

Destinations

FOOD

Creole to stout, cookies to tamales

DEC. 1-JAN. 6
NEW ORLEANS
Reveillon Dinners: No city is more steeped in traditions than New Orleans and one of the best is the Reveillon dinner. Originally a meal enjoyed by Creole families after they had returned home from Christmas Eve Mass and again on New Year's Eve, Reveillon dinners have migrated to the city's restaurants. This year, more than 30 will be offering special prix fixe dinners of four or more courses that combine time-honored Creole dishes with innovative contemporary cuisine. Visitors will get a lesson in how to party Big Easy-style. *City-wide, menus \$28-\$75. [www.neworleansonline.com](#)*

DEC. 1-5
PORTLAND, Ore.
Holiday Ale Festival: Reasoning that there's nothing like a hearty porter or stout to ward off the winter chill, brewers craft more than 50 specialty ales for this holiday party. For those who prefer honey to hops, there is a mead tasting as well. Pioneer Courthouse Square, "the city's living room," gets cozy for the event with a clear tent top that doesn't obstruct views of the holiday lights and enormous decorated Christmas tree. *701 South West Sixth Ave., initial tasting package \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door, designated drivers \$5. [www.holidayale.com](#)*

DEC. 4-5
INDIO, Calif.
Indio International Tamale Festival: Making tamales at Christmas is a tradition for many Mexican and Mexican-American families. This high-spirited festival brings the tamales onto the streets of this town near Palm Springs. The first 10 volunteers can participate in a tamale eating contest, while everyone else can sample tamales from local restaurants, churches, and civic groups. One of the four stages of entertainment is reserved for

mariachi bands, while others feature folkloric dancing and music ranging from Tejano to reggae. *Downtown, free, food for sale. [www.tamalefestival.net](#)*

DEC. 11
MONADNOCK, N.H.
Currier and Ives Cookie Tour: Visitors need not arrive in a horse-drawn sleigh. But they should pack a container to stash the goodies handed out on this self-guided tour of more than a dozen inns and gift shops in the Monadnock region. Each establishment will offer a homemade treat that might range from gingerbread men to Irish lace cookies or the "everything good" cookie with toffee, chocolate chips, and cranberries. All the stops will be fully decked out for the holidays. *Tickets (\$10) and tour map available at all participating establishments. [www.currierandivescookie tour.com](#)*

PLAN AHEAD

JAN. 14-16
CAREFREE, Ariz.
Carefree Art & Wine Festival: Talk about laid-back: This event takes place at the downtown junction of Easy Street and East Hum Road, not far from North Tranquil Trail. If the location doesn't put you in the mood to buy the works of 160 artists, a few glasses of wine and live music probably will. The self-proclaimed "largest wine-tasting event" in the state features selections from Arizona, California, Australia, Germany, Austria, France, and Italy. *Admission \$3, wine tasting package \$10. [www.thunderbirdartists.com](#)*

PATRICIA HARRIS AND
DAVID LYON

Events are sometimes canceled, rescheduled, or sold out; check online. Patricia Harris and David Lyon can be reached at [their food and travel blog at \[www.hungrytravelers.com\]\(#\)](#).



FRENCH QUARTER FESTIVALS

Reveillon dinner at Arnaud's in New Orleans.



PHOTOS BY PAUL E. KANDARIAN FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

"Infinity Dots Mirrored Room" (1996) by Yayoi Kusama (glass, Formica, black light, decals) at the Mattress Factory art museum.

Pittsburgh's compact charm

Savor a new hotel, walk to arts, theater, food

Paul E. Kandarian
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

PITTSBURGH — What's old is what's new at Fairmont Pittsburgh, a glistening glass-tower, LEED-certified upscale hotel in the heart of the city's business and theater district. It opened in March, the largest high-rise construction project in the city in the last 20 years.

The 185-room hotel was built on a 1½-acre site of Three PNC Plaza that over the centuries was home to a German boarding house, toy store, and cabinet-maker's shop, part of the city's early commercial and immigrant life.

Glass bottles, elegant and detailed dishware, gilded garnitures from France, botanical prints and tiles, and Kestner doll heads were buried or tossed down wells, forgotten for ages until the hotel excavation, when workers unearthed more than 26,000 relics from the 19th century.

A commissioned archeological survey ensued and many artifacts are now on permanent, museum-quality display throughout the hotel, including those doll heads in a glass case in the 15th-floor elevator area.

"We've taken our cue from the artifacts found right beneath the hotel," said Len Czarnecki, the hotel's general manager. "The Fairmont has named suites and boardrooms after former businesses that once stood here. Our pastry kitchen has named a nougat candy after one of the shop owners."

The hotel's upper rooms have stunning views of Mount Washington across the Monongahela



Shops, markets, restaurants — mirrored in the mural — populate the Strip District, a one-half square-mile neighborhood bustling with commerce.

River, several fabled Pittsburgh bridges, and the city's football and baseball stadiums. Most elegant are the views of the adjacent PPG Place, a massive, reflective-glass tower of Gothic design, and five satellite buildings of matching architecture, created by Massimo Vignelli in the 1980s.

Directly below my 15th-floor room was Market Square, a gloriously open space perfect for good-weather lunching at places like MixStirs Café, where they make a killer steak-and-cheese wrap.

If you think of Pittsburgh as a smoke-belching steel city, forget it. The city is now home to an amazing arts, cultural, and theater scene. Slip on walking shoes and take a self-guided tour with a copy of "Pittsburgh Art in Public Places." (You can download it at [www.publicartpittsburgh.org](#).)

The Fairmont has paid homage to two of the city's most famous sons, Andy Warhol and Andrew Carnegie, in naming the hotel bar Andys. Drinks bear their names and cocktail coasters

share quotes from each. Andys also hosts a splendid jazz series Wednesday through Saturday.

The Andy Warhol Museum, a short walk from the hotel (everything in compact Pittsburgh is easily walkable), is the largest museum in North America devoted to a single artist. Also worth visiting is The Mattress Factory, head-scratching art at its esoteric best, including a mirrored-wall room with three mannequins painted playfully in pink dots. The infinite effect of the mirrors makes it seem like there are thousands of them.

For theater, visit the Pittsburgh CLO (Civic Light Opera), a nonprofit and winner of the Richard Rodgers Award for Excellence in Musical Theater. We saw "Triple Espresso," a wickedly funny show about three aging lounge lizards that is playing until Jan. 9.

And while you're walking, wander to The Strip down Penn Avenue, a kitschy-cool collection of amazing markets, restaurants, and shops. The Pennsylvania

If you go . . .

Where to stay
Fairmont Pittsburgh
510 Market St.
412-773-8800
[www.fairmontpittsburgh.com](#)
Super-contemporary rooms with stunning views, from \$199.

Where to eat
Habitat
Fairmont Pittsburgh
412-773-8848
[www.habitatrestaurant.com](#)
World cuisine using locally sourced ingredients. Entrees from \$16.

What to do
Pittsburgh CLO
719 Liberty Ave.
412-281-3973
[www.pittsburghclo.org](#)
A theatrical tradition since 1946.

Andy Warhol Museum
117 Sandusky St.
412-237-8300
[www.warhol.org](#)
Adults \$15.
Pittsburgh Macaroni Co.
2010-12 Penn Ave.
800-223-5928
Mecca of Italian foodstuffs stocks more than 5,000 specialty products and sells 100-plus tons of cheese a week.

Macaroni Co., a massive, old-school Italian market, evokes Boston's North End or Providence's Federal Hill.

Pittsburgh isn't what it used to be. For lovers of art, culture and history, it's way better.

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Holidays In The Sun

	December 25 Saturdays 7 Nts From	January Saturdays 7 Nts from
Cancun SATURDAYS Non-Stop Airfare via Allegiant Air		
Royal Solaris ★★★★ Plus	\$2439 \$1699 ⁹⁹	\$1399 \$1099 ⁹⁹
Gran Melia Cancun ★★★★★	\$2559 \$1799 ⁹⁹	\$1839 \$1399 ⁹⁹
Dreams Cancun Resort & Spa GOLDEN ★★★★★ VALUE PLUS: FREE Non-Stop Transfers!	\$2809 \$2269 ⁹⁹	\$2139 \$1449 ⁹⁹
Riviera Maya		
BlueBay Grand Esmeralda ★★★★	\$2899 \$1699 ⁹⁹	\$1599 \$1299 ⁹⁹
Ocean Coral & Ocean Turquesa by H10 Hotels ★★★★	\$2429 \$1869 ⁹⁹	\$1719 \$1369 ⁹⁹
Occidental Grand Xcaret ★★★★	\$2339 \$1999 ⁹⁹	\$1639 \$1299 ⁹⁹
Grand Sunset Princess All Suites Resort & Spa ★★★★	\$2599 \$1999 ⁹⁹	\$1699 \$1399 ⁹⁹
Now Sapphire Riviera Cancun GOLDEN ★★★★★ UnlimitedLuxury VALUE PLUS: FREE Non-Stop Transfers, plus \$200 Resort Coupons, per room per stay (restrictions apply). Night Out Dine Around Package: Stay at Now Sapphire and enjoy dinner and an evening of entertainment at Now Jade Riviera Cancun.	\$3129 \$1999 ⁹⁹	\$2259 \$1569 ⁹⁹
Los Cabos Roundtrip Airfare via US Airways		
Hola Grand Faro, Luxury All Inclusive Resort Los Cabos ★★★★ Deluxe Partial Oceanview Room. Located on the golden sand-beaches of the Gulf of Cortes, adjacent to the golf course and just minutes from the traditional town of San José del Cabo. Enjoy the many amenities, five swimming pools, wading pool and a Jacuzzi, extensive terraces and sun decks, lobby bar with a theatre, bicycles, two tennis courts, paddle tennis, racket-ball, volley-ball, basketball, equipped gymnasium, Kids Club & Juniors Club.	Valid Sun/Mon, Jan 2-Feb 28 departures 5 Nts from \$919	

Prices vary by departure date. Prices are per person, based on double occupancy, unless otherwise stated and include roundtrip airfare from Boston via Allegiant Air, Cabo San Lucas via US Airways, or other U.S. certified air carrier, hotel transfers, hotel tax and baggage handling. Please see the individual air carriers website for a full detailed description of baggage charges. Bookings within 14 days of departure add \$10 per person, \$126.96 [U.S. and foreign taxes/fees, \$2.50 per segment September 11th Security Fee, airport user fees] not included. All prices shown include applicable fuel surcharges. Holiday surcharges and weekend add-ons may apply. All packages are capacity controlled and subject to availability and change. Fares are for general information only and not a reflection of current seat availability. Apple Vacations not responsible for errors or omissions. See Apple Vacations' Fair Trade Contract, noad_13174_101710_boston.cj

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Currents

Remember that scene in New York . . .

See the famous subway grate featured in Marilyn Monroe's "The Seven Year Itch." Sit on the same bench Woody Allen and Diane Keaton shared in "Manhattan." And visit Grand Central Station, which has appeared in such films as "The Godfather" and "Superman." The Classic New York Movie Sites Tour gives visitors a look at some of the top historic Midtown and Uptown movie locations, led by guides who are actors. The new three-hour bus tour provides interesting facts about the history of New York's film industry, and includes movie snippets on overhead screens as you visit notable sites. Adults \$40, children ages 6-9 \$24; tours run Nov. 21, Dec. 5, and Dec. 19. 212-209-3370, [www.screenstours.com](#)

Best weather destinations

Mount Washington in New Hampshire ranked as the "best winter location" in a recent Weather Channel poll. The channel's television viewers and digital users were asked to choose the so-called "best" climates, from a meteorological perspective, to experience summer, winter, extreme weather, rain, and isolation. Mount Washington, known as having some of the worst weather in the world, with hurricane-force winds 110 days a year, 311 inches of average snowfall, and temperatures as cold as

40 degrees below zero, beat out Oswego, N.Y., where the snow can fall at a rate of 6 inches an hour. Those looking for elbow room should head to the Florida Keys, Juneau, Alaska, or Nanucket, the top three picks in the "best location for isolation" category.

Albuquerque hospitality

Check into the new Hotel Parq Central in Albuquerque and you may find the staff eerily hospitable. The 84-year-old building, which is listed on the National

Register of Historic Places, was once Santa Fe Hospital. The hotel's four buildings are connected by pathways and landscaped gardens, where you can wander among the irises and Mexican evening primrose. Then sip a Roaring Twenties-themed cocktail at the new rooftop Apothecary Lounge while taking in skyline and mountain views. Rates start at \$159 per room and include parking, Internet, and continental breakfast. 505-242-0040, [www.hotelparqcentral.com](#) KARI BODNARCHUK

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Grand Central Station with its memorable Beaux Arts architecture is a stop on the Classic New York Movie Sites Tour.