

Colonial Williamsburg

Grand Illumination fireworks first three Saturdays in December, Dec. 6, 13 and 20

Additional holiday programming happening throughout the week



Images courtesy of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

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WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (Nov. 21, 2025) – [Grand Illumination](#) returns to Colonial Williamsburg's Historic Area for three consecutive weekends this December as part of a series of holiday programming that is free and open to the public.

This year's festivities kick off on Thursday, Dec. 4 at 5 p.m. with the annual Community Christmas Tree Lighting on Duke of Gloucester Street at the Courthouse. Festivities continue with three consecutive weekends of holiday events, including the Celebration of the Yule Log on Fridays, December 5, 12, and 19, at 6 p.m. The procession begins at Capitol Circle and concludes in front of the Courthouse, where guests will enjoy music, caroling, and yuletide spirit.

Grand Illumination takes place on Saturdays, Dec. 6, 13, and 20, kicking off with a holiday proclamation at the Courthouse at 4:45 p.m., followed by illuminations at the Wythe House and Raleigh Tavern. Music and holiday cheer will fill the streets leading up to the events at the Capitol and the Palace starting at 6 p.m. Each night features a different lineup of musical acts including the Virginia Chorale, The Barksdale Treble Chorus, Reveille A Cappella, and the Virginia Gentleman UVA Men's Choir as well as Williamsburg favorites including the Colonial Singers of Williamsburg, the Jubilee Performers, William & Mary Appalachian Music, The Tarpley Ringers, Branch Fields, Margaret Woods, The Williamsburg Choraliers, the William & Mary Accidentals, the Company of Comedians, and more.

Two grand fireworks displays sponsored by the City of Williamsburg conclude the evening's festivities at the Palace and the Capitol starting at 7 p.m. Parking and general Grand Illumination details are available at the following link, [Grand Illumination FAQ 2025](#).

Additional seasonal programming that is free and open to the public includes:

- [Lighting of the Cressets](#), Nov. 21-22, 28-29 and Dec. 26-27 – Lit cressets (metal baskets of wood mounted from poles, an early form of street lighting) will illuminate historic Duke of Gloucester Street as musicians and dancers stroll the city. 6-9 p.m.
- [Merchants Square Tree Lighting](#), Nov. 29 – This Small Business Saturday tradition includes musical performances and a special appearance by Father Christmas. 5 p.m.
- [Community Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony](#), Dec. 4 – Located in the heart of the Historic Area across from the Courthouse, the 40-foot community Christmas tree will be illuminated with over 7,500 lights. This annual event, co-sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Williamsburg, includes caroling, the pageantry of the Colonial Williamsburg Fifes & Drums, and a reading of *The Night Before Christmas*. 5-5:30 p.m.
- [Celebration of the Yule Log](#), Dec. 5, 12, 19 – The Yule log will be hauled by a wagon from Capitol Circle to Market Square where it will be added to a bonfire accompanied by holiday music, festivities, and the lighting of the cressets. 6-7:30 p.m.

Holiday festivities continue daily throughout the season in Colonial Williamsburg's Historic Area, Merchants Square and at the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg. Colonial Williamsburg historic sites are open daily to ticketed guests from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg are open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. with [Artful Winter Evenings](#) extended hours and special programming from 5-7 p.m. every Thursday in December.

For more information on ticketed holiday programming and dining experiences, explore the Colonial Williamsburg [Holiday Planner](#). To purchase tickets and find up-to-date event information, visit colonialwilliamsburg.org. Follow Colonial Williamsburg on [Facebook](#) and [@colonialwmsburg](#) on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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About The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation preserves, restores and operates Virginia's 18th-century capital of Williamsburg. Innovative and interactive experiences highlight the relevance of the American Revolution to contemporary life and the importance of an informed, active citizenry. The Colonial Williamsburg experience includes more than 600 restored or reconstructed original buildings, renowned museums of decorative arts and folk art, extensive educational outreach programs for students and teachers and 18th-century inspired culinary options from historic taverns situated along historic Duke of Gloucester Street. Colonial Williamsburg Resorts complement the experience, offering guests five unique hotel properties including the iconic Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star, AAA Five Diamond Williamsburg Inn, newly renovated Williamsburg Lodge-Autograph Collection, Williamsburg Woodlands Hotel and Suites, the Griffin Hotel, and authentic 18th-century Colonial Houses. The resort offers a range of events and amenities including four historic taverns, 15 food and beverage outlets providing exquisite culinary experiences from casual to elegant dining, the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club featuring 36 holes designed by Robert Trent Jones Sr. and his son Rees Jones, a world-class full-service spa and fitness center, pools, meeting and flexible event spaces, and scenic gardens providing the perfect venue for weddings and special events. Merchants Square, built alongside the Historic Area in 1935 as one of the first planned shopping districts in the United States, features more than 40 specialty boutiques with products ranging from apparel to fine jewelry, art, specialty foods and gifts. Philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and hospitality operations sustain Colonial Williamsburg's educational programs and preservation initiatives.

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