

# Christmas lights in the Dyker Heights neighborhood

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If you come to New York City in December, you'll find the festive Christmas season throughout the town. Skaters wobble beneath the giant tree in Rockefeller Center. [Giant snowflakes adorn the upper floors of the Saks Fifth Avenue store](#) while animated Christmas-themed window displays entertain visitors on the ground floor of Saks, as well as [Macy's](#) (where Santa takes a roller coaster ride), [Lord and Taylor](#), and many other stores. But somewhat overlooked in all this extravagance are the amateur efforts of the residents of Dyker Heights. (Take the R to 86th then make the 20-minute walk or catch the B64 bus to 11th Avenue.) There is no line for tickets; there is no entrance. You just wander through the streets admiring the Christmas lights, inflatable snowmen, Nativity displays, and other decorations, be they tasteful and reverential or (what you're more likely to notice) ostentatious and mind-boggling. There were a lot of extravagant displays, but the one that took the cake was the large house with a 15-foot-tall Santa flanked by 20-foot tall nutcracker soldiers, accompanied by two merry-go-rounds and life-size figures waving to passers-by from the upper balcony.

Visit in the early evening, say from 5pm to 7pm. This hits the sweet spot between "late enough that night has fallen" and "catch them before the lights are turned off." We visited during a weekday and there were barely any people on the streets, and those we saw were locals just out for an evening stroll. There were a few cars driving slowly through the neighborhood, but not enough to disrupt that friendly neighborhood atmosphere. (I suspect things are much different on the weekends.) Remember, this is a residential neighborhood, not a commercial display, so don't make a lot of noise and please respect the residents' privacy.

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