

# Trips keep kids busy over the holidays



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**The Upper Canada Village's Alight at Night Festival has returned again this year. The annual festival is close to their one million light goal making the village brighter than ever. (Handout)**

I can hear the inner cries of many moms and dads -- my comrades in arms -- as the holiday season approaches: "Two weeks off school? How will we cope?"

Here are some ideas to keep your rambunctious brood outside and occupied over this long winter vacation:

## **VICTORIAN CHARM**

Introduce the kids to some simpler times at Upper Canada Village. Its Alight at Night Festival runs through Jan. 5, with a half-million lights decorating the historic buildings and streets. Located in Morrisburg, about 30 minutes from Brockville, this 19th-century village's annual festival includes horse-drawn wagon rides, a life-size toy train, plus holiday music and shopping. To check dates and festivities, see [uppercanadavillage.com](http://uppercanadavillage.com).

## **SHOWSHOES AND FIREWORKS**

During Christmas vacation, Blue Mountain Village near Collingwood will be open not only for skiing but also several Christmas-themed, non-ski activities. Included on its holiday roster are guided snowshoe treks, Saturday night fireworks, Santa visits, carolers and make-your-own Christmas ornament classes. World Snowboard Day will be celebrated at Blue with a Park Party on Dec. 30. The Village's annual outdoor and family friendly New Years Eve Party includes fireworks. See [bluemountain.ca](http://bluemountain.ca).

## **MERRY MOZART**

Toronto's Casa Loma and Opera Atelier are hosting performances and workshops through Dec. 30 with a Mozart's Magical Castle theme. Kids of all ages will be treated to excerpts from Mozart's most famous opera, The Magic Flute. Scavenger hunts, carolers and a 8-metre-high Christmas tree are also part of the fun. See [casaloma.org](http://casaloma.org).

## KISSING BOUGHS

Toronto's Todmorden Mills along Pottery Road brings back the Regency era at Christmas time with historic buildings decorated with evergreen garlands, kissing boughs, apples, candles and mistletoe. Sample 19th-century festive treats like Whim Wham and Hedgehog Topsy Cake, or take home a handmade Christmas decoration. Event times vary through Dec. 31. See [toronto.ca/museums-events](http://toronto.ca/museums-events).

## ANIMAL CRACKERS

The Toronto Zoo has at least two holiday events of note. Boxing Day's Christmas Treats Trek is an annual tradition during which families discover which treats are loved by which exotic animals. Half price admission applies all day Dec. 26. The Toronto Zoo's New Year's Eve Family Countdown starts at the family friend time of 8 p.m. (not midnight). Pre-purchased tickets are required. See [torontozoo.com](http://torontozoo.com).

## 3D STANLEY CUP

Through Dec. 31, Toronto's Hockey Hall of Fame is hosting an exclusive engagement of Stanley's Game Seven 3D. It's billed as hockey's first 3D film, mixing hockey action with 3D animation and classic footage of the most memorable moments in Canada's hockey history. See [hhof.com](http://hhof.com).

## MILITARY MAGIC

Toronto's Historic Fort York will serve up some 1826-style Christmas baking alongside a crackling fire inside the Officers' Mess. Christmas treats are for sale in The Museum Store. Event runs through Dec. 31. See [toronto.ca/museums-events](http://toronto.ca/museums-events).

**How do you keep your kids busy over holidays?**

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Local activities and events

Play dates or daycare

Longer trips

Other

I don't have kids

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## CANDY CANE COACH

An outdoor Rockin' New Year's Eve party will close out holiday events at Victoria Park in London, Ont. Until Dec. 31, the park will be adorned with 75,000 lights, tin soldiers, a jack-in-the-box and a nativity scene. There's free public skating 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Also watch for the festive train called the Candy Cane Coach. See [london.ca](http://london.ca).

## WINTER WONDERLAND

Montreal's annual Extravaganza runs to Jan. 5, transforming the old part of the city into a winter wonderland. The historic Place Jacques Cartier is awirl with twinkling lights, concerts, outdoor games and exhibitions. See [lesfeeriesduvieuxmontreal.info](http://lesfeeriesduvieuxmontreal.info).

**BRIGHT LIGHTS WEST**

Vancouver's annual Bright Nights festival transforms Stanley Park into a magical forest. There's even a mystical train that transports kids through the park straight into Santa's living room. Bright Nights is on now through Jan. 2. See [vancouver.ca](http://vancouver.ca)

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