

*Colonial  
Williamsburg*



## **A Bright, Festive Holiday Season at Colonial Williamsburg, Hold the Pyrotechnics**



**The Folk Art Christmas Tree at the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg, Liberty Ice Pavilion in Merchants Square, and a handmade, natural wreath in the Historic Area, which is fully decorated for the holiday season.**

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (Nov. 30, 2020) – Holiday festivities continue daily throughout the season in Colonial Williamsburg’s Historic Area and Merchants Square and at the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg. New state restrictions on public gatherings, however, combined with a statewide increase in new COVID-19 cases, will prevent the presentation of the series of free, managed-access fireworks demonstrations planned as a scaled-back version of traditional Grand Illumination programming.

“Colonial Williamsburg’s top priority remains the health and safety of guests, employees and the community as a whole,” said Cliff Fleet, president and CEO of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. “Working with the City of Williamsburg, we conceived and had hoped to present a series of scaled back, socially-distanced fireworks events over three Saturdays in December to celebrate the season. Unfortunately, that will no longer be possible in light of the Commonwealth’s recently tightened gathering restrictions due to changing health data.

“But the bright holiday magic of Colonial Williamsburg remains, and we welcome our neighbors and guests to join us daily to celebrate the season and the new year,” Fleet continued. “We look forward to presenting the best-ever Grand Illumination in 2021, in conjunction with the City.”

Colonial Williamsburg’s Historic Area is fully decorated and holiday-themed programming is being presented daily – mostly outdoors – through New Year’s Day, along with a range of new exhibitions, seasonal programming and the famous Folk Art Christmas Tree at the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg, which this year completed a \$41.7-million donor-funded expansion.

In Merchants Square, a variety of shopping and dining options await, along with Liberty Ice Pavilion, now open daily on Duke of Gloucester Street. A new Christmas Market opens Fridays through Sundays, Dec. 4-19, at the corner of South Boundary Street and Francis Street, hosted in partnership with the City and CultureFixVA.

“Though we were all looking forward to the return to normal, as represented by the fireworks at Grand Illumination, we must continue to make adjustments for the public’s safety,” City Manager Andrew O. Trivette said. “Our disappointment that we must forgo the fireworks displays to adhere to the Governor’s recent restrictions is tempered by the fact that we are able to accommodate new events like the Christmas Market and allow favorites like 2nd Sundays to continue.”

Event schedules and admission information is available at [colonialwilliamsburg.org/holidays](https://colonialwilliamsburg.org/holidays). Details on Colonial Williamsburg Resorts getaways, plus tavern and contemporary dining information are available at [colonialwilliamsburghotels.com](https://colonialwilliamsburghotels.com).

Grand Illumination has traditionally been held on the first Sunday in December, as an event free and open to the public featuring musical performances and fireworks demonstrations at multiple Historic Area locations. In September, Colonial Williamsburg announced plans for a scaled-back Grand Illumination alternative to be held on Dec. 5, 12 and 19. Fireworks were to be limited to a single demonstration presented by the City of Williamsburg over the Governor’s Palace, viewable by reservation only from socially-distanced, marked audience areas on the Palace Green. The plan was contingent, however, upon government restrictions and guidelines as well as the status of the health and safety data at the time of the scheduled events.

Colonial Williamsburg continues to follow strict health and safety protocols, as recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Virginia Department of Health and other agencies. In addition to programming adjustments, most doors, faucets, and other high-traffic touchpoints are now touchless, and there are significantly enhanced cleaning protocols throughout all open locations.

For the safety of employees and the public, ticketed guests can expect reduced interaction with Colonial Williamsburg staff. Site entry is limited by state-mandated capacity guidelines, and guests are encouraged to proceed quickly through interpretive sites to accommodate as many visitors as possible. Face coverings are required while inside Colonial Williamsburg-owned buildings and for participating guests at Liberty’s Ice Pavilion, and their use is encouraged elsewhere outdoors as well. Guests are also asked to adhere to social-distancing guidelines during their visit to Colonial Williamsburg sites, when walking along Duke of Gloucester Street and in other publicly accessible areas. [Colonialwilliamsburg.org](https://Colonialwilliamsburg.org) lists

additional guest comfort and safety guidelines to provide the safest experience for guests, the general public and Colonial Williamsburg's staff.

All Colonial Williamsburg employees have received special safety training to limit the risk of spread or infection. The training included general and site-specific safety requirements such as basic sanitization procedures, use of face coverings where appropriate, and social distancing with colleagues and guests. Signs posted throughout the Historic Area and Art Museums will remind guests of safety precautions to protect themselves and others from risks associated with COVID-19 exposure.

General information on Colonial Williamsburg operations is available online at [colonialwilliamsburg.org/update](https://colonialwilliamsburg.org/update) and by following [Colonial Williamsburg](#) on Facebook.

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*The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation preserves, restores and operates Virginia's 18th-century capital of Williamsburg. Innovative and interactive experiences highlight the relevance of the American Revolution to contemporary life and the importance of an informed, active citizenry. The Colonial Williamsburg experience includes more than 600 restored or reconstructed original buildings, renowned museums of decorative arts and folk art, extensive educational outreach programs for students and teachers, lodging, including the Forbes 5-star Williamsburg Inn, culinary options from historic taverns to casual or elegant dining, the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club featuring 45 holes designed by Robert Trent Jones and his son Rees Jones, a full-service spa and fitness center, pools, retail stores and gardens. Philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and hospitality operations sustain Colonial Williamsburg's educational programs and preservation initiatives.*

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