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WHY CHOOSE HOOD RIVER FOR THE HOLIDAYS? BECAUSE THE HALLMARK CHANNEL HASN'T DISCOVERED IT YET—BUT YOU CAN

Five reasons this festive little town is ready for its close-up.

(HOOD RIVER, Ore.) — Tucked between the snow-capped peaks of the Cascades and the vast, wintry Columbia River Gorge, Hood River is holiday magic made real. It's the kind of town that looks like a movie set but feels like a close-knit neighborhood. The streets glow with lights, music drifts from shop doors, and nearly everything you'll experience is made, poured, or prepared by someone who lives nearby. Hood River is a place where the seasons slow down, sparkle a little brighter, and bring people together with a natural ease.

Here are five reasons to spend the holidays in Hood River this year.

1. It Feels Like a Holiday Movie (Without the Cameras)

Downtown Hood River transforms after Thanksgiving, with snow-dusted sidewalks lined with twinkle-lit trees, warm drinks in mittened hands, and neighbors spreading holiday cheer. The season officially begins with the [Annual Tree Lighting & Street Festival](#) on Friday, Dec. 5, when downtown transforms into a pedestrian- and family-friendly plaza filled with caroling, cocoa, music, and the glow of a community tree that brings everyone together.

2. Shop Local with Heart

On Saturday, Nov. 29, celebrate with *Shop Local, Shop Small*, a festive downtown event filled with handcrafted goods, seasonal specials, and neighborhood cheer. To make holiday browsing easier, the City of Hood River offers free downtown parking Dec. 9 - 24. The Hood River Visitor Center also provides complimentary gift wrapping on weekends before and after Thanksgiving, for locally purchased items accompanied by a receipt. Opening on Nov. 21, [Handmade for the Holidays](#) at Columbia Center for the Arts features a thoughtfully curated collection of art, ornaments, and gifts by regional makers, transforming holiday shopping into a personal and memorable experience.

3. Holiday Events for Everyone

From makers markets and live theater to snowy adventures on Mt. Hood, Hood River's

calendar is full of ways to enjoy the season.

- Nov. & Dec.: [Mt. Hood Railroad Polar Express Train Ride](#)
- Friday, Nov. 21: [Cork Wine Shop Wine & Oysters Holiday Kickoff](#)
- Friday, Dec. 5: [Shine Brighter Together, the 2025 Annual Tree Lighting & Street Festival](#)
- Friday & Saturday, Dec. 5 & 6: [The Ruins Winter Makers Market](#)
- Sunday, Dec. 7: [Mt. Hood Town Hall Holiday Market](#)
- Saturday, Dec. 13: [SantaCon & Toy Drive](#)
- Saturday & Sunday, Dec 13 & 14: [Last Chance Holiday Craft Show](#)
- Friday & Saturdays in Dec.: [Junie B. in Jingle Bells, Batman Smells at Columbia Arts Center](#)
- Saturday & Sunday, Dec. 21 & 22: [Breakfast with Santa at Mt. Hood Meadows](#)

4. Stay Close to the Magic

Whether looking for a cozy downtown suite or a quiet destination near the snow, Hood River has a range of warm and welcoming places to stay. The newly opened [Lightwell Hotel](#) offers historically renovated rooms in the heart of town. Also downtown, [Oak Street Hotel](#) captures the essence of the holidays with a dazzling display of twinkle lights and a warm, welcoming glow—creating the kind of festive ambiance even Hallmark would envy. For groups or more extended stays, [The Horsefeathers Hotel](#) and [Columbia Cliff Villas](#) provide comfort, stunning views, and additional space. If you're heading toward the mountain, [Cooper Spur Mountain Resort](#) offers a peaceful alpine retreat surrounded by forest and trails. And for classic holiday charm, the [Columbia Gorge Hotel & Spa](#) adds sparkle with its riverside views and annual Landscape of Lights display.

5. Every Visit Gives Back

The holidays in Hood River are driven by the community, comprising artists, makers, farmers, and merchants who live and work here. When you shop small or stay local, you're helping preserve the heart of this place. It's also easy to give a little more through [Give for the Gorge](#), which supports nonprofits working to protect the region's landscapes, culture, and communities. Whether you're here for a weekend or just stopping through, your time and support have a lasting impact.

In a season full of hustle and bustle, Hood River has everything to make the season truly meaningful. It's not the set of a holiday movie. It's better. This is a place where neighbors string lights, cider is made from locally grown apples, and the joy comes not from spectacle, but from community. Hood River is like Whoville, but with better beer, no Grinch, and a view. It may not be on Hallmark's radar, but it's right where the holidays come to life.

For more information on holiday festivities and the full events schedule, visit visithoodriver.com/events. For more information on Hood River or to book a stay at one of Hood River's lodging options, visit visithoodriver.com/stay.

Photos of Hood River Holidays [HERE](#) (credit: Visit Hood River)

About Visit Hood River:

Located at the crossroads of the spectacular Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and the magnificent Cascade Range and just an hour from Portland, Hood River offers outdoor recreation, dramatic vistas, historic landmarks, bountiful fruit, and fantastic food, wine, beer, and cider. With accommodations ranging from luxury hotels to historic B&Bs, Hood River is a four-season destination for families, outdoor enthusiasts, weddings, corporate events, and more. It was named a Best Adventure and Explorations Town by the 2023 Sunset Travel Awards and Nature Lovers Destination in the 2022 Sunset Travel Awards, a Top 10 Wine Destination for 2017 by Wine Enthusiast Magazine, and 2015 Best Adventure Town in the West by Sunset magazine. Visit Hood River supports economic development, community development, and destination marketing for Hood River, Cascade Locks, Mosier, Odell, Parkdale, Pine Grove, and Mount Hood. For more information, call 800-366-3530 or visit www.visithoodriver.com.

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