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CAPE CHARLES A DESTINATION FOR HOLIDAY CHARM BY THE BAY

Festive Fridays Lights Up Beach Town with Live Music, Free Movies, Local Shop Specials, Carriage Rides

Cape Charles, VA – Cape Charles is getting hot, and it's not just the summer sun. The increasingly popular Victorian beach town on the Chesapeake Bay is spreading the magic into the holiday season with Festive Fridays, a free celebration beginning at 5 p.m. every Friday from Thanksgiving to Christmas.

"We're here for people who want a small-town holiday experience," says Suzanne Golibart, owner of Periwinkle's Consignment Boutique and Chair of the Retail Alliance, which is partnering with the Northampton Chamber of Commerce and local organizations and businesses to host the events. "If you're local, the store owners know who you're shopping for, and if you're visiting, we make you feel right at home. It's a lot more personal than Santa at the mall."

Luminaries will set Cape Charles aglow with holiday cheer, a perfect ambiance for riding in a horse-drawn carriage or strolling into the town's eclectic storefronts, such as the Wilson building, once a classic department store and now the chic home of AT Altitude Gallery and Moonrise Jewelry. Live music on an outdoor stage on Strawberry Street will feature local acoustic groups and Northampton High School and Middle School's band and chorus. The Palace Theatre is showing a free holiday movie at 8:00 p.m. each Friday night, and children's activities range from a Santa House at the Cape Charles Christian School to a dramatized children's story hour on the stage at Lemon Tree Gallery and Studio, which will also host caroling and a holiday-themed open mic night.

The town's businesses will stay open until 8:00, offering shoppers door prizes and special discounts on everything from local art to coastal-inspired gifts to gourmet eatables. Local restaurants, known for their fresh seafood and picturesque views, are preparing specials.

"People have been coming into our stores all summer long asking us if we are doing Festive Fridays again," says Andrew Follmer, President of the Cape Charles Business Association and owner of two shops in town, The Boardwalk and ...Like a Sailor. "You just can't replicate the genuine small-town charm we have here."

The good cheer doesn't stop on Friday nights, making Cape Charles an attractive destination for a weekend holiday getaway. On Saturday, December 3, Santa will be visiting Cape Charles by train in the morning, and in the evening, merrymakers can take in the Grand Illumination at Central Park and the lighted golf cart parade, as well as the inaugural lighted boat parade and dance party at the marina. The following weekend promises satisfaction for both sweet and savory tastes, with the popular B8B Cookie Trail followed by the annual chowder cookoff at the Oyster Farm.

"The cookie trail is your chance to get inside these gorgeous Victorian homes, both B&Bs and private residences," says Tammy Holloway of Bay Haven Inn of Cape Charles, whose 1906 colonial revival is in its fourth year of operation as a bed and breakfast. "And in our historic village, you never have to fight for a parking spot." Admission for the event is a donation to the food bank.

"Festive Fridays is a product of the volunteer, can-do spirit that can be seen throughout the fabric of our little town," says Cape Charles Mayor George Proto. "It has fast become a holiday tradition, and I expect this year will be an even better success than last year."

Many town business owners share the mayor's enthusiasm and anticipate a flow of customers, as Tiffany Mohr, Event Manager at the Oyster Farm at King's Creek, can attest. "Festive Fridays gives us an opportunity to have business in the winter that we don't normally have." There is no question that Cape Charles' tourism is growing, with a 25% increase in meal tax revenue and a 70% increase in transient occupancy tax revenue since FY 2015, according to the town. But expanding the peak summer season into the shoulder season is crucial for small businesses to survive the quieter months of January, February, and March. "Festive Fridays gives us a chance to come together and celebrate and share how unique we are as a community, even when temperatures drop," says Mohr.

Film Showings:

- November 25 - A Christmas Story
- December 2 - It's a Wonderful Life
- December 9 - Elf
- December 16 - The Polar Express
- December 23 - National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation

Live Music:

- November 25 - Pete Hartzler and friends
- December 2 - Heather and Nathan
- December 9 - The Sunshine State Band
- December 16 - Northampton High School and Middle School Band and Chorus
- December 23: Jeff Madsen and Mike Hawker

To see a complete list of events and for more information, visit @festivefridayscapecharles on Facebook or visit www.festivefridayscapecharles.weebly.com.

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Discover holiday cheer for the whole family at Festive Fridays in Cape Charles.
Photo by Sharon Silvey courtesy of Cape Charles Memorial Library.



Experience Cape Charles hospitality at its finest during your holiday weekend getaway.
Photo by Chris Glennon and courtesy of Tammy Holloway.



Feel the love shining brightly in Cape Charles at Festive Fridays.
Photo courtesy of Greg Kohler.