



Underground and Twilight Christmas Adventures in the Wye Valley & Forest of Dean

Christmas events include night owl flying, twilight steam train rides, a magical grotto 100ft below ground and festive vegan cookery classes



Members of [Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism](http://www.wyedeantourism.co.uk) are geared up for Christmas with a huge range of festive events and activities. There are experiences galore that see Santa greet kids on a twilight steam train ride or residing 100ft below ground in a magical labyrinthian grotto. And, for crafty types there are clay tree and mosaic wreath workshops, plus upskilling culinary classes to ease festive catering fears.

Check out the Christmas highlights below or to view the full line up of events head to www.wyedeantourism.co.uk

Festive Family Fun Events

New Twilight Trains at [Perrygrove Railway](http://www.perrygrove.co.uk)

Coleford, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, 6-23 December 2019

With Perrygrove Railway's new twilight train running throughout December, there's no need to head to platform 9¾ for a magical experience. Passengers will be transported on an evening journey all aboard the Spirit of Adventure steam train, which whizzes through an illuminated woodland and past a frozen lake with a complimentary hot chocolate to warm the heart and soul. Keep an eye out for Father Christmas' grotto en-route where well-behaved children are treated to an early Christmas gift.

Twilight Train rides operate every Friday and Saturday between 6 and 21 December, Sunday 22 and Monday 23 December priced from £10.50 per person. Toddlers can travel for £6 each and under 1s for free. Find out more and book at www.perrygrove.co.uk or call 01594 834991.

Underground Christmas Market at [Clearwell Caves](http://www.clearwellcaves.co.uk)

Clearwell, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, 29 November – 24 December 2019

The iron ore caves at Clearwell will be transformed into a winter wonderland from 29 November. Follow the story of Clearwell Caves' fictional characters *Archie and the Unicorn* as they travel 100 feet below the earth through caverns filled with twinkling lights and decorations. Here, Father Christmas awaits with his elves to treat good children to an early Christmas gift. An underground

market will teem with festive stalls that stock seasonal treats, while tasty snacks are served in the cavernous café.

The Christmas caves are open between 29 November and 24 December between 10am and 5pm daily except for Fridays when open until 7pm. Tickets for ages 15 and over are £14, and tickets for children aged two to 14 are £14 with a present. Under twos are £6 with a gift, or free without. Find out more and book at clearwellcaves.com or call 01594 832535.

Santa and Steam at [Dean Forest Railway](#)

Lydney, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, 7-24 December 2019

Powered by Santa and his helpers, the Dean Forest Railway offers a ride on an authentic steam train along the heritage line that runs between Lydney and Parkend. There's no queuing for impatient kids as Santa will visit each child during the 75-minute journey. Children will receive an age-related gift while adults receive a mince pie and miniature spirit bottle to help keep warm.

The Santa Special train runs each weekend between 7 and 22 December and on Monday 23 and Tuesday 24 December. Tickets are £14 per person, under twos travel free. Find out more and book at www.deanforestrailway.co.uk or call 01594 845840.

Festive Run through the Forest of Dean

Beechenhurst, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, 22 December 2019

Forestry England will help get Christmas off to a healthy start with a five-mile run in the heart of the Forest of Dean. Come dressed up to impress Santa and tackle challenging forest paths and trails around Beechenhurst. The event is open to runners from novice to experienced athletes, with medals and festive goodies for all participants. The race also includes a one-mile Santa dash and a 300-metre elf dash for little ones.

The five-mile race starts at 10am on 22 December, pre booking is advised and entry is available from £18 per person. To find out more visit www.nice-work.org.uk/races/FODChristmas5/2019 or call 01797 229955.

Night Owl Flying at the [International Centre for Birds of Prey](#)

Newent, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, 30 November - 20 December 2019

Harry Potter fans will delight in the rare chance to witness owls flying in their natural nocturnal environment, illuminated by moonlight and the helping hand of spotlights. These special owl evenings will take place at the International Centre for Birds of Prey throughout December, located just outside the town of Newent near May Hill. Visitors will enjoy a hot beverage to warm up before the birds take flight over a series of indoor and outside displays.

The owl flying sessions start at 6.30pm on select evenings throughout winter and are priced at £35 per person (suitable for those aged 10 and over). To book and find out more visit www.icbp.org or call 01531 820286.

Christmas Workshops and Crafts

Christmas Cookery Classes at [Harts Barn Cookery School](#)

Longhope, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, 1-21 December 2019

Harts Barn Cookery School will host eight Christmas-themed classes for cooks to get set for the festive season. Kids will delight in making edible biscuit decorations, whilst adults can choose from Christmas breads, cake baking, chocolate making and afternoon tea courses. There is even a vegan

cookery course with recipes for tasty alternatives to the traditional Christmas dinner, and a family day that brings everyone together to cook seasonal dishes and craft Christmas tree decorations.

Courses run between 1 and 21 December and are priced between £25 (Edible Decorations for kids) and £110 (A Vegan Christmas) per person. The Festive Family Creativity workshop runs on 21 December and is £45 per person for the four-hour session. To find out more visit www.hartsbarncookeryschool.co.uk or call 01452 831719.

Mosaic Decoration Making with [Rachel Shilston](#)

Tidenham, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, 16 November-15 December 2019

Rachel Shilston, who appeared on Kirstie Allsopp's *Handmade Christmas* last year, will run her mosaic wreath workshops for others to make her unique decoration designs. In addition, Rachel will run mosaic bauble and Christmas tree making workshops.

Wreath making workshops are £110 per person and run on 17 and 29 November. Bauble making is £39 and runs on 3 and 4 December. Or the course can be accompanied with an afternoon tea on 15 December for £46. The Christmas tree workshop is £38 and runs on the 13 December. To find out more visit www.rachelshilston.co.uk or call 01594 844221.

Christmas Chocolates and Willow Decoration Making at [Humble by Nature](#)

Penalt, Monmouthshire, 7 December 2019

Humble by Nature will run two chocolate making workshops where budding chocolatiers can enjoy a guided tasting session before they learn how to make a smooth ganache, dip truffles and achieve a professional finish before packaging their creations in a decorative selection box for the perfect handmade gift.

There are also a few places still available for willow decoration making classes.

A 10am and 2pm Christmas chocolate making workshop will run on 7 December, with places available for £50 per person. The willow decoration workshop will run twice on 30 November (10am and 1.30pm), with places £45 per person. Find out more and book at www.humblebynature.com or call 01600 714595.

Clay Christmas Trees at [Eastnor Pottery](#)

Ledbury, Herefordshire, 5 November - 21 December 2019

Eastnor Pottery's Evergreen workshops offer the chance to create a hollow Christmas tree from soft clay. Participants can decorate the trees in a seasonal palette of paints and underglazes, before sending them to be fired and glazed.

Evergreen workshops are £20 per person and run Tuesday to Saturday between 5 November and 21 December. To find out more visit eastnorpottery.co.uk or call 01531 633886.

Christmas Pottery Fayre at [Hot Pot Pottery](#)

Coleford, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, 7-8 December 2019

Hot Pot Pottery will run a Christmas Fayre 7-8 December, which features a range of festive-themed pottery and local crafts for sale as well as the chance to create unique decorations from clay, or have a go at painting a clay reindeer, snowman or baubles.

Pottery painting costs between £10.75 and £18.50 per piece, while decoration making costs £6 per piece. To find out more visit hotpotpottery.co.uk or call 01594 837943.

For more information visit www.wyedeantourism.co.uk

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High resolution images are available on request.

For further media information please contact Fiona Reece or Ryan Baker at Travel Tonic PR;
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Notes to Editors:

Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism (WVFDT) was formed in 2006 and is the official Destination Management Organisation representing the interests of almost 400 tourism related businesses spread across Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire and Herefordshire and is the only cross-border tourism association in the UK, spanning Wales and England.

The region covers over 1,000 square miles and is home to one of England's largest and more ancient forests as well as the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Within this unique landscape of forested hillsides, limestone gorge scenery, waterfalls, rocky outcrops and unspoilt villages, are some of Britain's best fishing and canoeing opportunities, not to mention tidal surfing on the Severn Bore, a natural phenomenon coinciding with the full moon.

Above the Severn estuary rises the triangle plateau of the Forest of Dean, regularly taking a starring role in major blockbusters including Star Wars, Harry Potter and in 2020, The Secret Garden. With over 20 million trees it's the perfect place to forest bathe, explore new heights from tree top trails, or maybe spot a deer or two.

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