A Vermont Country Christmas
Featuring Woodstock's Beloved "Wassail Weekend"

Thursday, December 8 - Sunday, December 11, 2022
4 Days – 3 Nights

Photo Credit: Woodstock Chamber of Commerce

Take a step back from the hustle and bustle of the modern holiday season and immerse yourself in the heartwarming charms of a traditional Vermont Christmas. Friendly innkeepers will make you feel like family during your stay at a historic country inn. With four "jolly ole" days of caroling, delicious cuisine, unique seasonal outings and hands-on experiences, you'll truly feel like you've stepped onto the set of a classic holiday movie!

Visit the town of Woodstock and revel in the 19th-century-inspired magic of its award-winning "Wassail Weekend" festivities and see for yourself why *Country Living* named it one of the "Best Christmas Towns in the United States." Witness carolers serenading in the streets and horses prancing in the parade 'round the village green. Be an elf in Santa's Workshop and travel by sleigh through a Christmas tree farm. Warm up with a cup from the spiced punch bowl as you visit decked halls in historic homes. Come, celebrate small town holiday heritage that harkens back to the traditions of yesteryear.

Day One, Thursday:

Welcome to white season in the Green Mountain State! Upon a late afternoon arrival at your quintessential Vermont inn, you'll be greeted by the warm Yankee hospitality of your innkeepers and the inviting aroma of holiday spices. Gather for a **welcome reception** that offers *glögg*, a hot mulled wine and the perfect elixir to mark the beginning of an unforgettable Christmas holiday in an idyllic winter landscape that even Currier and Ives would envy!

Refresh and make yourself comfortable in the room you'll be calling home for the next three nights. Reconvene for a hearty welcome dinner served in the inn's cozy dining room.

Following dessert, gather in the parlor where you'll be joined by a local song-catcher who will lead a group sing-a-long of classic Christmas carols**.** Whether or not you can carry a tune, you'll be delighted by the contagious camaraderie of a musical evening that will set the tone for the exciting days to come. Turn in for the night with visions of sugarplums—maple sugar to be precise!

Day Two, Friday:

Wake up to a home-cooked country breakfast before boarding your motor coach and transferring to "Santa's Workshop" at Middlebury's Maple Landmark Woodcraft**.** Upon arrival, a master artisan will lead you on a private tour of this remarkable woodworking operation that uses locally sourced maple to craft iconic American toys, gifts and recreational items that are sold worldwide. Next, roll up your sleeves and get ready to play elf as you embellish your own keepsake ornament! After, there will be time for you to shop amongst their dazzling array of handcrafted items for house and home. Workshop-direct prices will ensure you will find something for everyone on your list and a treat for yourself.

En route to today's included group lunch at a locals' favorite eatery, the coach will make a photo stop at the Pulp Mill Bridge**.** This rare, two-lane covered bridge flanked by the rushing waterfalls of Otter Creek, is postcard-perfect and makes for an ideal Christmas card and group portrait backdrop.

After lunch, it's off to a working Christmas tree farm where you'll jingle all the way through an evergreen wonderland on **a** horse-drawn sleigh or hay ride. Blankets will be provided to keep you toasty as you dash over the hills and through the snow to the family cabin where you'll warm up with hot cocoa and cookies before your ride back to the farm.

Return to the inn in the late afternoon. There will be time to relax and refresh before dinner.

Your included dinner will be served at the charming Waybury Inn**.** If the rustic wooden interiors look familiar, it's likely because the Waybury doubled as The Stratford Inn on *Newhart* for nearly a decade of classic television. Be sure to get a picture with the iconic Minuteman Café and Stratford Inn sign before you leave. Who knows, maybe you'll even run into Larry, Darryl and Darryl! Just don't expect the latter two to say much…

Following dinner, return to the inn. With "kerchief and cap," settle in for a long winter's nap before tomorrow's Wassail Weekend festivities!

Day Three, Saturday:

Enjoy breakfast at the inn before meeting your guide for the day—Saint Nick himself**!** It turns out his sleigh is in the repair shop for some much-needed TLC before the big day, so he'll need to board your motor coach and go a-wassailing with your group all the way to Woodstock**.**
Did you know this little Vermont gem holds the distinction of being named one of the "Best Christmas Towns in the United States" by *Country Living*? Today you'll see why! Along the way, Santa will regale you with fun Vermont facts and holiday lore and point out natural landmarks that are unique to the region.

Pay a visit to Billings Farm**,** an award-winning, an operating Jersey dairy farm and outdoor history museum. Here you'll tour the fully-restored 1890 Farm Manager's house all decked out in traditional greenery and candles. Participate in a candle dipping or Colonial craft workshop that will provide you with a unique token of a Vermont Christmas past to take home with you.

Upon arrival in Woodstock, Santa will bring you to the Dana House that dates back to 1807 and now serves as the headquarters of the Woodstock Historical Center. Take a step back in time and admire the 19th-century-inspired holiday decor that festoons its quaint, but grand interior.

Break for lunch on your own at one of Woodstock's many fine restaurants, casual eateries or a pop-up holiday café and browse the artisanal craft market and locally-owned shops that line the streets of the town center. Bedecked in holly, tinsel and lights, many businesses will be offering visitors their own unique version of Wassail punch to visitors. Dating back to medieval times, this English Yuletide tradition is a warm mulled cider often served with spices and fruit and doled from a grand communal serving bowl called a "Wassailing bowl." It's so delicious that Woodstock went so far as to name their famous holiday celebration "Wassail Weekend!"

This afternoon's "Wassail Parade" is without a doubt the highlight of the Vermont holiday season. Over 50 horses and ponies clop their way around the village green, proudly carrying riders of all ages dressed in period finery to transport onlookers back to the 1800s. Add to this the joyous sound of merry carolers and you can practically taste the figgy pudding and roasted chestnuts! It is truly a not-to-be-missed experience that would warm the heart of even the most hardened Scrooge and bring out the inner child in everyone, regardless of age.

Depart Woodstock in the late afternoon and travel back to the inn. Upon arrival, say goodbye to your Santa-guide.
Tonight, a special farewell dinner is served at a fine Vermont restaurant, but not before everyone is treated to a private cooking demonstration by the owner and head chef! You'll have a front-row seat to see how one of the chef's signature dishes is made before getting to taste it is as one of the courses on this evening's menu. Raise a toast of holiday cheer and savor this one-of-a-kind Vermont culinary experience before returning to the inn.

Day Four, Sunday:

Enjoy a delicious farewell breakfast at the inn. After you check out of your rooms, there will be time for a stroll and photo ops around the village green.

Take time to stop in at the amazing Gourmet Provence Bakery and Wine Shop**.** They offer pastries, made-to-order elegant desserts, local cheeses, Vermont specialty products and imported selections. In the gift room you will find Pre de Provence soaps, La Rochere glassware and April Cornell linens. In the wine room, you will find hundreds of local, domestic and imported wines, all at very reasonable prices. Everyone will receive an individually wrapped holiday cookie decorated by Gourmet Provence's head pastry chef to sweeten their trip home. These artfully iced works of art are so beautiful you'll no doubt want to take a picture before you take your first bite!

Board your coach and depart for Hildene**,** the Lincoln family home. Explore this grand, 24-room estate that was built in 1905 by Abraham Lincoln's son, Robert Todd Lincoln. Gaze in awe at the artfully

placed greenery, berries and bows, as the home has been beautifully decorated as if it were the year 1912, the last year the Lincoln family celebrated Christmas in Vermont.

Bid a fond farewell to Vermont and continue home with memories you'll cherish for years to come!

Your package includes:

- 3 Nights accommodations at a historic Vermont inn
- 3 Breakfasts
- 1 Lunch
- 3 Dinners, one of which includes a pre-dining cooking demonstration
- Welcome reception
- Evening of caroling
- Tour and ornament workshop
- Photo stop at the covered Pulp Mill Bridge
- Horse-drawn sleigh or hay ride
- Admission to the 1890 Farm Manager's House at Billings Farm and Museum
- Hands-on craft session at Billings Farm
- Visit to the historic 1807 Dana House
- Time to explore Woodstock
- Wassail Parade in Woodstock
- Time to shop at Gourmet Provence
- Holiday cookie from Gourmet Provence
- Admission to Hildene
- Souvenir gift
- Services of a step-on guide for one day
- One complimentary room, based on a single
- Baggage handling for one piece of luggage per traveler
- Accommodations, group meals, admissions and baggage handling for the motor coach driver
- Taxes and gratuities (Note: Gratuities for the coach driver and local guide are not included and are at your discretion based on service)

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