

*Colonial  
Williamsburg*



## **Three Free, Managed-access Grand Illumination Events Planned to Safely Celebrate the Holiday Season**

*Free events Dec. 5, 12 and 19 are contingent on an increase in Virginia's COVID-19 cap on public-gathering size. Guests would view fireworks funded by the City of Williamsburg from individual audience areas on the Palace Green. Reservations open Oct. 6 by phone only.*

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (Sept. 23, 2020) – The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and the City of Williamsburg are making plans to safely celebrate Grand Illumination and the holiday season consistent with government guidelines and restrictions associated with COVID-19. These plans are contingent upon the restrictions on public gatherings that are in place at the time. More information will be provided closer to the date of the event.

Instead of a single Sunday event, Colonial Williamsburg is planning to hold Grand Illumination from 5:30-7 p.m. on three consecutive Saturdays: Dec. 5, 12 and 19. Each night, a fireworks demonstration would be presented by the City of Williamsburg in one location – over the Governor's Palace. A limited number of guests with free Colonial Williamsburg reservations

would enjoy a program including Yuletide music and pyrotechnics from 250 socially-distanced, marked audience areas on the Palace Green, each with a group capacity of 4-6 people.

“This holiday season will be particularly special, and different from all that came before it. We hope to celebrate Grand Illumination in a way that includes as many guests as possible while protecting their safety along with that of employees and the community,” said Robert Currie, Colonial Williamsburg director of entertainment. “We don’t know what the intervening weeks hold in terms of public-health guidelines, but we look forward to a joyous holiday season followed by a healthy, happy 2021.”

Event reservations open Oct. 6 and can only be made by calling Colonial Williamsburg toll-free at 1-800-447-8679 Mondays through Fridays 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m. or Saturdays and Sundays 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Audience areas are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. Chairs will be provided and food and beverages will be available to purchase on-site. Reservations are limited to one per household and reservation dates cannot be changed.

An event FAQ list is available at [colonialwilliamsburg.org/holidays](https://colonialwilliamsburg.org/holidays). Colonial Williamsburg’s popular Holiday Planner is available online only this year due to special planning related to COVID-19, and will be available starting Oct. 6 via the same Web page.

Colonial Williamsburg Resorts will offer holiday getaway packages, dining information and reservations available by phone or by visiting [colonialwilliamsburghotels.com](https://colonialwilliamsburghotels.com).

Grand Illumination and other holiday events are contingent upon government-issued public health guidelines. Capacities are strictly limited. Free reservations are required to view the fireworks and to enter the Palace Green area. Face coverings will be required on Palace Green during guest check-in and any time guests are not within their designated audience areas. Event signage will remind guests to maintain at least six feet of social distancing from guests not traveling with them. Fireworks are only viewable from Palace Green. Guests and members of the public without free reservations will have difficulty viewing fireworks from any other location within the Historic Area.

Grand Illumination guests are advised to park at the Colonial Williamsburg Regional Visitor Center at 101 Visitor Center Drive and access the Historic Area on foot or via Colonial Williamsburg shuttle buses which are complimentary for ticketed guests.

Colonial Williamsburg continues to closely monitor public-health guidance and will respond immediately if additional government-issued restrictions arise. Resumed public operations are dependent upon continued reduced health risk. Colonial Williamsburg continues to work closely with government agencies, healthcare and private-sector organizations, William & Mary and others. Colonial Williamsburg follows Virginia’s Emergency Temporary Standards and has aligned its plans and safety protocols with those recommended by the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov), the [Virginia Department of Health](https://www.vdh.virginia.gov) and other agencies.

Effective with Colonial Williamsburg’s reopening June 14, most interpretive programming were moved outdoors. Additionally, most doors, faucets, and other high-traffic touchpoints are now touchless, and there are significantly enhanced cleaning protocols throughout the foundation’s open locations.

For the safety of employees and the public, ticketed guests can expect limited interaction with interpretive staff. Site entry is limited by state-mandated capacity guidelines for social

gatherings, and guests are encouraged to proceed quickly through interpretive sites to accommodate as many visitors as possible. Face coverings are required while inside foundation-owned buildings and their use is encouraged outdoors as well. Guests are also asked to adhere to social distancing guidelines during their visit to Colonial Williamsburg sites, when walking along Duke of Gloucester Street and in other publicly accessible areas. [Colonialwilliamsburg.org](http://Colonialwilliamsburg.org) lists additional guest comfort and safety guidelines to provide the safest experience for guests, the general public and Colonial Williamsburg's staff.

All Colonial Williamsburg employees receive special safety training prior to returning to work to limit the risk of spread or infection. The training includes general and site-specific safety requirements such as basic sanitization procedures, use of face coverings where appropriate, and social distancing requirements to follow with colleagues and guests. Signs posted throughout the Historic Area and Art Museums will remind guests of safety precautions to protect themselves and others from risks associated with COVID-19 exposure.

Information on Colonial Williamsburg operations are available online at [colonialwilliamsburg.org/update](http://colonialwilliamsburg.org/update) and by following [Colonial Williamsburg](#) on Facebook.

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*The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation preserves, restores and operates Virginia's 18th-century capital of Williamsburg. Innovative and interactive experiences highlight the relevance of the American Revolution to contemporary life and the importance of an informed, active citizenry. The Colonial Williamsburg experience includes more than 600 restored or reconstructed original buildings, renowned museums of decorative arts and folk art, extensive educational outreach programs for students and teachers, lodging, including the Forbes 5-star Williamsburg Inn, culinary options from historic taverns to casual or elegant dining, the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club featuring 45 holes designed by Robert Trent Jones and his son Rees Jones, a full-service spa and fitness center, pools, retail stores and gardens. Philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and hospitality operations sustain Colonial Williamsburg's educational programs and preservation initiatives.*