

Events

This Santa-approved list was made (and checked twice) so you know where to go for the holliest-jolliest holiday fun in San Diego.

DR. SEUSS' HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS

Did you know that Whoville is actually in San Diego's [Balboa Park](#)? Every holiday season, the plaza outside Balboa Park's [Old Globe Theatre](#) is transformed into the town that came from the mind of San Diego's own Dr. Seuss. And every holiday season, the Theatre puts on an unbelievable production of Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*!

- Dates: November 3 - December 29, 2018

SKATING BY THE SEA

The breathtaking charm of [Hotel del Coronado](#) is undeniable any time of the year, but when it dons its lights and sparkles next to the water on a warm December night, it's unbeatable. It paints the perfect backdrop for an unforgettable—and completely San Diegan—experience as you ice skate right between the hotel and the ocean. Skating by the Sea, the outdoor seaside ice-skating rink, offers three-hour skate sessions daily. Check out the other outdoor skate rinks, too, at [Liberty Station](#) and [Hilton Bayfront](#) downtown.

- Dates: November 19, 2018 - January 1, 2019

OCEAN BEACH HOLIDAY PARADE

Nothing says "a San Diego holiday" like watching the festive celebration—which includes classic Woody cars as well as Kris Kringle himself—just steps from the beach. The surfer town of [Ocean Beach](#) has been a local holiday staple for nearly 40 years.

- Date: December 1, 2018

LITTLE ITALY'S CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

San Diego's [Little Italy](#) neighborhood always brings the charm, so it's no surprise that their Tree-Lighting Ceremony is a site to behold. The tree is actually a 25-foot tower of more than 1,000 vibrant Poinsettias, and the event includes live music, entertainment, holiday beverages and more.

- Date: December 1, 2018

SEAS 'N' GREETINGS, BIRCH AQUARIUM

[Birch Aquarium](#) at Scripps Institution of Oceanography is always a place of wonder, learning and adventure, but during the holidays it really gets into the spirit of the season. Enjoy different themed animal encounters, a scavenger hunt, live holiday music and, of course, Scuba Santa. Yes, Santa actually goes scuba diving in the tanks.

- Dates: December 1 - 31, 2018

BALBOA PARK DECEMBER NIGHTS

Balboa Park is the largest urban cultural park in the country and the cultural heart of San Diego. The park's two-day holiday celebration does not disappoint. Free of charge, this event lights up the night with bright decor, carolers, performances and delicious food and drinks from around the world.

- Dates: December 7-8, 2018

SAN DIEGO SANTA RUN 5K AND 1-MILE RACE

Santa Claus is coming to town, and he's lacing up his running shoes. Join him, beard and all, in San Diego's [Pacific Beach](#). Every 5K racer gets Santa shorts, a short-sleeve jacket, a hat, sunglasses, a belt and a big, white beard. The sea of Santas is a sight to see, and even more fun to be a part of.

- Date: December 8, 2018

PORT OF SAN DIEGO BAY PARADE OF LIGHTS

The magic of the holiday season meets the beauty of San Diego Bay with more than 100 private boats, decorated and twinkling with holiday lights. The annual [Port of San Diego Bay Parade of Lights](#) takes place over two weekends in December, with great places to take in the show on [Shelter Island](#), [Harbor Island](#), the [Embarcadero](#), [Seaport Village](#), Marina Park and Coronado's Ferry Landing.

- Dates: December 9 & 16, 2018

JUNGLE BELLS, SAN DIEGO ZOO

This is the meeting of two awesome things: animals and holidays. The world-famous [San Diego Zoo](#) is transformed into a magical winter wonderland during the season, with lighted animal sculptures, festive music, special holiday treats and a bunch of animals that really, really love the holidays.

- Dates: December 14, 2018 - January 6, 2019

OLD TOWN HOLIDAY IN THE PARK & LAS POSADAS

[Old Town San Diego](#) was the site of the first Spanish settlement on the West Coast, and today buzzes with 12 acres of Mexican heritage and historic sites. Join the seasonal festivities at Old Town Holiday in the Park to learn how residents celebrated the holidays in the 1800's with candlelight tours, holiday singers and more. Then join for the tradition of Las Posadas, a walking reenactment of the Christmas story.

- Date: December 15, 2018

GASLAMP HOLIDAY PET PARADE

It's well-known that San Diego is a pet-lover's paradise, and the holiday season is no exception. The annual Gaslamp Holiday Pet Parade marches one paw at a time through San Diego's historic [Gaslamp Quarter](#). Owners dress up their pets for the event—upping the cuteness even more—all ending at a Pet Expo featuring an award ceremony for best-dressed pets.

- Date: December 16, 2018

PORT OF SAN DIEGO HOLIDAY BOWL PARADE

The morning of the SDCCU Holiday Bowl—one of the great annual college football showdowns—the parade takes to the streets along San Diego Bay in beautiful downtown San Diego. Not to be missed, this procession is the largest balloon parade in the entire country, with float after float moving to the beat of the marching bands.

- Date: December 31, 2018