

5 Best Festive Destinations for the Holidays

Make one of these five festive destinations your home for the holidays!

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By Judy Koutsky

“Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh!” You’ve sung it dozens of times with your family, but what if you could do it in real life? When you spend the holidays at a resort, this is exactly the type of Christmas magic your kids get to experience. It may be difficult to press pause on your at-home traditions for a year, but vacation destinations really are primed to make sure your family builds new memories like no other.

“Going away for Christmas was fantastic because the trip was truly about spending time together with just our immediate family,” says Jann Fujimoto, whose kids loved their trip to Door County, WI. Instead of cooking and cleaning for guests, they spent the trip trying new activities like geocaching, going for winter hikes, and exploring all the local seasonal offerings. “We were totally transported into the holiday spirit,” adds Fujimoto. Even if you can’t skip the big family Christmas, you can head out of town anytime between Thanksgiving and New Year’s to experience all these great spots have to offer.



Big Cedar Lodge

Big Cedar Lodge, Ridgedale, Missouri

Located 15 minutes away from the resort town of Branson—home to the Silver Dollar City theme park, which is outfitted with 5 million lights and 1,000 decorated trees this time of year—the rustic Big Cedar Lodge looks like something out of Santa’s village. For your own piece of the North Pole, book a two-bedroom log cabin that features a decked-out Christmas tree, working fireplace, and a covered porch for enjoying a little crisp fresh air. And don’t forget to leave room for some special guests: Santa’s elves visit the resort nightly to tuck kids into bed, read holiday stories, and collect letters for the boss in red. Other don’t-miss holiday treats: an enormous Gingerbread Village, a seasonal scavenger hunt for kids, stocking decorating, storytime with Mrs. Claus, and a snowman ice-cream social.