

Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 2015

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The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel Sparkles during Holidays in this Unspoiled Island Sanctuary *Seasonal entertainment, luminary trails, an island holiday village, and historic homes*

LEE COUNTY, FL – The holiday season is one of the most beautiful times to visit The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel in southwest Florida. This year, visitors have many opportunities to celebrate with traditional events that include the 40th Annual Holiday Nights at the Edison & Ford Winter Estates in Fort Myers and the 31st Annual Luminary Trail on Sanibel and Captiva islands. Two of the area's historic, turn-of-the-century homes will be open for holiday tours. Captiva Holiday Village is packed with activities to get visitors into the spirit of the season. There is much more and many events are free.

40th Annual Holiday Nights at the Edison & Ford Winter Estates, Fort Myers Through Jan. 3, 2016 (Event is closed Dec. 24 & 25)

239-334-7419

www.edisonfordwinterestates.org

Edison Ford Holiday Nights reflect the many contributions of Thomas Edison, Henry Ford and their families. It was chosen by the editors of USA Today as one of the 10Best Historic Homes for the Holidays, which also included The White House, Mount Vernon, Monticello and the Biltmore in North Carolina. To view the article visit: <http://www.10best.com/interests/trip-pics/historic-homes-for-the-holidays/>.

A not-to-be-missed holiday tradition, the historic buildings and acres of gardens are decorated with lights and traditional decorations. The holiday estates offer a behind the scenes tour, Children's Holiday Tree Trail, Santa visits on select nights, refreshments and shopping in the Holiday Cottage Shoppe, Museum Store and Garden Shoppe. For admission and details:

www.edisonfordwinterestates.org/events/annual-events/holiday-nights/

Captiva Holiday Village, Captiva Island

Weekends beginning Thanksgiving weekend through Dec. 19, 2015

www.captivaholidayvillage.com

Beginning with a tree-lighting and fireworks, this popular southwest Florida barrier island transforms into a Holiday Village with events every weekend through December. This themed, fun-filled holiday extravaganza is set against the backdrop of the shimmering Gulf of Mexico and breathtaking sunsets. Visitors to Captiva Island during Captiva Holiday Village weekends enjoy a Mullet Band parade, lighted boat parade, South Seas holiday strolls, a Junkanoo Parade, a carol sing at the Chapel by the Sea, sunset arias, a holiday golf cart parade and much more:

December 4: Sunset Arias at 'Tween Waters Inn

A magical evening hosted by 'Tween Waters Inn. Bring a blanket and some wine as you sit back and enjoy beautiful operatic voices while the sun dips into the Gulf of Mexico.

Dec. 5: Captiva Luminary

For more than two decades island businesses, organizations, residents, and tourists have gathered for one of Captiva's most treasured annual events, the Luminary Festival. Captiva sparkles with

illuminated candles from end-to-end with the launch of the holiday season. Enjoy a variety of bands performing live music throughout the Village.

Dec. 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, 26: South Seas Island Resort Holiday Stroll

Families are invited to visit South Seas Island Resort for a breathtaking display of holiday lights and family activities during Holliday Stroll. Children will enjoy making gingerbread, creating ornaments, eating smores and visiting with Santa. The resort is usually closed to the public, but during Holiday Stroll, the gate is open for all to enjoy. Children 12 and under are FREE, adults \$10. All proceeds will benefit Community Cooperative, a local non-profit agency which cares for the hungry and homeless in the community.

Dec. 12: Captiva Lighted Boat Parade

The 6th Annual Captiva Island Boat Parade begins at South Seas Island Resort Marina and cruises through Pine Island Sound to 'Tween Waters Inn Marina on Roosevelt Channel. Visitors

can cruise in the parade with special passenger tickets with Captiva Cruises or watch the event from shore at McCarthy's Marina, 'Tween Watters Inn, and Green Flash Restaurant.

Dec. 13: The Chapel by the Sea Holiday Sing

The Captiva Chapel By the Sea will once again host the Captiva Community Carol Sing. Come join in singing some of the old favorites and enjoy a few new ones.

Dec. 19: Golf Cart Parade

In its 6th season, the Golf Cart Parade has become an island holiday tradition. Nearly 50 decorated golf carts roll down Captiva Drive with "over the top" displays of holiday spirit. Snowflakes, flamingos and gingerbread houses float up Andy Rosse Lane to the delight of spectators. Be sure to vote for your favorite "float" for the People's Choice Award.

Check [here](#) for information on accommodations.

The 31st Annual Christmas Luminary Trail and Open House, Sanibel Island on Dec. 4, 2015 and Captiva Island Dec. 5, 2015

www.sanibel-captiva.org

This event draws visitors from all over the world as they join local residents to celebrate the season with three miles of luminary candles and events.

Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre, Fort Myers

Nov. 26-Dec. 26, 2015

www.BroadwayPalm.com

239-278-4422

Celebrating its 22nd season in southwest Florida, Broadway Palm offers an exciting holiday lineup that includes *It's a Wonderful Life* in its main theater on the dates above. In addition, Off Broadway Palm presents *Plaid Tidings* Nov. 12-Dec. 26. The Children's Theatre features *A Velveteen Rabbit Christmas* Dec. 4-8, 11, 13-15, 17-18 and 21-22. Call or visit website for detailed schedule and prices.

27th Annual Fort Myers Beach Christmas Boat Parade

Dec. 5, 2015

www.fortmyersbeachchamber.org

239-474-7500

Come enjoy some holiday spirit at the 27th Annual Fort Myers Beach Christmas Boat Parade. Last year over 30 boats decked out in holiday array, participated and this year promises to be

even more exciting. The parade will pass by such establishments as Big Game Waterfront Grill, Parrot Key Caribbean Grill, Matanzas on the Bay, Nervous Nellies, Doc Ford's and Bonita Bills where spectators kick back and enjoy the fun. The parade is 6-8pm.

Santa's Dolphin & Wildlife Cruise, Port Sanibel Marina, Fort Myers

Dec. 24, 2015

239-472-8443

www.adventureinparadiseinc.com/cruises/santa-christmas-cruise/

Cruise out to a deserted island where Santa is waiting with presents for the kids before he makes his journey later that evening! Have photos taken. Cruise leaves at 10 a.m. and returns at 11:45 a.m. Reservations required. Call for details.

Annual Bonita Springs Christmas Boat Parade

Dec. 12, 2015

www.bonitaboatparade.com

239-495-0455

Parade kicks off at 6 p.m. from the Fish House Restaurant. Visit website for a route map.

The Southwest Florida Symphony Holidays 2014, Fort Myers and Sanibel Island

www.swflso.org

239-418-1500

Holiday Pops Concert: Christmas in Paradise will be presented Dec. 19 at Barbara B. Mann Performing Arts Hall In Fort Myers; Dec. 20 at Big ARTS Schein Hall on Sanibel Island and on Dec. 21 at Shell Point Village in Fort Myers. Call for ticket information.

Gasparilla Inn & Club, Boca Grande, celebrates "Twelve Days of Christmas"

Dec. 21, 2015 - Jan. 1, 2016

941-964-4500

www.the-gasparilla-inn.com

Festive decorations, familiar music and wonderful food are just some of the treats awaiting visitors this holiday season. Special activities spark holiday magic for the entire family, right through the New Year. Cookie decorating, caroling, classic holiday movies, gingerbread house decorating and teddy bear tea parties are just a few of the many activities offered during the Twelve Days of Christmas celebration at The Inn. Check [here](#) for details.

2015 Holidays in the Downtown Fort Myers River District

A fun-filled series of holiday events are scheduled to welcome the season. For details of each day's events, visit www.myriverdistrict.com. Events will include:

- **Holiday House
Decorated Historic Homes, downtown Fort Myers
Dec. 11-23, 2015**

Thousands of lights decorate the historic Burroughs Home and Langford Kingston Home in historic downtown Fort Myers. This year's theme: "Christmas in Tropical Paradise." Bring your camera for a visit from Santa. Tickets are \$5 per person. Children and veterans receive free admission.

Check [here](#) for details.

5-9 p.m. nightly

www.fmwcc.com

www.BurroughsHome.com

239-337-0706

- **Holiday classics presented by the Florida Repertory Theatre, downtown Fort Myers**
www.floridarep.org
 239-332-4488
 "The Seafarer" Nov. 20 - Dec. 13 and "A Christmas Story" Dec. 1-20, 2015. Call or visit website for admission and times.
- **Music and Movie Night in the Park**
Centennial Park
Dec. 4, 2015
5 p.m.
 Activities include:
 Free concert begins at 5 pm - Southwest Florida Symphony.
 City tree lighting at 6 p.m.
 Visit Santa 5-7 pm.
 Free movie begins at 7:30 p.m. - Miracle on 34th Street.

2015 Holidays on the Seminole Gulf Railway, Fort Myers

www.semgulf.com

239-275-8487

Set sail for a holiday light extravaganza Dec. 7,8, 14 and 15 on the Seminole Gulf Railway. Enjoy soup and salad going north to Punta Gorda for a boat tour through Punta Gorda Isles and entree and dessert on the journey back to Fort Myers. Call for details and reservations.

[Fort Myers Beach Birthday Party & New Year's Eve Celebration](#)

Dec. 31, 2015

www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov or www.fortmyersbeachchamber.org

Come celebrate the birthday of the Town of Fort Myers Beach and New Year's Eve at Times Square. Festivities for the town's birthday run from 1-3:30 p.m. with live music and free cupcakes starting at 1 p.m. New Year's Eve festivities kick off at 7 p.m. with more music. Ball drop at midnight followed by fireworks off the pier. Don't miss the fun!

For more information on special holiday events and packages or for planning a holiday vacation to The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel, visit www.FortMyers-Sanibel.com.

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Editor's Note: *The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel in southwest Florida includes: Sanibel Island, Captiva Island, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Cape Coral, Pine Island, Boca Grande & Outer Islands, North Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres. For media assistance please visit www.fortmyers-sanibel.com/media-central/.*