

» **Print**

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to colleagues, clients or customers, use the Reprints tool at the top of any article or visit: www.reutersreprints.com.

Travel Picks: Top 10 Christmas lights displays

Fri, Nov 30 2012

LONDON (Reuters) - There's nothing like a good holiday lights display to spark off the festive season.

Just the thought of a steaming hot drink cupped in your gloved hands, a woollen cap on your head, a fluffy scarf wrapping you up tight as you soak up the seasonal spirit in a city sparkling with the glow of lights has prompted online travel adviser Cheapflights.com (www.cheapflights.com) to offer its list of Top 10 Christmas lights displays. Reuters has not endorsed this list:

1. Singapore

In recent years, the magic of Christmas lights has spread even further afield to countries throughout Asia. Every evening from November 20 to January 2, Orchard Road and Marina Bay in Singapore are lit up in full-on seasonal splendor with its Christmas in the Tropics light display. Singapore's famous shopping district celebrates with twinkling street lights, dressed-up shop windows, concerts, musicals and exhibitions.

2. Toronto, Canada

In Toronto, the annual Cavalcade of Lights marks the official start of the holiday season with music, skating, dancing and a whole heap of Christmas lights. Now in its 46th year, the Cavalcade was created in 1967 to showcase Toronto's newly constructed City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square. The festive usually falls on the final weekend of November when the Square and a giant Christmas tree are illuminated by more than 300,000 energy-efficient LED lights that shine from dusk until 11pm, November 17 to January 1.

3. Paris, France

With a name like the City of Lights you'd expect Paris to shine at Christmas and it certainly doesn't disappoint. During the day you'll come across the usual bustle of tourists at the iconic sites, but night time is when the magic really happens. With the sparkling Eiffel Tower, glitzy Champs-Élysées and starry streets, the city feels like a real-life fairy tale after dark.

4. Medellin, Colombia

Christmas in Medellin, Colombia, is a time of families coming together to celebrate and enjoy the simple pleasure of looking at amazing decorations. In December, the city's thoroughfares, roads and parks are covered in thousands of fairy lights, with the most impressive displays found in Avenue la Playa and the Medellín River. Every year thousands flock to the Medellín River to gaze at the million dollar displays, sample delicious food and enjoy street performances.

5. Kobe, Japan

Seasonal illuminations around Christmas time have become a popular attraction in cities across Japan and none is more beautiful than the Kobe Luminarie. After the Kobe earthquake of 1995, Italy donated thousands of hand-painted bulbs to the city and these were transformed into an intricate, gothic-style luminarie designed by Valerio Festi and Hirokazu Imaoka. The tradition continues, and every year from December 1-12, around four million locals and tourists alike come to celebrate Japan's enduring resilience near Higashi-Yuenchi Park.

6. Baltimore, Maryland

For 11 months out of the year, 34th Street in Baltimore is like any other street in North America, but in the month of December something truly magical takes place. Now in its 62nd year, the "Christmas Street" light display sees thousands of visitors descend on this unassuming neighborhood to view some of the most fantastic, and quirky, lights in North America. Each house on the block is decorated in the owner's unique style and some homes include toy trains on rooftops and hubcap Christmas trees.

7. Vilnius, Lithuania

For the Christmas season, Lithuania's capital city Vilnius gets covered in colorful garlands of electric lights and the country's largest 'Christmas tree' (the Vilnius television tower under a vale of lights) is lit up. In the Old Town Christmas Markets, taste festive treats and mulled wine, and then see if you can spot Santa or listen to carols in one of the city's many churches. For a dazzling performance like no other, check out the popular Magic Christmas display. This state of the production sees the city's cathedral transformed into a colorful storyboard with a "4D" projection of light, sound, and even scent.

8. Vienna, Austria If experiencing a traditional European Christmas is on your list, it doesn't get more perfect than celebrating Weihnachten in Vienna, Austria. From mid-November 10 of Vienna's city squares are transformed into beautiful Christmas Markets decorated with bushy trees and strings of twinkling fairy lights hanging from every available surface. Top this off with stalls selling crafts, gifts, local produce, season foods and festive drinks and you've got enough Christmas spirit to cheer even the biggest Grinch.

9. Berlin, Germany

Germany is the home of Christmas Lights so it's no wonder the country's capital really shines during the holiday season. When the sun goes down on Berlin, the city's historic buildings, streets and every available tree branch is lit up with colorful projections



and row upon row of fairy lights. Berlin's illuminations are such a draw that visitors with a passion for photography can sign up for special guided tours of the lights. Within the city squares and boulevards nearly 60 different Weihnachtsmarkt (Christmas Markets) provide even more glistening sights along with all the shopping, food and Glühwein (mulled wine) you'd expect from a Christmas market. You'll find some of the best illuminations at the 368m Fernsehtur (TV Tower), Alexanderplatz Market, Opera Palace, National Opera and the famous Brandenburg Gate and Charlottenburg Palace.

10. Disney, Los Angeles, California USA

The happiest place on earth gets even merrier over the holiday season as Disneyland is transformed into an extravagant winter wonderland right in the heart of California. Classic rides such as It's A Small World and the Haunted Mansion are given luminous festive makeovers, while Main Street is decked out in the all the best Christmas trimmings. Heralded by trumpeting toy soldiers, prancing reindeer, joyful gingerbread men and skating snowflakes, the Main Street Christmas Fantasy Parade sees all of Disney's most popular characters dressed up in their holiday best. The centerpiece of this magical display sees Sleeping Beauty's Castle covered with snow-capped turrets, shimmering icicles and twinkling lights. Finally, everything is topped off by a dazzling pyrotechnics and fireworks spectacular.

(Editing by Paul Casciato)

© Thomson Reuters 2011. All rights reserved. Users may download and print extracts of content from this website for their own personal and non-commercial use only. Republication or redistribution of Thomson Reuters content, including by framing or similar means, is expressly prohibited without the prior written consent of Thomson Reuters. Thomson Reuters and its logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of the Thomson Reuters group of companies around the world.

Thomson Reuters journalists are subject to an Editorial Handbook which requires fair presentation and disclosure of relevant interests.

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to colleagues, clients or customers, use the Reprints tool at the top of any article or visit: www.reutersreprints.com.