

THINGS TO DO > ENTERTAINMENT

## 30+ Bay Area holiday pop-ups, parties and performances for 2023

Here's a festive roundup of local ways to celebrate the holiday season.



Four authentic English pubs and the Bohemian Absinthe Bar, serve up hearty Christmas cheer at the Great Dickens Christmas Fair & Victorian Holiday Party. (Rich Yee)





By **BRITTANY DELAY** | [bdelay@bayareanewsgroup.com](mailto:bdelay@bayareanewsgroup.com)

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The holidays are just around the corner, and no matter how you celebrate the season, there's something for everyone around the Bay. From ice skating to holiday performances, light shows, art fairs and train rides, here's a sampling of ways to celebrate.

**Miracle and Sippin' Santa Pop Up Bars:** Thanksgiving week through New Years at several Bay Area venues, including Livermore's Fat Pigeon (Nov. 20-Jan. 6) and locations in Oakland and San Jose. Enjoy a pop-up Christmas cocktail experience featuring festive drinks, over-the-top decorations and exciting new mug designs to bring the holiday season to life. Free admission, drinks and food priced separately; [miraclepopup.com/locations](https://miraclepopup.com/locations); [sippinsantapopup.com/locations](https://sippinsantapopup.com/locations).

**Safeway Holiday Ice Rink:** Nov. 1-Jan. 15, 333 Post St., San Francisco. Skate through the holidays at San Francisco's favorite Union Square rink, which offers ice skating for all ages daily and special events scheduled throughout the holiday season. \$15-\$20. [unionsquareicerink.com/](https://unionsquareicerink.com/)

**SF Proper's Nutcracker Tea:** Nov. 3-Dec. 30, Villon, 45 McAllister St., San Francisco. SF Proper pastry chef Samara Wales presents a traditional Nutcracker Tea service with cookies, scones and bite size sandwiches plus a hot chocolate cart and special nutcracker takeaway. \$35-\$65. [properhotel.com/san-francisco/happenings/](https://properhotel.com/san-francisco/happenings/)

**'The Hip Hop Nutcracker':** 7 p.m. Nov. 17, Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway, Oakland. Enjoy tinsel with a twist as Tchaikovsky's 130-year-old ballet is reimagined as a holiday dance spectacle. This production features hip hop pioneer Kurtis Blow, a dozen all-star dancers, an onstage DJ and an electric violinist turning the beloved Tchaikovsky score on its head. \$44-\$82. [bit.ly/HipHopNutcracker2023](https://bit.ly/HipHopNutcracker2023)

**Merry Meritage:** Nov. 17-Jan. 7, The Meritage Resort and Spa, 875 Bordeaux Way, Napa. The Merry Meritage ice rink will be open daily for guests and locals to show off their skating skills and embrace the winter season. The resort's event lineup also includes artisan holiday markets, a tree lighting ceremony, s'more sessions, igloo experiences, tinsel teas and Santa visits. \$25 rink admission, other event prices vary. [meritageresort.com/merry-meritage](https://meritageresort.com/merry-meritage)

**Redding Garden of Lights Festival:** Nov. 17-Jan. 7, 1125 Arboretum Drive, Redding. Designed by renowned light artist Tres Fromme, this festival features more than one million twinkling lights. Guests can roam the McConnell Arboretum & Botanical Gardens, exploring winding paths leading through 10 acres of artfully illuminated and immersive displays, including "Candy Cane Causeway," "Polar Palace" and "Light Tunnels." \$0-\$30. [reddinggardenoflights.org/](https://reddinggardenoflights.org/)

**Après Village & Skate Rink:** Nov. 17-Jan. 28, Four Seasons Silicon Valley, East Palo Alto. Simulating a cozy mountainside retreat with mini-chalets and an outdoor skate rink, this seasonal pop-up features a festive, family-friendly village with hot cocoa, snow globe and winter sleigh photo experiences, and a new Après Village food truck. \$20 to \$30 skate rink admission, other prices vary. [bit.ly/ApresVillage2023](https://bit.ly/ApresVillage2023)

**Great Dickens Christmas Fair & Victorian Holiday Party:** Nov. 18-Dec. 17, The Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave., Daly City. Enjoy an immersive holiday adventure with hundreds of literary and historical characters. Roam four acres filled with Victorian theaters, pubs and dance halls while enticing aromas of roasted chestnuts and hearty foods fill the air and dozens of lamplit shops overflow with handmade gifts. \$0-\$45. [dickensfair.com/tickets/](https://dickensfair.com/tickets/)



WOODSIDE, CALIFORNIA – NOVEMBER 17: Visitors walk in the Walled Garden at Filoli Historic House and Garden during their "Holidays Media Preview Night" in Woodside, Calif., on Tuesday, Nov. 17, 2020. (Nhat V. Meyer/Bay Area News Group)

**Holidays at Filoli:** Nov. 18-Jan. 7, 86 Cañada Road, Woodside. Take in this premier Bay Area light attraction where thousands of glittering lights adorn the estate garden's trees, plants and hedges for a must-see experience. Don't forget to check out Santa Days, Holiday Tea in the Garden House, wreath-making parties and firepit experiences. \$0-\$39 admission.

[filoli.org/events/holidays/](https://filoli.org/events/holidays/)

**'Tis the Season for Science:** Nov. 18-Jan. 8, California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco. Science-lovers of all ages will revel this holiday season in winter-inspired activities including a penguin-themed puppet show, caribou crafts, snowflakes under a microscope and live shows. Admission prices vary.

[calacademy.org/tis-the-season-for-science](https://calacademy.org/tis-the-season-for-science)

**Holidays in Yountville:** Nov. 19-Jan. 1, various Yountville locations. Enjoy six weeks of holiday-related events including wine tastings, holiday movies, music performances, cooking classes, grapevine wreath making, holiday trivia night, cookie decorating and holiday light tours via the Napa Valley Wine Trolley. Prices vary. [yountville.com/events/holidays-in-yountville/](https://yountville.com/events/holidays-in-yountville/)

**A Merry-Achi Christmas:** 3 and 7:30 p.m. Nov. 24, 101 Paseo de San Antonio, San Jose. Latin Grammy nominees Maestro José Hernández and his Mariachi Sol de México return to Hammer Theatre with this festive, annual holiday show that includes mariachi favorites as well as beloved Christmas classics. \$35-\$45.

[hammertheatre.com/events-list/](https://hammertheatre.com/events-list/)

**'Enchant Christmas' San Jose:** Nov. 24-Dec. 31, PayPal Park, San Jose. Enchant Christmas offers a complete holiday experience including the world's largest Christmas tree maze, a decked out Christmas Village, an ice-skating trail, live entertainment and special themed days such as Ugly Holiday Sweater Night.

\$25-\$33. [enchantchristmas.com/san-jose-ca-paypal-park/](https://enchantchristmas.com/san-jose-ca-paypal-park/)

**Ice Skating by the Bay:** Nov. 24-Jan. 1, Del Monte Avenue and Washington Street, Monterey. Skate through the holidays with a scenic coastline backdrop at Custom House Plaza. \$13 to \$15. [iceskatingbythebay.com](https://iceskatingbythebay.com)

**Christmas in the Park:** Nov. 24-Jan. 1, Plaza de Cesar Chavez Park, 1 Paseo de San Antonio, San Jose. Christmas in the Park is back with a downtown walk-through that includes lights, trees, exhibits, performances, displays and hot chocolate. In addition, a Holiday Drive Through offers a fantastic light show programmed to themed holiday music. Park admission is free, drive through is \$30-\$35 per car. [christmasinthepark.com/](https://christmasinthepark.com/)

**Garden of D'Lights:** Nov. 24-Jan. 6, 1552 Bancroft Road, Walnut Creek. Explore Ruth Bancroft Garden's exciting winter holiday light exhibit, Garden of D'Lights, which includes three acres of illuminated cacti, succulents and other plants, all designed to transport you to a realm of wonder. \$0-\$29.

[ruthbancroftgarden.org/garden-of-dlights/](https://ruthbancroftgarden.org/garden-of-dlights/)





Thousands of holiday lights illuminate mature cacti, succulents and trees as visitors tour the 3.5 acre Ruth Bancroft Garden and Nursery on a cold evening in Walnut Creek, Calif.. (Jose Carlos Fajardo/Bay Area News Group)

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**Big Bad Voodoo Daddy Wild and Swingin' Holiday Party:** 8 p.m. Nov. 25, 2400 First St., Livermore. Swing into the holiday season with this Grammy-nominated band that delivers high-energy jazz and swing music for over 30 years and promises to bring their signature sound to the stage with classic holiday tunes and original hits. \$70-\$100. [bit.ly/BigBadVoodooDaddyHolidays](https://bit.ly/BigBadVoodooDaddyHolidays)

**Downtown Martinez Holiday Happenings:** Nov. 25-Dec. 23, various downtown Martinez locations. Enjoy a series of festive events including a tree lighting, a Santa's House pop-up, a Holiday Sip & Shop, a giveaway series and a Santa Beer Crawl. Prices vary. [downtownmartinez.org/](https://downtownmartinez.org/)

**Thrive City Winter Wonderland:** Nov. 29-Dec. 31, 1725 Third St., San Francisco. Celebrate the holidays at the Golden State Warrior's Thrive City with festive experiences including a tree lighting ceremony, ice skating, live entertainment and treats, plus Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Noon Year's Eve celebrations. Free admission. [chasecenter.com/thrive-city-winter-wonderland-2023](https://chasecenter.com/thrive-city-winter-wonderland-2023)

**Santa Train Jolly Journeys:** Nov. 30-Dec. 23, 1275 McKinstry St., Napa. All aboard for a merry adventure through Napa Valley. Begin your festive voyage at the station with cheerful carolers, hot cider or cocoa, photo ops with Santa and a merry mailing station for North Pole-bound postcards. \$80-\$200. [winetrain.com/plan-your-trip/santa-train-jolly-journeys/](https://winetrain.com/plan-your-trip/santa-train-jolly-journeys/)

**'Holiday Swingin' – A Kat Edmonson Christmas:** 8 p.m. Dec. 1, 2400 First St., Livermore. Clap your hands and tap your toes as the holiday spirit comes to life. Enjoy the smooth and soulful voice of Kat Edmonson as she performs classic holiday tunes and her own original songs, accompanied by a talented jazz ensemble. \$40-\$70. [bit.ly/KatEdmonsonChristmas](https://bit.ly/KatEdmonsonChristmas)

**Holidays with a Twist:** 8 p.m. Dec. 1 at Christ Church East Bay in Berkeley and Dec. 2 at 77 Van Ness Ave. in San Francisco. Join The International Orange Chorale of San Francisco for a freshly squeezed take on holiday classics, featuring newly composed works that reimagine and riff on holiday season melodies, carols and hymns. \$0-\$40. [iocsf.org/events](https://iocsf.org/events)

**Let's Glow SF 2023:** Dec. 1-10, various locations in San Francisco. Let's Glow SF, the country's largest holiday projection arts festival, will return to the Bay this holiday season with works projection mapped onto the facades of five iconic SF buildings, including the Ferry Building. Free. [downtownsf.org/things-to-do/lets-glow-sf](https://downtownsf.org/things-to-do/lets-glow-sf)

**Christmas on the Wharf:** Dec. 1-23, 201 Washington St., Monterey. Stroll along Monterey's Old Fisherman's Wharf this holiday season to enjoy visits from Santa, caroling and other live performances, and festive decorations including a majestic, 23-foot Christmas tree. Free admission. [bit.ly/ChristmasontheWarf](https://bit.ly/ChristmasontheWarf)

**Holiday Crafts at Randall Museum:** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 2, 199 Museum Way, San Francisco. Get crafty this winter at Randall Museum's annual Holiday Crafts Day. Learn how to roll beeswax candles and make handmade lip balm, then sweeten the season by constructing a candy house. Explore the museum for unexpected surprises plus toy train building and soap-making. Free admission. [randallmuseum.org/](https://randallmuseum.org/)

**Holiday Tamalada:** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 2, 1665 Fernside St., Redwood City. Redwood City is hosting it's second annual Holiday Tamalada, a hands-on tamale making and tasting workshop bringing together neighbors, friends and family for a joyful holiday season. \$69. [bit.ly/AHolidayTamalada](https://bit.ly/AHolidayTamalada)

**Redwood City's Hometown Holidays:** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Dec. 2, Courthouse Square, Downtown Redwood City. Enjoy a traditional holiday parade, live entertainment, food and drinks, carnival rides and games, photos with Santa, train rides and a petting zoo. Free admission. [redwoodcitydowntown.com/hometownholidays/](https://redwoodcitydowntown.com/hometownholidays/)

**'Winter Dreams – Musical Stories for the Holidays':** 2 to 4 p.m. Dec. 2, 1801 Lacassie Ave., Walnut Creek. Presenting a beautiful selection of holiday music, master storyteller Susan Strauss and local choir WomenSing join the Diablo Symphony Orchestra for a joyous, musical holiday celebration. \$0-\$40.

[bit.ly/DSOWinterDreams](https://bit.ly/DSOWinterDreams)

**Light Up the Night:** 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. Dec. 2, Crescent Drive, Downtown Pleasant Hill. Enjoy a night of fun activities including live music, dancing, arts and crafts, train rides, a Christmas tree lighting and visits with Santa. Free admission.

[pleasanthillca.org/888/Festivals-Events](https://pleasanthillca.org/888/Festivals-Events)

**Holidays at the Estate:** 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 2-3, 8761 Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg. Offering a warm welcome to the season, Ferrari-Carano Vineyards and Winery invites you to enjoy a splendidly decorated estate, festive entertainment, seasonal culinary treats crafted by chef Alec Graham and special pours of Ferrari-Carano's acclaimed wines. \$45. [bit.ly/HolidaysAtTheEstate](https://bit.ly/HolidaysAtTheEstate)

*Have a holiday event to add? Submit it online at [forms.gle/Cu9J6Ks2fQiQUcKk8](https://forms.gle/Cu9J6Ks2fQiQUcKk8).*

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