

The most wonderful time of the year is also a fantastic opportunity for the Myrtle Beach area to show off its own holiday spirit.

We like to kick things off a little early here along the Grand Strand and really give visitors and residents a chance to enjoy as much of the Yuletide offerings as possible. Many of our premiere theaters, like The Carolina Opry, Alabama Theater, the Atlantic Stage and the Palace Theater begin rolling out their holiday shows starting on Nov. 1.

These Christmas extravaganzas feature singing, dancing and, in some cases, real snow. And how often do we get to see snow this close to the Atlantic Ocean?

Actually, the waters of the Intracoastal Waterway do provide the setting for one of our favorite and most unique of holiday traditions. On Nov. 30, the 29th Annual Intracoastal Christmas Regatta Boat Parade sets sail from the inlet at Little River and makes its way down to Dock Holidays Marina. It's a unique Christmastime display that is sure to warm the hearts of even the Scroogiest of Scrooges.

The beauty of all the holiday lights seen around the Grand Strand will invoke child-like wonderment in all of us. The various municipalities begin their tree-lighting ceremonies around the first of December. But they're all preceded by the annual holiday tree lighting at Broadway at the Beach on Nov. 23.

Combining twinkling lights with the majesty of nature, Brookgreen Gardens again presents its "Night of a Thousand Candles," running from Dec. 5 to Dec. 21. It's one of the Myrtle Beach area's grandest holiday traditions.

Then, once Santa has finished making his rounds, it's time for the sounds of "Auld Lang Syne" to start dancing in your heads. There are plenty of celebrations on tap for those along the Grand Strand to ring in 2014. The Children's Museum of S.C. gets the jump on all the other festivities with its Noon Year's Eve Party on Dec. 31. And pay attention to the nighttime sky, because places from Barefoot Landing to Pelicans Stadium to Broadway at the Beach will be sending fireworks screeching into the nighttime sky as a way of saying out with the old, in with the new.

It's not too late in this calendar year for you to resolve to spend the holidays here with us.