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Beverly Hills: Where To Stay, Eat And Play For The Holidays

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Iconic entrance to the Beverly Hills Hotel. AUDREY MA

Mixing Hollywood glamour with luxury, Beverly Hills, California, is one of the most exciting places to visit during the holidays. The famed city and surrounding areas, like Bel Air and Century City, are famous for their festive atmosphere, making for a luxurious destination to celebrate the season's magic.

Beverly Hills might seem stuck in time, its palm tree-lined boulevards and extravagant historic mansions clearly on display, but a large increase of development and new additions are on the horizon with luxury hotels and famed Chefs ready to launch new trendy properties in 2024.



The future of Beverly Hills is certainly bright, according to Julie Wagner, CEO of Beverly Hills Conference & Visitors Bureau. “On the heels of a successful 2023, Beverly Hills continues into the new year with incredible momentum and development across the destination. The city’s food scene is unmatched, with restaurant after restaurant opening from the culinary industry’s biggest names, including NYC’s **Dante**, LA’s admired restaurateur **Evan Funke**, and world-renowned **Daniel Boulud**. The 90210 remains a coveted zip code for retail and fashion, with a new **Chanel** flagship, **Kith**, and **Loewe** among the most recent storefronts to hit Rodeo Drive. Looking ahead, numerous developments are forthcoming, including **Aman Beverly Hills**, complete with a club, hotel and residences, **Rosewood Residences**, and **Mandarin Oriental Residences** (home to Chef Boulud’s new Café Boulud).”

So, deck the halls and get ready to explore for the holidays. Here are the most festive places to eat, stay, and play in Beverly Hills and surrounding areas.



Beverly Hills Hotel JEREMY AUSTIN

Where to stay

Known for some of the most iconic and legendary hotels, Beverly Hills is not lacking for grand palaces like The Beverly Hills Hotel, the celebrity-studded retreat of Bel Air Hotel, and the newest starry arrival, The Maybourne Beverly Hills.

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The Beverly Hills Hotel

Locally known as "The Pink Palace," The Beverly Hills Hotel and Bungalows, Dorchester Collection is a landmark classic Californian hideaway known for playing host to Hollywood's most famous. Built in 1912, the city of Beverly Hills was actually created around this iconic hotel's pink facade.

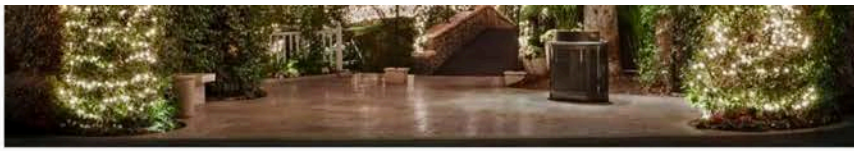


Private pool Bungalow 5 at The Beverly Hills Hotel. DORCHESTER / BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL

The hotel's guest rooms and suites include 21 unique bungalows that are more like individual homes. Some Bungalows are specialty suites with a living room, baby grand piano, fireplace, and large balcony. Nights here have you dining with movie stars and Hollywood executives in the Polo Lounge Restaurant. Days are spent in the spa or sunbathing in the poolside cabanas.

The legendary Hotel transforms during the holidays. Christmas Eve Dinner has Carol singers from 12 pm to 4 pm and Santa Claus from 11 am to 6 pm. Christmas Day Dinner offers up a Prix-fixed four-course menu from 12 pm to 9 pm (\$240 per adult, \$120 for children 12 and under), a grand dessert buffet, and live music from 12 pm to 10 pm. The Polo Lounge Bar offers up 12 Days of Soufflés leading to Christmas, including classic Pumpkin Pie, Holiday Sugar Cookie, Peppermint Chocolate Chip, Eggnog, and Gingerbread. A Children's Cookie Decorating Class will take place, with the pastry team hosting a masterclass in Polo Private. Youngsters will embellish 24 delicious cookies to take home in a signature pink box on Thursday, December 21, from 3 – 5pm.





Hotel Bel Air decked out for the holidays DORCHESTER / HOTEL BEL AIR

Hotel Bel Air

One of my favorite hotels in the world, the Hotel Bel Air highlights its glamorous past with enchanting gardens, a fairytale-style lake complete with swans, a very popular pool scene, an intimate spa, and stunning suites and bungalows. Located adjacent to Beverly Hills in neighboring Bel-Air, the hotel is the most exclusive in Southern California.

The hotel has 45 suites and 58 large guest rooms, all surrounding private pink mission-style bungalows. You can feel the celebrity history here, where stars such as Marilyn Monroe, Cary Grant, and Elizabeth Taylor retreated away from the crowds. Some famous names have even stayed here long-term, calling the hotel their home away from home. There is even a suite named after Grace Kelly and a stunning Presidential Suite with a private pool and Spanish courtyard.



Grace Kelly Suite at Hotel Bel Air DORCHESTER / HOTEL BEL AIR

The Restaurant at Hotel Bel-Air offers cozy booths over the lake and features a California-Mediterranean fusion menu crafted under executive chef Connor McVay. Offered up during the month is a Holiday Movie Series on the Front Lawn from December 11 – 15; the hotel will invite guests to the decorated Front Lawn for a series of famed holiday classics presented on a massive outdoor screen. In the lobby, the Advent Calendar invites guests to open doors daily to reveal a unique holiday treat.





Poolside at Hotel Bel Air DORCHESTER / HOTEL BEL AIR

The Christmas Eve Dinner offers a Prix-fixed four-course menu from 5 pm to 9 pm (\$275 per adult, \$95 for children 12 and under) and Carol singers from 6 pm to 9 pm. Christmas Day Brunch is a Prix-fixe three-course menu from 11 am to 3 pm (\$250 per adult, \$95 for children 12 and under); a Grand dessert buffet and seasonal cocktails; a visit from Santa Claus from 11 am to 3 pm and Carol singers from 12 pm to 3 pm. Christmas Day Dinner Prix-fixe three-course menu is from 5 pm to 9 pm (\$225 per adult, \$95 for children 12 and under); along with a grand dessert buffet.

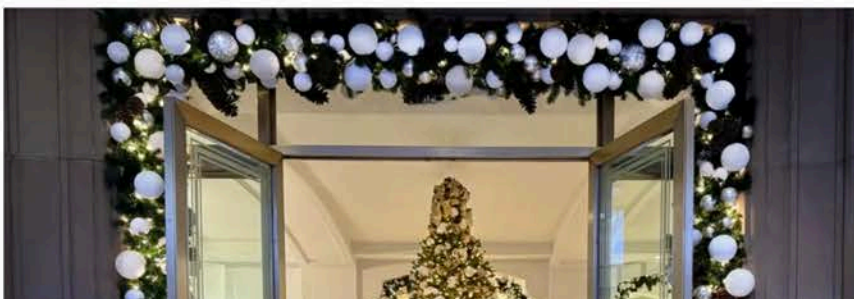


The Maybourne Beverly Hills THE MAYBOURNE HOTEL

The Maybourne Beverly Hills

Celebrities are flocking to this fabulous property in the heart of Beverly Hills. The Maybourne Beverly Hills is the first US location of the famed Maybourne Hotel Group, and they have completely renovated the hotel to perfection, with bright, airy colors straight out of the Italian Riviera, a fabulous new cigar and whiskey bar, and the trendy rooftop Dante Restaurant.

Rooms are stunning and light, with unique mid-century classic furniture. Spacious signature suites are the best options. As with every Maybourne property, art is key to the design and features an evolving collection of California artists. Suites have balconies overlooking the city with floor-to-ceiling windows and large marble bathrooms. My favorite is the huge Hollywood Suite, which feels more like a private residence, an 1800-square-foot one-bedroom suite offering amazing city views.

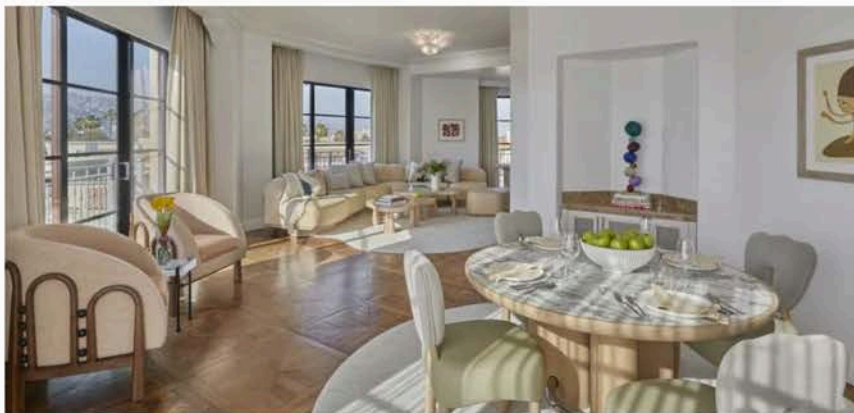




The Maybourne Beverly Hills all decked out for the holidays - JIM DOBSON FOR FORBES

Days are spent poolside or in the 20,000-square-foot spa (the largest in the city), with 17 treatment rooms and a magnesium-infused mineral pool. Lazy afternoons are spent dining at the amazing Terrace Restaurant overlooking the Gardens with oven-roasted Italian pizzas, outrageous fresh pasta, and aperitivo-style cocktails.

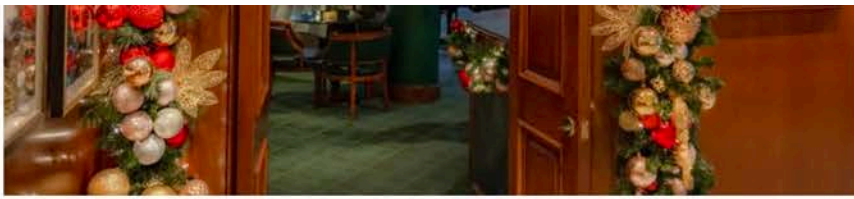
During the holiday season, the hotel's Terrace Restaurant will host Christmas feasts on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The popular afternoon tea gets a holiday twist with seasonal flavors and treats and Laurent-Perrier Champagne. Christmas Eve Dinner at The Terrace or Christmas Day Brunch at The Terrace is \$195 per person, and New Year's Eve at The Terrace 5pm and 8pm (\$295 per person).



Hollywood Suite at The Maybourne Beverly Hills - MAYBOURNE

And if it couldn't get any more decadent, the hotel has an exclusive partnership with Bentley Beverly Hills, enabling hotel guests to experience L.A. in style during the holidays. Visitors booking a suite will have the opportunity to use one of five complimentary Bentley vehicles: a luxury Grand Tourer, a new Bentley Flying Spur, the ultimate SUV, the Bentayga, or the elegant Continental G.T. Convertible. Those staying local will be able to ride in the hotel's Bentley house car, navigated by a dedicated personal driver.





Polo Lounge at Beverly Hills Hotel AUDREY MA

Where to Eat

There is a resurgence of new cuisine arriving to Beverly Hills with exciting restaurants, bars and lounges mixed with iconic and historic dining spots. From extravagant rooftop views to intimate retreats, the people (and celebrity) watching only adds to your dining options in Beverly Hills.

Polo Lounge

Opened in 1941, you are almost guaranteed to see a famous face here at California's most classic restaurant, inside The Beverly Hills Hotel. This is power dining at its best from the hard-to-get Booths 1, 2, and 3. Serving American cuisine, the Polo Lounge is dark, sexy, and private, with terrific ambiance. Order the famed McCarthy salad for lunch to feel like a real insider. For dinner, enjoy classic steak dishes with iconic cocktails like the best Martini in town.

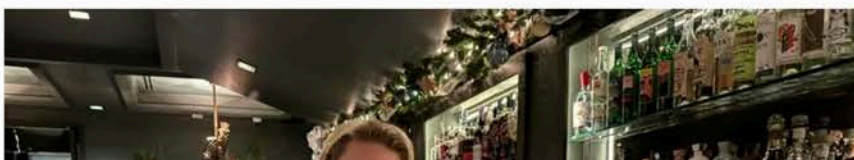


Stunning views of the city from Dante DANTE

Dante

My favorite new restaurant is Dante, the new ninth-floor bar at the Maybourne Beverly Hills that opened this summer, is already receiving cult status in the city. Its New York location was voted the number-one bar in the world a few years back, and this new spot does not disappoint. Owners Nathalie Hudson and Linden Pride have brought some of their native Australia to Beverly Hills with a remarkable launch offering up stunning views of the city and Hollywood Hills.

Filled with velvety soft blue booths and a ceiling fresco by local artist Abel Macias, the walls open to the outdoors, overlooking the balcony filled with romantic couches. There is also a long bar and pool seating near the wood-fired oven, and the people-watching is among the very best in the city. The outrageous drinks menu, friendly staff, and market-fresh meals make you feel like you are on the coast of Amalfi. Italian influences are everywhere.





Bar director Adam Fournier and legendary Chef Wolfgang Puck behind the bar at Spago Beverly Hills. JIM DOBSON FOR FORBES

Spago

As Spago Beverly Hills enters its 40th year, they have revealed a completely new look with a beautifully renovated bar to accompany the cuisine from legendary Chef Wolfgang Puck. Adam Fournier joins as Bar Director and is a 2021 Diageo World Class US Bartender of the Year. He has created a culinary-driven bar program that is just as iconic as its famed Chef, featuring high-end, rare, or discontinued ingredients for one-of-a-kind luxurious cocktails.

During the holidays, the restaurant is decorated from top to bottom with special events, including Christmas Eve with the "Santa Sisters" holiday carolers, a winter wonderland & an extensive 3-course "selection" prix fixe menu filled with seasonal choices. Guests will be welcomed with a glass of Ca'Del Bosco from the "Champagne" region of Italy known as Franciacorta, poured from a magnificent 3L bottle.

Wolfgang Puck tells me, "Beverly Hills is a unique place. It is a food destination, having some of the best produce from farmers' markets. It's all about luxury, and the luxury segment is doing very well. Both Spago and Cut (at the Beverly Wilshire) are having an amazing year. Post covid, we have seen people really diving into the luxury dining scene, and we hope to see that continue in 2024."



Après-ski dining experience at Century Plaza Hotel. FAIRMONT

Swiss Chalets at the Century Plaza Hotel

For the second year, Los Angeles' first Après-ski dining experience returns to Fairmont

Century Plaza with custom-built Swiss Chalets, cozy fire pit seating, and a new menu of Alpine favorites. With stunning décor straight off the slopes, the five wood chalets are the perfect setting for their delicious Cheese and Chocolate Fondues. Mains include Braised Beef Cheek served with roasted sunchokes, Brie and Pear Soup, and festive cocktails like spiked Eggnog of the Century and the Espresso-ski Martini. A three-course menu priced at \$105 per person is served with a welcome glass of Glühwein. The Swiss Chalet experience will be available nightly beginning at 5pm through December 31, 2023.

Continuing the Après-Ski experience, Fairmont Century Plaza has collaborated with lifestyle and fashion platform *Who What Wear* to create festive fun throughout December. Guests can enjoy weekend movie nights, cookie making, challah baking, and much more.



Lobby of the Four Seasons Los Angeles in Beverly Hills from outrageous floral designer Jeff Leatham. JIM DOBSON FOR FORBES

Where to Play

Beverly Hills is famed for its high-end stores, and strolling along the iconic Rodeo Drive is always a visitor's window-shopping dream. New stores, including Giorgio Armani and Moncler, joined a new Louis Vuitton men's store, and John Lobb has also launched a new flagship location.

The Jolly Trolley returns this year, offering special rides from the corner of Rodeo Drive and Dayton Way at Two Rodeo. The festively decorated trolley car will take visitors to the "Unwrap the Magic" projection show at City Hall. It will drop off at the corner of North Crescent Drive and North Santa Monica Boulevard and loop back.

Rodeo Drive is transformed during the holidays along its center median from Santa Monica Boulevard to Wilshire Boulevard with Up, Up & Away Holiday, where teddy bears ride on toy hot air balloons. Thousands of white lights and an enhanced audio system playlist on weekends add to the cheer.

My personal favorite thing to do is visit many of the luxury hotel lobbies to witness their spectacular displays for the holidays, and then have a festive cocktail in their decked-out bars. One of the most extravagant is Jeff Leatham's floral installations in the lobby at Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills, complete with a spectacular red theme.