

Enjoy a magical Christmas in *Shakespeare's England*

Enjoy a magical Christmas in Shakespeare's England with a host of seasonal activities including the chance to see Father Christmas, festive plays, carol concerts, candlelit tours, craft fairs, Christmas markets, a Royal Shakespeare Company performance of *Wendy & Peter Pan* and the chance to see the spectacular Shakespeare Birthplace lightshow. Shakespeare's England has all the magical ingredients you need this Christmas.

Christmas markets will return to Bridge Street in Stratford-upon-Avon from Thursday 26 November to Thursday 17 December. Visit the **Shipston on-Stour** Victorian evening on Friday 4 December from 5:45pm - 8pm. The lights are switched on in **Royal Leamington Spa** on 15 November, in **Stratford-upon-Avon** on 26 November and in **Kenilworth** on 27 November. Visit **Yuletide Fayres** in Leamington every Sunday from 22 November – 20 December. The popular **Warwick Victorian Christmas Evening** featuring craft stalls and traditional entertainment is on Thursday 26 November when the lights are switched on.

See brand new productions by the **Royal Shakespeare Company**. *Wendy & Peter Pan* runs from 13 November – 31 January in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. This spectacular production played to packed houses in 2013 and will be revived with the original set and costumes. In the Swan Theatre *Queen Anne* runs from 19 November – 23 January and focuses on the relationship between Queen Anne and the Duchess of Marlborough. *Love for Love* runs from 28 October – 22 January and is performed for the first time by the RSC.

See **Shakespeare's Birthplace** in a whole new light as the Tudor walls are illuminated from 26 November – 19 December. Wander into the garden to experience a magical interactive illumination - all completely free! There will also be Tudor Christmas talks every day from 21 - 24 December at the Birthplace. At Anne Hathaway's Cottage play traditional parlour games and listen to festive readings, make a Christmas cracker and foam wreath, join carol singers and meet Victorian costumed guides. Halls Croft has a display contrasting a Christmas spent at home in the first World War and Christmas spent on the battlefield whilst Harvard House will be recreating Christmas as it would have been at a 17th Century Tudor merchants house.

The Christmas season at **Warwick Castle** runs from 16 November - 3 January. Treat little ones to *Breakfast with Santa* - included in Castle entry on dates in November and December - with games, carols, a special gift and the chance to meet Father Christmas. Enjoy *The Princess Tower* and join other guests on a stunning *Torch-Lit Tour*, or head to the State Rooms for *Stories with Santa*. Savour a traditional menu at a *Great Hall Mediaeval Banquet* or journey through the Mediaeval, Georgian and Victorian eras experiencing sword

fighting and a pistol duel at the *Great Hall Dine*

Through Time. Celebrate in style at the *Great Hall Christmas Ball* with a 3-course dinner, disco and entertainment. And welcome 2016 with *The New Year's Eve Great Hall Banquet*, an evening of entertainment from some of the Castle's best-loved characters.

Enjoy '*Christmas at the Castle*' at **Kenilworth Castle** on the 12 & 13 December. See the gatehouse decorated from greenery from around the Castle. Enjoy crafts, storytelling and meet a very special guest in his grotto.

Join the internationally acclaimed **Orchestra of the Swan** for a programme of festive favourites! The concert which takes place on 12 December at 7:30pm includes music by Vivaldi, Poulenc, Rutter and many other seasonal favourites set within the beautiful Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon. Tickets from £15.50.

Visit **Batsford Arboretum** on the 5 & 6 December and see Santa complete with donkeys! Families can select their Christmas trees and buy discounted Christmas decorations (discounted for that weekend only). On Boxing Day enjoy a stroll followed by mulled wine and hot drinks in the café.

Take part in a wreath making adult workshop on Saturday 5 December at **Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum**. Decorate and embellish a wreath to take home. Cost is £20 per person. Please book in advance. Santa returns on Saturday 12 December. Receive a special gift, take part in craft activities, enjoy refreshments and listen to the Coventry Philharmonic Choir sing favourite carols. Free, drop in event suitable for the whole family.

Stratford ArtsHouse will play host to their first professional pantomime this year as the magical tale of *Cinderella* is brought to the stage. Running from 19 - 27 December, the ArtsHouse will welcome a professional cast, plus children from two local dance schools Tap 'n' Groove and Sarah Cooke's School of Dance.

Watch *Jack and the Beanstalk* at the **Royal Spa Centre** from 5 December – 2 January. Take the family to see if Jack can save the day, retrieve the harp and win the heart of the Princess. With spectacular scenery, stupendous costumes, hilarious slapstick and bags of audience participation, *Jack and the Beanstalk* promises to be a treat for all the family!

Visit **Hanbury Hall** and see Father Christmas each weekend in December along with children's crafts activities. The house and gardens will be decorated using a traditional Christmas song theme.

Hill Close Gardens in Warwick are holding their 'Spirit of Christmas' on Sunday 6 December from 2 - 5pm. Activities include 'Search for Santa in the gardens', Bottle Tombola, Christmas lights around the gardens, Candle lit nativity garden, mulled wine and Christmas carols plus children's craft activities.

The **Warwick Rocks** Christmas event takes place in Warwick's Market Square on Sunday 6 December. Watch two Christmas favourites on the big screen, *Frozen* in the afternoon and *Elf* in the early evening. This event is free to attend, wrap up warm, bring a chair and sit back while also sampling the fabulous street food on offer and perhaps a hot chocolate or two.

Watch *The Three Musketeers* at **Playbox Theatre** on selected dates in December and January. Be transported to the studios, the back lot, the lavish world of film making in the 1930s for a fabulous extravaganza set in the 17th century telling of D'Artagnan leaving his rural home to travel to Paris to become a musketeer. His life changes when he meets Athos, Porthos and Aramis, who live by the motto "All for one, one for all". With swashbuckling fights, romance and treachery, cunning plots and deceit, the story is one of the most loved with its heroes and heroines. The cost is £14 standard & £8 concessions.

Wander around a winter garden and craft market at **Hogarth's** in Dorridge in December on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoon. Entry is free! Find craft huts full of festive fayre, including mulled wine, a beer hut, sausage stall and lots more! A photographer will take a memento photo with Santa for £5 per child.

Enjoy Morris, Mumming and Music from 24 – 26 December at **The Fleece Inn** near Evesham. Visitors can see Father Christmas, experience traditional Mumming and see the Bretforton Silver Band perform plus diners can enjoy meals by candlelight from 1 – 23 December which, along with the roaring open fires and twinkling decorations, add to the festive atmosphere.

Spend New Year's Eve at **Wroxall Abbey Hotel & Estate** and stay overnight with a Gala Dinner from £195 per person or a 2 night stay for £250 per person (based on 2 people sharing a double room in the Mansion). The Gala Dinner includes champagne and canapés, 5-course dinner, entertainment by the Junction 2 band, guest appearance by Pipe Major Martin Hewins for the traditional swirl of the pipes plus a disco and dancing. Prices for the Dinner are £109 per person. Enjoy a New Year's Day Brunch served from 11.30am - 3.00pm including a selection of hot and cold dishes for £25.95 per person.

Dine in splendour at **Ettington Park** and enjoy a Black Tie Downton Abbey event on 4 & 19 December for £79 per person. Sherlock Holmes Murder Mystery festive dinners take place on 11 & 18 December & 8 January. Enjoy detective work and dining for £50 per person.

Celebrate New Year's Eve with a champagne and canapé reception, black tie dinner and dancing. DBB from £210 per person based on 2 people sharing a room. Add an extra 24 hours to include a ticket to the New Year's Day racing at Cheltenham from £330 per person.

Celebrate New Year's Eve in style at **The Welcombe Hotel in Stratford-upon-Avon** with a themed Masquerade Gala Dinner on Thursday 31 December. The extravagant occasion includes watching a fire eater, canapés & champagne reception, 5 course gourmet dinner and dancing to a live band from £95 per person.

Listen to Christmas carols at the **Church Street Townhouse** in Stratford-upon-Avon every Tuesday in December from 7 - 8pm. Enjoy mince pies, mulled wine and festive beers whilst savouring the festive atmosphere.

Celebrate Christmas at **The Falcon** in Stratford-upon-Avon at one of their special Party Nights on 4, 5, 11, 12, 18 & 19 December from £30 per person. The evening starts at 7pm, dinner at 7:30pm and dancing till late. On 3 December, guests will have the opportunity to meet, watch and to eat with the award winning Head Chef, Phil Bailey. Cost is £29.50 per person.

Enjoy a delicious 2 and 3 course festive menu from 30 November – 24 December at **The Bell in Alderminster**. Sit down to lunch on Christmas Day with Champagne Kir & canapés, 3 courses followed by mince pies & coffee. Christmas Party Nights take place on 4, 11 & 18 December with music and dancing.

For something innovative visit "*Slopeside, Stratford in the Alps*" at **Riverside** in Stratford upon Avon. The UK's largest wooden structure will be converted into a party scene in the Alps for a number of nights with street food, pop up deck chair cinema, vintage photo booth, Euro Pop disco and a karaoke competition!

Spend Christmas Day enjoying a relaxing lunch at **The Stratford**. Enjoy a glass of sparkling wine and a 4-course lunch in Quills Restaurant. Lunch is served from 12.30pm - 2.30pm. Price per guest is £79 or £39.50 for children aged 5-12. FREE for children aged 4 and under.

Enjoy a 2 or 3 night special break at **Mallory Court** just outside Royal Leamington Spa. Arrive on Christmas Eve for mince pies, mulled wine and carols followed by dinner. On Christmas Day enjoy a full English breakfast then later a glass of Champagne prior to a 4 course lunch and in the evening a light buffet supper. On Boxing Day, enjoy a walk after breakfast and in the afternoon relax with tea and biscuits followed by a 3 course dinner that evening. Prices from £395 for a 2 night break and £495 for a 3 night break.

Attend the Masquerade Ball at the **Alveston Manor** in Stratford-upon-Avon on Fridays and Saturdays from 27 November - 19 December from 7pm - midnight. Enjoy a fabulous 3 course meal then hit the dance floor with your mystery partners. Cost is £34 per person. Stay overnight in a classic room, including full English breakfast. Fridays is £50 per person, per night or Saturdays is £65 per person, per night.

Spend Christmas Eve night at **The Ardencote**. The break includes use of the leisure facilities, tea, coffee & mince pies, kids swimming club, a winter Pimms drinks reception where the Claverdon Choir will sing carols, a candlelit 3 course dinner, accommodation in a twin/double bedroom and Full English Breakfast on Christmas morning for £99 per person.

For more information on Christmas in Shakespeare's England please visit

<http://shakespeares-england.co.uk/christmas-shakespeares-england>

or call 01789 260 677

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Notes to editors

Shakespeare's England is the official destination management organisation for Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick Districts. It is a public-private sector partnership representing the leading tourism businesses and organisations in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick, Royal Leamington Spa, Kenilworth and surrounding market towns and villages. For more information visit please visit www.shakespeares-england.co.uk/content/about-us

More information on Shakespeare's England can be found at www.shakespeares-england.co.uk www.facebook.com/ShakespearesEngland and Twitter [@ShakespearesEng](https://twitter.com/ShakespearesEng)

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