

Faux Snow

You can't stop Central Floridians from enjoying a white winter. It might not fall naturally, but there are plenty of places to enjoy fun, frozen festivities in the area. Grab your gloves, and let's defy Mother Nature.

Written by **Kristen Manieri**

Consider Gaylord Palms as your place for the ultimate "Christmas-crawl." Frolic with the family for hours as you explore the resort — dexterously decked out in holiday décor, complete with a 54-foot Christmas tree. Catch one of four live shows on stage at the Emerald Plaza, visit Santa, and don't miss our favorite way to occupy the family — the Hidden Holiday Gnome Hunt. Your trek will culminate at **ICE! at Gaylord Palms**, where you and your gang brave the 9-degree temperatures in signature hooded parkas as you traverse wintry scenes guaranteed to take your frosty breath away. With more than 2 million pounds of ice packed into a 100-acre winter wonderland, ICE! certainly is the North Pole of Central Florida. www.gaylordhotels.com/gaylord-palms



The ICE! Slides, inside ICE! at Gaylord Palms, are a guest favorite.

Looking to keep those tootsies toasty? Check out **Celebration** for that fun, festive, but not-so-frosty feel. With nightly "snow fallings" through December, kids can slip and slide around Celebration Town Center in man-made snow. Clean up on the holiday fun, filled with sudsy snowflakes, trolley train rides, horse-drawn carriages and, of course, visits from Santa. **PLAYGROUND Tip:** Be sure to bring extra towels to wipe down with before returning home. www.celebrationtowncenter.com

For those of you yearning to enjoy the nightly breeze this time of year, **Light Up UCF** presents 50 nights of holiday cheer. Beginning November 20 and running through January 10, UCF's Holiday Film Festival is packed with festive flicks such as *The Polar Express* and *Miracle on 34th Street*, all brought to you on an outdoor screen. Treat the "fam" to a Rockettes show inside the arena, and delight in the animated outdoor light show around the ice-skating rink. Attractions like Santa's Workshop, Kris Kringle's Carousel and a Ferris wheel top off an evening of complete holiday immersion. www.lightupucf.com

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Snow on the Big Screen

Dreaming of a white Christmas? On December 4 at 7 p.m., the city of Winter Park and Enzian theater will present two free back-to-back holiday classics on an outdoor screen in Central Park: *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* and *White Christmas*. www.enzian.org



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Kids enjoy manufactured snow at RDV Sportsplex's Snow Fest event in Maitland.



Hop in the family sleigh and head out west — well, west of Orlando, that is. Plant Street transforms into magical merriment during **Light Up Winter Garden**. Fifteen tons of snow provides the slippery slopes of a stellar sledding course. Downtown Winter Garden glows with thousands of twinkling lights, and festive tunes fill the chilly night air, courtesy of carolers and holiday performers. Chillin' in Winter Garden, complete with Santa visits and yummy holiday treats, the North Pole won't seem so far away on Friday, December 4 between the hours of 6 and 9 p.m. www.wintergarden-fl.gov

Imagine how cool it would be to take your kids to the North Pole to meet Santa. SeaWorld's Wild Arctic transforms into a polar paradise at **The Polar Express Experience**, complete with frigid temperatures, a towering Christmas tree, village décor and Santa with his gift-laden sleigh (parents, get your own gifts; these are just props). While in the North Pole, be sure to wish the belugas, the polar bears and that ginormous walrus "Happy holidays!" Continue your stroll around the park, where glistening snow flurries are found at SeaWorld's Waterfront and the *Shamu Christmas ... Miracles* show conveys the true spirit of the season. We're excited about the three new shows this year. All we can say is, there will be ice-skating to watch, sea lions with extraordinary skills and "Sesame Street" pals to make your kiddies giggle, now through January 3. www.seaworld.com

Snowball fight! You and your family can romp around in giant piles of snow, perfect for friendly battles or target practice, in the new snowball target range at the **RDV Sportsplex Snow Fest**. No need to worry about your little one getting trampled; RDV will have a snowy area just for toddlers to explore. Ice-skate to DJ tunes inside the Ice Den, get your face painted by an elf, bounce in inflatable castles and sip hot cocoa on Saturday, December 19 from 2-6 p.m. www.mvpsportsclubs.com

Find the magic of the season at the "Kingdom." On select evenings throughout November and December, Disney's Magic Kingdom opens its gates for an after-hours holiday bash with **Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party**. Kicking off at 7 p.m., Mickey's Once Upon a Christmastime Parade features dancing snowflakes, horse-drawn sleighs and character favorites decked out in holiday duds. The evening continues with live stage shows, character meet and greets and an unforgettable fireworks display over Cinderella Castle, bejeweled with 200,000 twinkling lights. Complimentary hot cocoa and cookies will be served on Main Street, U.S.A., where snow flurries float through the air, filling your family with that holly jolly feeling. All of Magic Kingdom's favorite attractions will be open as well. This event requires a separate admission. www.disneyworld.com

Set your heart aglow as thousands of twinkling lights blanket Cranes Roost Park on Saturday, December 5 at **Uptown Altamonte's Light Up the Holidays**. Snow floats through a sky dazzled by a spectacular fireworks display. Gaze at the area's largest Christmas tree, personally deliver your wish list to Santa, and enjoy a festive stroll around the Roost. The lights will sparkle and shine throughout December as Cranes Roost doles out a steady schedule of holiday-inspired concerts and movies. www.uptownaltamonte.com

Come on, Bambi ... it only takes a few laps around the rink to master those ice-skating skills. Check out these frosty spots for a fun way to burn off some of the sugar cookie calories.

Light Up UCF
Orlando
www.lightupucf.com

RDV Ice Den
Maitland
www.mvpsportsclubs.com

The Ice Factory
Kissimmee
www.icefactory.com

Central Park West
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www.cityofwinterpark.org

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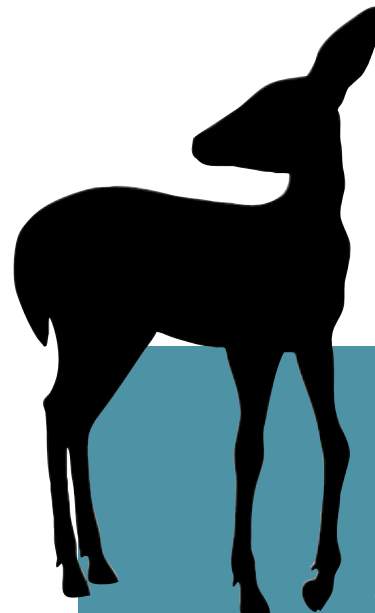
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