



## Grapevine

Each year, this North Texas town turns into a glimmering Christmas capital

By Cynthia J. Drake

During the holidays, Christmas reigns supreme in the North Texas town of Grapevine. Stroll Main Street at night and you'll bask in the glow of a 30-foot-tall Christmas tree and storefronts festooned with lights and bows and Santas. You can even ride the rails to Santa's workshop. Grapevine's transformation into the Christmas Capital of Texas may have begun years ago as a tourism initiative, but it's now embraced by the entire town—and beyond. Holiday event start dates vary; check websites for details.

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## THE PERFECT DAY

**8:30 A.M.** Beginning November 10, start your day with a Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer breakfast at the **GAYLORD TEXAN**. The resort wows visitors with its San Antonio River Walk–inspired layout and, during the holidays, 2 million lights and massive Christmas trees. (817) 778-1000; [marriott.com](http://marriott.com).

**10:30 A.M.** Have you ever seen Santa scuba dive? Starting in early December, catch him at **SEA LIFE AQUARIUM** in Grapevine Mills Mall. (469) 444-3050; [visitsealife.com/grapevine](http://visitsealife.com/grapevine).

**NOON** In December, you can eat lunch inside the life-size gingerbread house at **GREAT WOLF LODGE**. Make advance reservations for a \$10 donation to Ronald McDonald House Charities. (800) 693-9653; [greatwolf.com/grapevine](http://greatwolf.com/grapevine).

**2 P.M.** All aboard the **NORTH POLE EXPRESS**, the Grapevine Vintage Railroad's holiday journey that kicks off November 23. After arriving at Santa's workshop, you'll meet the Big Guy. Train tickets sell out quickly; check the Grapevine Convention and Visitors Bureau's social media channels to take advantage of last-minute cancellations. (817) 410-3185; [grapevintexasusa.com](http://grapevintexasusa.com).

**3:30 P.M.** Near the train station, you'll find the **VETRO GLASSBLOWING STUDIO AND FINE ART GALLERY**, where you can craft your own ornament (available for pickup the next day or mailed to your house). Check the website for ornament-making times. (817) 251-1668; [vetroartglass.com](http://vetroartglass.com).

**4:30 P.M.** Head to **DR. SUE'S CHOCOLATE** (817-416-7667; [drsueschocolate.com](http://drsueschocolate.com)), where you can sample creative creations such as chocolate with Hatch chiles. Then step into **MARKET ON MAIN** (817-488-7656) for a locally made souvenir, or sample the wine at **MESSINA HOF** (817-442-8463; [messinahof.com/grapevine](http://messinahof.com/grapevine)).

**6 P.M.** Dine at **MÍ DÍA FROM SCRATCH**, a local favorite known for its made-to-order tableside guacamole, street tacos, and killer margaritas. (817) 421-4747; [midiafromscratch.com](http://midiafromscratch.com).

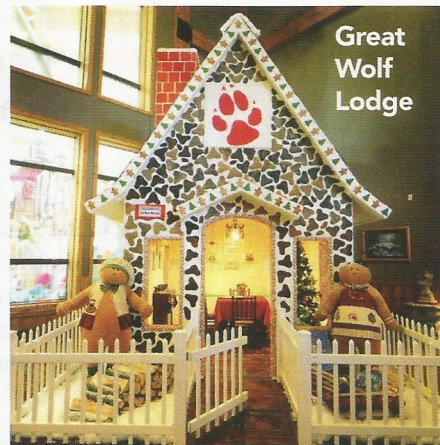
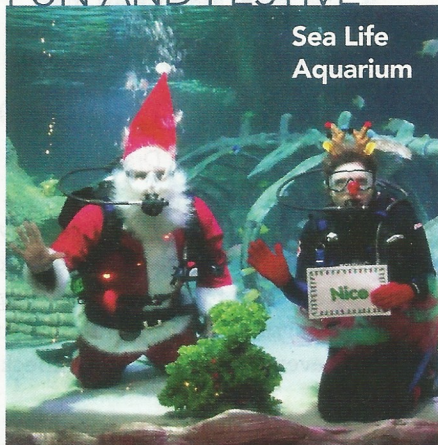
**9 P.M.** Stroll **MAIN STREET** and soak in the lights and holiday music.



### AN ICY WONDERLAND

Reserve tickets for “Ice!” at the **Gaylord Texan**, which starts November 9. This indoor exhibit transforms 2 million pounds of ice into a walk-through wonderland featuring carved and illuminated ice sculptures, as well as ice slides and a frozen cocktail bar—all kept at a nose-chilling 9 degrees. You're given insulated coats, but bring a pair of mittens or gloves, too. Children, \$13.99; adults, \$22.99. (817) 778-1000; [tinyurl.com/gaylordice2018](http://tinyurl.com/gaylordice2018).

## FUN AND FESTIVE



Be sure to designate a driver if you plan to drink alcohol.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: MICHAEL L. TURNAGE; COURTESY GREAT WOLF LODGE; COURTESY GRAPEVINE CVB