

# FAMILY FUN & HOLIDAY FESTIVITIES IN BILLINGS

*Where shadows of the towering Rimrocks meet the mystic waters of the Yellowstone River, Billings serves as Montana's trailhead for whatever awesome adventures visitors seek under big skies. And as the cooler months move in, many of those adventures take on a festive twist as Montana's largest city boasts a jovial lineup of holiday events adored by locals and visitors alike.*

## **HARVESTFEST**

Celebrate all the seasonal goodness at **Harvest Fest** – an annual fall festival that takes place during the second weekend of October in Downtown Billings. The enticing aromas of edible delights like roasted nuts and kettle corn fill the crisp fall air along with musical accompaniment of talented fiddlers during this finale of the summer's Farmers' Market. Sample the last of the fresh produce, mums, pumpkins and pies of the past season, and then check out the pumpkin pie baking contest to see some of the town's local tastemakers at work. Families can check out the interactive children's area, which includes free crafts and activities for all ages.

## **RUN TURKEY RUN!**

This **Thanksgiving Day 5K and Street Mile race** was created in 2011 to help put an end to hunger in the Billings community and to support family fitness. Since the race's inception, participants and sponsors have collectively raised more than \$275,000 for Meals on Wheels, Family Service Inc., the Billings Backpack Program, the MSU Billings Yellowjacket Emergency Pantry and the Rocky Mountain College Food Pantry. So plan on dressing up like a turkey and racing for a good cause, or cheering on the locals participating in this cherished event.

## **THE NUTCRACKER AT THE ALBERTA BAIR THEATER**

The **Alberta Bair Theater** has hosted the finest performers in every discipline of the performing arts, including classical and popular music, country music and jazz, opera, ballet, modern and ethnic dance, comedy, drama and musical theater. And for more than 30 years, performances of Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Ballet" have been a Thanksgiving tradition sure to get you into the holiday spirit!

## **HOLIDAY LIGHTS PARADE**

With more than 100 floats adorned with holiday décor and Santa in tow, **the Billings Holiday Lights Parade** in Downtown is an annual tradition within the local community to usher in the holiday season on the day after Thanksgiving. Be sure to stop in at the downtown galleries, boutiques and eateries to warm up and start your holiday season shopping in Montana's Trailhead.



### THE POLAR EXPRESS

Billings' historic train station is transformed into a winter wonderland, and families snuggled in pajamas gather to watch a theatrical production of **The Polar Express**. Santa also makes an appearance to take photos with all the kids, as everyone enjoys cookies and warm cocoa before taking a train ride of their own on the Polar Express. Tickets go on sale in November at the Billings Depot website and sell out extremely fast, so mark your calendars today!

### ZOOLIGHTS

Take a drive on the wild side at **ZooMontana's ZooLights**. Once the zoo's beloved animals like Winston the sloth, Bert the bison and Simpson the wolf take to resting for the evening, ZooMontana lights up the night sky with a festive display of flickering holiday light displays, accompanied by the holiday tunes broadcast on ZooRadio for all to enjoy. ZooLights is Billings' only drive-through holiday light display.

### MOSS MANSION TREE FESTIVAL

The historic 1903 **Moss Mansion** helps make the holiday season sparkle every year in Billings with the sights and sounds of Christmas. Each room of the mansion is adorned with trees, twinkling lights and ornaments. Visitors can vote for their favorite tree and embrace the holiday spirit as the Moss family might have long ago.