



Conclave 2025 | Branson MO

NEWSLETTER #7

Christmas and New Year's Traditions in Tennessee, Kentucky, and North Carolina

The southeastern United States, particularly Tennessee, Kentucky, and North Carolina, boasts a rich tapestry of Christmas and New Year's traditions that reflect the region's cultural heritage, blending Southern hospitality, Appalachian customs, and religious observances. These traditions bring communities together in celebration of family, faith, and the changing seasons.

Tennessee

In Tennessee, the Christmas season often begins with festive light displays. The city of *Gatlinburg* hosts the annual **Winterfest Celebration**, where the Great Smoky Mountains are illuminated with millions of twinkling lights. *Nashville*, known as "Music City," infuses its holiday events with live music, including Christmas concerts at the Grand Ole Opry. Traditional Southern dishes like country ham, sweet potato casserole, and pecan pie often grace Christmas dinner tables, along with storytelling and hymn singing. For New Year's Eve, the **Music Note Drop** in downtown *Nashville* is a lively spectacle, featuring live performances and fireworks.



Holiday lights in Gatlinburg, TN

Kentucky

Kentucky's Christmas traditions are steeped in rural charm and family-centered activities. Towns like *Bardstown* and *Lexington* embrace the holiday spirit with Victorian-style Christmas parades, carriage rides, and candlelit tours of historic homes. The state's love for bourbon plays a role in holiday festivities, with bourbon-infused treats like fruitcake and eggnog being staples. On New Year's Day, Kentuckians often partake in the Southern tradition of eating black-eyed peas and greens for good luck and prosperity. Many communities also hold "First Day Hikes" in state parks, embracing nature as they welcome the new year.



Typical Christmas Scene in Bowling Green, KY

North Carolina

In North Carolina, the Blue Ridge Mountains serve as a picturesque backdrop for holiday celebrations. The town of McAdenville, known as **Christmas Town USA**, transforms into a winter wonderland with elaborate light displays attracting visitors from across the country. In Asheville, the **Biltmore Estate** hosts a grand Christmas celebration, featuring opulently decorated trees and holiday-themed tours. Food traditions include Moravian cookies and sugar cakes, a nod to the state's Moravian heritage. New Year's Eve in Raleigh features the **Acorn Drop**, a quirky local tradition symbolizing the city's nickname, "The City of Oaks."



Christmas at the Biltmore Estate, Asheville, NC

Across these states, a shared love for community, food, and celebration unites the people during the holiday season. Whether it's enjoying the lights in Tennessee, sipping bourbon in Kentucky, or marveling at historic estates in North Carolina, these traditions capture the warmth and joy of the holidays in the American South.

(Compliments of ChatGPT. Places we will visit are in italics)

Cindi and I wish you all a very Happy and Prosperous New Year. If you get a moment, raise a toast to me on Friday, my 75th Birthday!

*If you are up for a little preview of our Grand Old Opry concert, you might want to check out the Country Music Association's **Christmas Special** tonight on ABC. 8pm/7pm Central. Lot's of big-name performances.*