

Enjoy plenty of festive fun in *Shakespeare's England!*

Enjoy plenty of festive fun in Shakespeare's England with a host of seasonal activities including the chance to see Father Christmas, listen to festive plays and carol concerts, enjoy candlelit tours, craft fairs & markets and see a Royal Shakespeare Company performance of *The Tempest*. Shakespeare's England has all the special components you need for a magical Christmas this year.

The fabulous **Christmas markets** will be held on Bridge Street in Stratford-upon-Avon on the last five Thursdays in the run up to Christmas - 24 November, 1, 8, 15 & 22 December. Visit the **Shipston on-Stour** Rotary Victorian evening on Friday 2 December from 6pm - 8pm. The lights are switched on in **Royal Leamington Spa** on 20 November, in **Stratford-upon-Avon** on 24 November and in **Kenilworth** on 25 November and 2 December. Visit **Yuletide Fayres** in Leamington every Sunday from 20 November. The **Warwick Victorian Christmas Evening** featuring craft stalls and traditional entertainment is on 24 November when the lights are switched on. The **Lantern Parade** takes place in Leamington Spa on Sunday 4 December from 4pm – 5pm.

The **Royal Shakespeare Company** concludes the 400th anniversary year with a production of Shakespeare's late play, *The Tempest* which runs from 8 November – 21 January. This captivating story of magic, spells and spirits sees the skills at theatre-making come together with digital power to create an innovative production which provides the perfect introduction to Shakespeare for families. Combine seeing a play with festive dining at the Rooftop Restaurant with stunning winter views across the River Avon. 2 courses are available at £19.95 and 3 courses for £24.95.

Visit **Shakespeare's Birthplace** to see how the Tudors decorated their homes for Christmas and listen to a talk about Christmas in the Tudor period. Celebrate the start of advent the Victorian way at **Anne Hathaway's Cottage** on 3 & 4 December. Explore the pastimes the Hathaway family would have taken part in and listen to stories of Christmas past. See the cottage decorated in Victorian Christmas decor or try your hand at decorating festive biscuits. Discover how Christmas has changed in the 400 years since the Halls lived at **Hall's Croft**. Become a Tudor fashionista at **Shakespeare's New Place** and look like William Shakespeare with their make and take Tudor ruff activity. *Garden of Curious Amusements* takes place at New Place from 15 – 17 December. Step through the grand oak and bronze doors and let their muses dazzle and surprise you on a fantastical dream-like journey (*ticketed event*).

Younger visitors at **Warwick Castle** can enjoy plenty of time with Father Christmas with the all new *Santa's Stately Breakfast*, a magical feast for families. Or experience a magical sleepover in the winter wonderland of Knight's Village, welcoming guests for its first festive season (closed 24/25 December). New Santa **Sleepovers** are available on 2, 3, 9, 10, 17-23 December, complete with an Elf wakeup call and story time with Santa. Spend the night in Woodland Lodge by the River Avon from £40pppn based on four guests sharing, including breakfast and two days Castle entry with car parking.

Visit the **Stratford-upon-Avon Christmas Fayre** at Stratford Race-course from 4 – 6 November. The show's 100 exhibitors will be selling a wide mix of artisan designs & crafts, creative & unusual homewares and fabulous foods. Plus there's a Christmas Cookery Theatre with top chefs, yuletide music from a trio of Victorian minstrels and Father Christmas in his Grotto. Ticket price is £5 (in advance) £6 (on the gate) Children under 16yrs FREE.

Stratford Artshouse provides entertainment for the family with *Aladdin*, the magical Christmas pantomime which flies into Stratford from 14 - 27 December. Featuring a West End cast, spectacular scenery and costumes, dazzling special effects and plenty of audience participation, this is set to be a favourite this festive season. See a concert entitled "*Mozart & Moravec*" on 6 December by **Orchestra of the Swan**. Tickets cost from £9.50 to £27.50.

Enjoy crafts, storytelling and visiting Father Christmas in his grotto at **Kenilworth Castle** on 10 & 11 December. On 2 December take part in a Christmas wreath making workshop and learn about the different techniques used to make a special wreath to take home.

At **Ragley Hall** take part in festive cookery and floral decoration classes. Learn how to create table decorations, floral swags and wreaths plus make petit fours, festive stuffing and chutneys. Christmas group tours, winter garden tours and Christmas lunches are also available throughout December for groups of 12 – 54 guests.

Enjoy a special evening of wassailing and carol singing at **Hill Close Gardens** in Warwick on 11 December. Join musicians singing traditional songs around the lighted trees with Morris dancing and folk carols followed by a Christmas wassail with a local choir. The cost is £6 (includes a festive drink and mince pie).

Compton Verney celebrates the season with Christmas treats on 3 & 4 and 10 & 11 December with Father Christmas making an appearance. A stunning fireworks display will end the evening on 11 December.

Enjoy the thrill of horse-racing at **Warwick Race-course** on 8 December with live music, entertainment and racing. Special hospitality packages are available which include admission to the racecourse, race card, glass of bubbles, real ale, cider or winter pims and festive 3 course feast for just £55 per person.

Where better to source your shopping needs than **Bicester Village** which transforms into a magical wonderland of twinkling lights and festive fabulousness. Entertainment will take place throughout the Village, adding merriment to shopping days. A selection of festive menus will be available from favourites such as Soho House & Co's farmshop restaurant, Villandry Grand Café and Pret A Manger.

Stuck for a gift idea for children then buy '**Tales of Shakespuss**' which re-tells elements of Shakespeare's plays with cute animal characters. Available from booksellers including Amazon and Waterstones, they are priced at £5.99 each.

Take part in a festive *Sherlock Holmes Murder Mystery* evening on 22 December & 13 January at **Ettington Park Hotel**. Enjoy a glass of Buck's Fizz with a 3-course dinner and interactive murder mystery entertainment. Cost is £55 per person. Stay overnight from £55 per person based on 2 people sharing a classic room with full traditional breakfast.

Sample award-winning seasonal dining in the beautiful panelled restaurant at **Mallory Court**. A 3-course lunch costs from £32.50 per person or 3-course dinner from £49.50 per person. *Not available 24/25/26 & 31 December*. On Christmas Eve listen to the Boys and Mens Choir with a glass of mulled wine and mince pie followed by a 3 course supper in the Brasserie with coffee. Cost is £35 per person.

Glam yourself up for the New Year's Eve 'black and white' celebrations at **The Arden Hotel** with a Champagne and canapé reception, gourmet 4 course dinner followed by music from The Platinum Rogues and dancing until 1:00am. Midnight munchies and hot chocolate will also be available before departing! Cost is £95 per person.

Enjoy a festive traditional afternoon tea at **The Stratford Hotel**. Prices are from £18 per person for afternoon tea, £23 with a glass of prosecco or £25 with a glass of Lanson champagne or the cocktail of the week.

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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