



## Have Yourself a Carson Valley Christmas

*Relive the Happy Golden Days of Yore in a Magical, Small-Town Setting*

**CARSON VALLEY, Nev. (Nov. 18, 2024)** – The Hallmark Channel may have cornered the market on movie-watching during the Christmas season, but the idyllic small towns and nostalgic storylines depicted in holiday movie tropes are also informing travel trends. As more people [plan vacations to places that give Hallmark movie vibes](#), winter travel-planners are seeking lesser-known locales with charm, spirit, and a corner shop or two perfect for an adorable meet-cute. In other words, they're looking for a nostalgic spot like Carson Valley, Nevada, and its Hallmark-esque communities of Genoa, Gardnerville, Minden, and Topaz Lake.



Nestled at the foot of the snowcapped Eastern Sierra, Carson Valley is this year's holiday haven with scenic settings, epic activities, corner mom-and-pop shops full of meaningful treasures, and romantic small-town events. In fact, with a real [Lifetime movie](#) filmed in the destination in 2020, visitors to this magical destination might feel motivated to write their own dreamy holiday screenplay inspired by festive locations and welcoming hometown characters.

With that in mind, here's the rundown of necessary ingredients — all abundant in Carson Valley — that'll lay the foundation for a script-worthy winter vacation.

### **Holiday Trope Ingredient #1: Cozy Scenery & Romantic Pastimes**

Horse-drawn sleighs, outdoor hot springs, ski lodges — all storybook settings for holiday vacation scenes — and Carson Valley has them all. A short drive away, visitors can take a guided tour on a narrated [horse-drawn sleigh ride](#) on a trail overlooking crystalline Lake Tahoe, the snowcapped Sierra Nevada, and towering pines. Or for a more active experience, visit the bunny hill or more epic black diamond trails for abundant [snow play](#).

It's best to make basecamp on the valley floor, where travelers can play in the snow — but won't be burdened by wintry inconveniences. So after a short and scenic drive down the hill, what holiday vacation would be complete without a visit to a [natural hot springs](#) or a romantic dip in an in-room hot tub at a [cozy hotel](#)?

For travelers looking for a more “disconnected” outdoor adventure: Winter camping is totally a thing alongside a sparkling alpine lake at Topaz Lake Park, complete with the lure offered by full hookups, millions of twinkling stars overhead, and some of the best winter fishing around. Campers might consider capping off their outdoor outing with a night or two at the [Topaz Lodge Resort Casino](#), with its authentic mountain lodge vibe that oozes peace and quiet — along with amazing food from a locals' favorite restaurant and hot indoor showers that may have been missed in the midst of off-the-grid adventure time.

### **Holiday Trope Ingredient #2: Enchanting Local Character**

No holiday movie would be complete without the charm injected by a hometown personality with a wealth of stories and insights about the town's residents. In the Carson Valley, many notable “residents” are bands of wild mustangs, aeries of eagles, and herds of mule deer, so expert wildlife tour guides provide the local character. Abundant [tour guides and outfitters](#) are available to help create a memorable Carson Valley excursion. Visitors can expect rich storytelling, beautiful wildlife photography opportunities — and maybe a tip or two about a locals' favorite [dining destination or sagebrush saloon](#).

### **Holiday Trope Ingredient #3: Magical Small-Town Events**

Of COURSE a small-town holiday visit must be accompanied by a country Christmas concert, a festive tree-lighting, and breakfast with an adorable Santa. Carson Valley has a lineup of events offering their own brand of merry-making moments. In fact, “Carson Valley Christmas” — the annual month-long holiday celebration — might just make a good movie title.

Among this year's main Carson Valley Christmas highlights:

- Dec. 5: The 18<sup>th</sup> annual [Gardnerville Christmas Kickoff](#) takes place from 5-7 p.m., featuring electric carriage rides, caroling, live music, fireworks, Christmas dancing lights, and of course — Santa Claus!
- Dec. 6: Visitors can experience the [Minden Gazebo Lighting](#) from 5-9 p.m., as this iconic town centerpiece and its parklike surroundings are illuminated with sparkling color. Just a few miles away, [Christmas in Genoa](#) begins at 5:30 p.m. The town gathers at the Genoa Town Church for classic Christmas caroling, then everyone heads down to “Hope's Tree” at 6:15 for the official lighting of the town tree.
- Dec. 7: The next morning in Genoa, everyone’s invited to one of two “[Breakfast with Santa](#)” seatings. Enjoy pancakes, sausage, and of course — a visit from the Big Guy himself. Free admission for children 3 and younger, \$5 for everyone else.

Or perhaps visitors would prefer a shopping excursion? While [Gardnerville’s Candy Cane Main](#) is a monthlong event, the highlight happens on Dec. 7 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. during the annual Shop Main Street Cookie and Cocoa Crawl. Features of this district shopping extravaganza include carriage rides, an interactive map of participating businesses, and photos with Santa.

The evening of Dec. 7 features [Carson Valley’s 28<sup>th</sup> annual Parade of Lights](#), beginning at 5 p.m. and featuring marching bands, floats, and festive holiday charm. Locals and visitors line Highway 395 from Eddy Street to Minden Park to watch and cheer.

- Dec. 15: For those who need musical encouragement to find the Christmas spirit, the [Genoa Country Christmas concert](#) at 5:30 p.m. features Tom Miller playing holiday requests and fan favorites. Better yet: Dessert is served at intermission!

#### **Holiday Trope Ingredient #4: Quaint Corner Shops**

Winter travelers seeking unique local spots for holiday treasure need only look as far as the cozy boutique in the middle of town. Which town? They can take their pick! Carson Valley is the region’s holiday headquarters thanks to an unbeatable local [shopping scene](#), with masterfully curated and locally made goods and antiques in all corners of each charming locale. In the Carson Valley, “[shop small](#)” is a way of life — unique shops like [Cottonwood Creek Gifts](#), [Fresh Ideas](#), [The Pink Rose](#), [The Hitch Boutique](#), and [Red Barn Antiques](#) all reflect the spirit of small-town entrepreneurship.

For shoppers craving a small sampling of retail hot spots:

- [Cheshire Antiques in Gardnerville](#) features 12,000 feet of antiques and vintage items and 50+ vendors.
- In Minden, artisan-created treasures are everywhere inside [Heartstrings Gallery and Gifts](#), where browsers can find custom pieces, photography and wearable art.
- Or welcome (to) [Home in Genoa](#), a little shop on the corner of Main St. and Nixon with vintage furniture, home décor, antiques, and more.

With inspiration provided by the perfect scenic backdrops, a touch of local character, ample small-town events and charming corner shops, holiday travelers agree that a Carson Valley Christmas is worthy of its own Hallmark screenplay. Learn more about Genoa, Minden, Gardnerville, and Topaz Lake at the [Carson Valley Visitors Authority website](#), or call (775) 782-8145.

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*Straddling the California-Nevada state line 1.5 hours south of the Reno-Tahoe International Airport, discover the four communities — Genoa, Minden, Gardnerville, and Topaz Lake — that comprise spectacular Carson Valley. Beholding some of Nevada’s first and oldest establishments, visiting Carson Valley means authentically interacting with Nevada’s many histories while experiencing world-renowned outdoor recreation Nevada, and the American West is known for. From legendary forefathers who paved the way to Nevada statehood, to wild horse bands, eagles, and other wildlife, to premiere air sports, American Indian, Basque, and Western Ranching histories and cultures, and distinctive dining experiences that all exist here and only here, Carson Valley offers an adventure for everyone. For more information about lodging, special events, and more trip planning tools, go to [VisitCarsonValley.org](#) or dial (775) 782-8145. The Visitor Information Center is located within the Carson Valley Museum and Cultural Center at 1477 U.S. Highway 395 N, Gardnerville, NV.*

Media interested in a visit to Carson Valley, Nevada, should fill out the [Media Request Form](#).

**MEDIA RESOURCES:**

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