

Entertainment

7 greats ways to spend Christmas Day at places in and around Philly

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 **ADVENTURE AQUARIUM**

Scuba Santa at the Adventure Aquarium

by **Grace Dickinson**, FOR DoTHIS

It's Christmas Day: Maybe your household doesn't partake, or maybe you do celebrate, but one too many sugar cookies (or vexing situations with Aunt Anne and Uncle Joe) have you aching to get out of the house.

What are the options? There are a plethora of places in and around Philadelphia that are ready to welcome you into their doors on Dec. 25. From ice skating to garden marveling to *Rogue One* revelling, activities of all sort abound to create a fun and carefree Sunday for those of all ages.

Ice skate at Blue Cross RiverRink Winterfest



Whether looking to work off an afternoon feast or simply seeking a recreational activity outdoors, the [Blue Cross RiverRink](#) invites you to hit the ice starting at 1 p.m. on Christmas Day. Housing the only Olympic-size skating rink in the city, alongside a warm, chalet-inspired lodge, kids' area with arcade games, fire pits and more, the Penn's Landing area oasis offers hours of fun amidst waterfront views and a festive atmosphere.

1-8:30 p.m.; 101 S. Columbus Blvd.; www.delawareriverwaterfront.com

Longwood Gardens



Beat the normal weekend crowds that flock to [Longwood Gardens](#) by heading out on Christmas Day, when the Kennett Square attraction opens bright and early at 9 a.m. and remains open until 10 p.m. Decked out for the season, find half-a-million lights illuminating the verdant grounds, featuring 6,000 seasonal plants and 50 trees bedecked with sparkling red, gold, and green glass ornaments. In addition to the abundance of flowers and greenery to explore, choreographed fountains dance outdoors and, beginning at 4:30 p.m., fire pits light up to keep visitors warm. Organ singalongs will also take place every hour, on the hour, at the Longwood Organ from 2-8 p.m. (excluding 5 p.m.).

9 a.m.-10 p.m.; 1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square; www.longwoodgardens.org

Celebrate Being ___ at Christmas



Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, atheist or none of the above – it doesn't matter what your background is at the [National Museum of American Jewish History](#), welcoming all to come celebrate on Christmas Day. Hosting its annual [Being ___ at Christmas](#), guests are invited to fill in the blank during a day of live music, face painting, clay crafting, storytelling and more. The ticketed event includes admission to the museum, so be sure to leave extra time for wandering around while you're there.

10 a.m. -5:30 p.m.; 101 S. Independence Mall East; www.nmajh.org

Adventure Aquarium

Alongside sea creatures of every kind, the Adventure Aquarium welcomes several special holiday guests to its tanks, including Scuba Santa who swims with sharks, sea turtles and stingrays in a 760,000-gallon exhibit. Be sure to explore the aquarium's two newest installations of the year, [a shark bridge](#) that puts you just inches above Sand Tiger, Sandbar and Nurse sharks, and "The Little Blue Beach" where you can see the smallest penguins in the world. Does Christmas get cuter than that?!

11 a.m.-3 p.m.; 1 Riverside Dr., Camden; www.adventureaquarium.com

One Liberty Observation Deck



Whether celebrating Christmas or not, 'tis the perfect time for gifting those you love and also treating yourself. For a truly Philly-style present, it's hard to beat the 57-floor ascension up to [One Liberty Observation Deck](#) where some of the best skyline views await. Currently the tallest standing attraction within Philadelphia, the observatory offers 360-degree views that are prime for photos and admiring in the cityscape. On Christmas, bring the kiddos (12 years and under) and score one free admission per adult admission.

10 a.m.-5 p.m.; 1650 Market St.; www.phillyfromthetop.com

See a movie



For many, sitting in a movie theater seat on Christmas Day is as much of a tradition as sitting on Santa's lap in the days leading up. Most area theaters are open, meaning you can watch your two of the hottest movie stars in the world have a space/adventure romance (Jennifer Lawrence and Chris Pratt's *Passengers*), watch two heavy-hitters give a masterclass in acting (Denzel Washington and Viola Davis in *Fences*), enjoy one of Disney's top-rated films of the year ([Moana](#)) or relax with another film of your choice. Be sure to call ahead for hours and showtimes at the location nearest to you.

Check nearest theater for hours; Locations vary

Dine and drink at Philly area restaurants



Looking to dine out on Christmas Day? While the majority of restaurants are closed, there are still a ton of options, including [The Little Lion](#), [South Philadelphia Tap Room, Pub & Kitchen](#), [Royal Izakaya](#) (with its new sushi bar), and more. Count on most hotels with fine-dine dining establishments to remain open, such as [Lacroix at The Rittenhouse](#) and [XIX Nineteen at the Hyatt at The Bellevue](#), both hosting a special Christmas brunch. In the event you're not looking for dinner but instead to restock an exhausted booze supply, [Bottle Bar East](#) is the place to go. The Fishtown spot will open at 3 p.m. for all those who need to wash down any family arguments with a sudsy pint of beer, inviting you to take a seat at the bar until normal closing time or grab a six-pack to go.

Hours vary per restaurant; Select restaurants citywide

Washington Crossing Reenactment



Thousands head to [Washington Cross Historic Park](#) on the banks of the Delaware River each Christmas to see President Washington and his troop of reenactors carry out the monumental crossing of 1776, said to be a turning point of the Revolutionary War. Interact with hundreds of “soldiers” clad in Continental dress and listen to an inspiring pre-crossing speech by our nation’s first president. While the crossing officially goes down at 1 p.m., arrive early to secure a prime vantage point.

*Noon-3 p.m.; Crossing at 1 p.m.; 1112 River Rd., Washington Crossing;
www.washingtoncrossingpark.org*



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