Half-pipe skateboarding demos in the Palisades Plaza.
- Visits and photos with Santa, hat making, arts and crafts, facepainting, games, activities and more located at the Family Zone within the Municipal Gym.

This event is made possible through the generous support of our community partners, whose collaboration and dedication help bring this celebration to life each year.

With support from Republic Services, this event reflects the City of San Diego's commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility. Together, we're encouraging conscious holiday choices for December Nights and throughout the holiday season by encouraging guests to properly sort and recycle food and trash waste, take public transit to the event or ride share. Guests can also take advantage of one of two free bike valets available 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.

Visitors to December Nights also have an opportunity to support their neighbors during the holiday season. San Diego Gas & Electric is partnering with Jewish Family Service to collect socks and underwear for individuals staying at the City's Safe Parking lots, and San Diego County Toyota Dealers is partnering with the San Diego Rescue Mission to collect socks and underwear in their Toyota Sequoia Sleigh for families in need of support.

"This is the 48th edition of December Nights and it will be bigger and brighter than ever," said Christina Chadwick, Executive Director for the City's Special Events and Filming Office. **"We've worked hard to create an experience that honors the traditions San Diegans love, while introducing exciting new features for everyone to enjoy."**

December Nights also launches a month of holiday décor and lighting in select areas of Balboa Park, including the Plaza de Panama and the Cabrillo Bridge. With the Parks & Recreation Department facing budget constraints, the Prebys Foundation has stepped in to keep this beloved tradition alive.

To make planning stress-free, attendees can download the [December Nights Mobile Experience](#), which will be available starting on Dec. 4. 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 more accessible with plenty of options for people walking, bicycling and driving. Free and pre-paid vehicle parking options are available in various parking lots around Balboa Park, and free event shuttles bring visitors directly to the entrance at El Prado and the Cabrillo Bridge from various parking lot locations in 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.

Please, leave your pets at home. The event welcomes those who require a trained service animal to assist. For animals not specifically trained to work in a dynamic, crowded and unpredictable environment, you will be putting your pet in a potentially hazardous and frightening situation. Therefore, visitors are strongly encouraged to not bring pets to the event.

Drones are not allowed in Balboa Park without prior written authorization from the FAA and specific written permission from the event organizer.

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

- Keep valuables and cellphones in front pockets.
- Never leave bags or purses unattended.
- Keep children nearby and within sight.
- Be aware of your surroundings. If you see something, say something. To report any suspicious activity, call 9-1-1 immediately.

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 San Diego 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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