



CITY WINTER ACTIVITIES | #3

Ho Ho Holiday

SAY BAH, HUMBUG TO THE SNOW.
Our warm-weather winters offer plenty of opportunities to fill your calendar with holiday cheer. Whether you're looking for glittering lights, glitzy trees and glow-in-the-dark Santa Clauses or more refined merry making, here are some of our favorite ways to celebrate the season, Santa Barbara style.

Historic Casa del Herrero's Holiday Themed Tour

Step back in time to the 1930s and enjoy the ambiance of Casa del Herrero (House of the Blacksmith), one of the finest examples of Spanish Colonial Revival Architecture. Reservations are a must for the special holiday-themed tours featuring classically elegant holiday decorations and special refreshments, alongside this historic landmark Andalusian-style country house and its lavish grounds and gardens.



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Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, December 9, 11, 12, 16, 18 and 19 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Tickets are \$20. Children 10 and over are welcome. For reservations, call 805/565-5653 or email casaatour@silcom.com. 1387 East Valley Rd., Montecito, www.casadelherrero.com.

Holidays at the Historic Stow House Ranch

The Stow House, dating back to 1873, is dressed in a full festive array of finery for its annual holiday open house, featuring oodles of decorations both inside and out. Photo opportunities abound with Santa and his rein-goats offering a warm lap to visitors old and young; tours of the beautifully decorated house, where an old-fashioned toy train circles the base of the living room Christmas tree; crafts, including cookie baking and decorating for the kids; and live music.

December 12–13. Free admission. For more information, call 805/681-7216 or email dacia@gole tahistory.org. 304 N. Los Carneros Rd., Goleta, www.stowhouse.com.

10th Annual Trolley of Lights Tour

Enjoy an incredible show of holiday light artistry when you take this 90-minute trip through town on the Trolley of Lights. Both the young and young-at-heart are sure to enjoy this dazzling display of decorations, as well as the hot apple cider and holiday treats. This tour is a local holiday favorite that always sells out, so make your reservations early.

From mid-December throughout the month, starts nightly 6:30 p.m. at Stearns Wharf Dolphin Fountain, intersection of State St. and Cabrillo Blvd. For more information, call 805/965-0353 or visit www.sbtrolley.com.

—Leslie Dinaberg

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north of Santa Barbara, continue nine miles to Highway 1 (Guadalupe Street) and turn right. The Dunes Center, at 1055 Guadalupe Street, should be the first stop in the exploration of the largest dune complex in the state. The center also offers a variety of free docent-led walks and a bike ride or two every month covering different parts of the preserve.

Open to the public Tuesday–Sunday 10 a.m.–4 p.m. For event and walk schedules, call 805/343-2455 or visit www.dunescenter.org.

Santa Ynez Mountains and Valley Areas

As different from the more populated coastal areas as night is from day, the valley is rich in history and geographically diverse. The most scenic route to this beautiful area from Santa Barbara is by Highway 154, the San Marcos Pass. Off Highway 154 is the Paradise Store—the last chance for supplies before heading across the bed of the Santa Ynez River to the edge of the Los Padres National Forest, where Red Rock's boulders and swimming holes are legendary with generations of youthful adventurers. In the valley, vineyards dot the landscape, many with tasting rooms. Please reference our winery guide on page 96.

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Operated by the Santa Barbara County Parks Department, Cachuma Lake is a popular recreation area providing 750 campsites just 25 minutes from downtown Santa Barbara. Rental boats, fishing equipment and licenses are available, as well as a full marina and boat launch.