



Colonial Williamsburg

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION

A Festival of Light and Thunder: Grand Illumination 2017

A day of holiday family fun culminates in the treasured tradition of free music, merriment and fireworks over Virginia's 18th-century capitol



Colonial Williamsburg invites holiday revelers to enjoy the warmth and merriment of Grand Illumination on Sunday, Dec. 3, culminating in “A Festival of Light and Thunder” with free fireworks demonstrations over iconic Historic Area sites.

“The holidays are a welcome season when we gather with family, friends and our community to embrace light and hope,” said Mitchell B. Reiss, president and CEO of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. “As we do every December, we welcome our neighbors and guests from near and far to join us for a one-of-a-kind evening of warmth, music, and of course, traditional fireworks, at this year’s Grand Illumination.”

The day’s fun begins when historic sites open to ticketed guests from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., followed by the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Liberty’s Ice Pavilion is open from noon to 8 p.m. on Duke of Gloucester Street near Colonial Williamsburg’s Merchants Square.

Daytime programs include the Christmas Decorations Walking Tour at 9:15 a.m., 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. and Talk of the Town: Christmastide at 10 a.m. Each requires a special ticket. Midwinter Stories at 10:30 a.m. is open to guests with Colonial Williamsburg admission, as is The Spirit of the Season at the Raleigh Tavern at 1, 1:30, 2, 2:30, 3, and 3:30 p.m., which requires a free reservation ticket. A Victorian Christmas at 12:30, 2:30 and 4:30 p.m. requires a

special ticket in addition to Colonial Williamsburg or Art Museums admission. Visit colonialwilliamsburg.com for complete programming details.

Also on Dec. 3, Colonial Williamsburg is offering a single-site ticket to the iconic Governor's Palace, available in limited quantities exclusively via the Colonial Williamsburg Explorer mobile app for \$15. The ticket will only be available on Dec. 3. For just \$10, residents of Williamsburg, James City County and the Bruton District of York County can visit the Governor's Palace and other sites daily and enjoy other benefits with a Good Neighbor Annual Pass. For additional information and to purchase a Good Neighbor Annual Pass visit colonialwilliamsburg.com/good-neighbor.

The day's dining highlights include the Williamsburg Lodge Grand Illumination Feast from 4-6:30 p.m., Mr. Shields' Garden Refreshments for Young and Old in the Shields Tavern Garden from 4-8 p.m., and Grand Illumination Dinner at Chowning's, Christiana Campbell's, King's Arms and Shields taverns from 4:15-10 p.m. Additionally, food trucks are scheduled to operate in the Historic Area on Nicholson Street near Queen Street, and on Blair Street. Visit colonialwilliamsburg.com/events for additional information on dining options available during Grand Illumination.

For holiday gift-givers and souvenir-seekers, a public auction of rare and one-of-a-kind period-inspired items runs from 1-3 p.m. on the Market Square auction stage in the heart of Colonial Williamsburg's Historic Area. Select retail stores will remain open late, including Greenhow, William Pitt, Tarpley's and the Market House (weather permitting).

Grand Illumination festivities begin at 4 p.m. when a town crier officially opens the holiday season from the Courthouse steps. Until 6:30 p.m., themed musical performances will be showcased on four Historic Area stages:

- On the Palace Green, enjoy holiday big-band sounds to salute the Colonial Williamsburg restoration era of the 1930s
- On Market Square, hear cherished songs of the holiday season performed by a cappella groups from the College of William & Mary
- On Duke of Gloucester Street between Colonial and Botetourt streets, an ox wagon serves as the stage for the Jubilee Performers, capturing the spirit of traditional African-American song
- A stage on the Capitol's north lawn along Nicholson Street showcases the rich heritage Southern Appalachian music by the William & Mary Appalachian Music Ensemble

Also between 4 and 6:30 p.m., the Colonial Williamsburg Fifes & Drums perform seasonal regimental music of the 18th century at Capitol Circle, and William & Mary a Capella group the Gentlemen of the College sing on the new porch of the Raleigh Tavern.

At 5 p.m., the Fifes & Drums will be featured in a new ceremony to honor the origins of Grand Illumination and the lighting of Duke of Gloucester on the porch of the Raleigh Tavern.

The celebration culminates in "A Festival of Light and Thunder" at 7 p.m. with simultaneous free fireworks demonstrations above the Capitol, the Magazine and the Governor's Palace, followed by a torch-lit procession of the Fifes & Drums down Duke of Gloucester Street.

Event-related street closures are anticipated and guests and members of the community are encouraged to plan accordingly. Guest parking is available at the Colonial Williamsburg Regional Visitor Center.

Tickets and program information are available by visiting colonialwilliamsburg.com. Dining information and reservations are available via colonialwilliamsburghotels.com/events. Tickets, reservations and information are available by calling 855-296-6627, toll-free. Information, dining reservations and same-day program tickets are available via the free Colonial Williamsburg Explorer app, which can be downloaded from the Apple App Store and Google Play. Information is also available by following Colonial Williamsburg on [Facebook](#) and [@colonialwmsburg](#) on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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