

travel

Holiday hot spots

From the Big Apple to Santa Fe, it's not too early to book your yuletide getaway

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It's beginning to look - well, actually nothing like Christmas, but if you're thinking of spending the holidays in a place where it does look a lot like Christmas when the time comes, then you'd better be making not only a list and checking it twice, but also your plans and your reservations.

Across the country, big cities and small towns alike have discovered that people long to be surrounded by the traditional trappings of an old-fashioned experience. Thousands of lights strewn along Main Streets, massive Norway spruces groaning under the weight of their ornaments in front of city halls, opera companies caroling through neighborhoods, themed concerts and pageants, brunches with Santa Claus and performances of "The Nutcracker" all conspire to make for magical holiday memories.

And the best part? If you go away, none of that messy decorating or cleanup at your own house.

...Portland, Maine

Dreaming of a white Christmas? It's almost guaranteed in Portland, which has the Historic Old Port District to deck with boughs of holly and bedeck with lights, and as soon as the snow starts to fly, sleigh rides can be had through the streets as carolers sing you along.

Nestle all snug in your bed: More than a century old, the Black Point Inn is on the coast, just a few miles outside of town (510 Black Point Road, Scarborough, 207-883-2500, blackpointinn.com) and counts killer views, spacious rooms and fireplaces scattered throughout its public spaces among its charms. Rates start at \$210.



Denver Post staff writers Suzanne Brown, Joey Bunch, Kyle MacMillan and Tucker Shaw contributed to this report.