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LIFESTYLE

THE 9 MOST ABSURD DIY HOLIDAY LIGHT DISPLAYS IN LA

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In LA, you can find thrilling light displays at a number of well-established mainstream crowd pleasers, including the **LA Zoo**, and The Grove and Riverside's **Festival of Lights** at The Mission Inn. You can even stroll Descanso Gardens' **Enchanted: Forest of Lights**, which manages to be magical, without an overload of red and green. But true local holiday charm comes down to the

neighbors who scale ladders every late November to deck out their homes and apartments in twinkling glory. Here are some of the best houses and neighborhoods around Los Angeles for seeing what a little holiday spirit and ambition can create.

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Address: 3901 Longview Valley Rd, Sherman Oaks

When: 5-10pm every night through January 1st, weather permitting.

Mark Ziemkowski has been putting together a holiday spectacular on the lawn of his Sherman Oaks home for some time now. It's a festive overload, running a completely synchronized holiday show with singing animatronics, timed lights, and projections. Characters include DJ Jingles, a singing snow-couple, and, of course, Santa Claus. Check out his Facebook page to keep up with any announcements. **CONTINUE READING**

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Balian Ice Cream House

Address: 1960 Mendocino Lane of Allen, Altadena

When: Night-time

The Balian family made their money from ice cream, hence the name for their 3.5-acre Altadena Estate. Since 1955, the family has decked out the house to the nines each Christmas, and the tradition lives on to this day. Employing over 10,000 lights, a life-size nativity scene and various secular holiday characters, it's a sight that can't be missed. Not to mention, you can hit up the Balian house and Christmas Tree Lane in one trip. And while you're in the area, you might as well check out the Upper Hastings Ranch neighborhood, where residents have been elaborately decorating for the holidays since the 1950s.

[CHRISTMAS TREE LANE ALTADENA/YO](#)

Christmas Tree Lane

Address: Santa Rosa Ave between E Woodbury Rd and Altadena Dr, Altadena

When: Beginning December 10th

In the late 1800s, John P. Woodbury, Altadena's founder, decided to bring deodar cedar trees to Southern California. After two years, the young trees were placed along Santa Rosa Ave, which at the time was meant to be a driveway to the Woodbury estate. Though the estate was never built, the trees remain. In 1920, entrepreneur Frederick C. Nash realized the trees should be lit up for the holidays. Every year since (save a two-year stint in the 1940s), the trees have been aglow with Yuletide cheer. In 1990, Christmas Tree Lane was added to the National Register of Historic Places, and is California State Landmark No. 990. Take a cruise down the lane, about a mile-long, with your favorite holiday jingle on the stereo. This year's lighting ceremony takes place on Saturday, December 10th at 6pm.

Sleepy Hollow Christmas Lights Extravaganza

Where: Robert Rd and PCH, plus surrounding streets, Torrance

When: December 1st through January 1st, 6pm to 10pm

This Torrance neighborhood goes all out for the holidays, allowing gawkers to drive or stroll through the merry environment. (We'd suggest walking.) Many residents sell hot cocoa or snacks, contributing to the community feel of this annual tradition, so bring some cash and wear comfy shoes.



[FLICKR/ALI](#)

Candy Cane Lane

Where: Lubao and Oxnard Streets, Woodland Hills

When : December 10th through December 31st

Residents in this Woodland Hills neighborhood have been attempting to one-up each other's outdoor holiday decor annually since the 1950s. The spectacle extends over eight square block and many of the homes take on different themes each year, extending beyond the stereotypical Santa and his reindeer motif. Your best chances for viewing are before 10pm on weeknights and 11pm on the weekends, as many residents shut out the lights after that time so they get some sleep (and perhaps ease the burden of their electrical bills).



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Norton's Winter Wonderland

Where: 513 N. Florence St, Burbank

When: 6 to 9pm unless it's raining

Dick and Pam Norton have long turned their Burbank home into an incredible display of not on lights, but animated decor as well, including a merry-go-round that actually rotates and a ferris wheel that revolves. They began in the late '70s, and have only increased in seasonal extravagance every year since. Their neighbor, Keith LaPrath, joined in the shenanigans in the '80s, but will not be putting up his display this year. Dick's very stimulating website has photos and videos from years' past, in which they've also done a live-feed of the house for people who can't make the trip to Burbank.

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COURTESY OF RALPH ROBLI

Candy Cane Lane Santa House

Where: 13323 Lakeland Rd, Whittier

When: December 18th-24th, 4pm to 9pm, with a 30-minute break at 5pm

Ralph and Kathy Robles go all out for Halloween at their Whittier home, but they do something a little different each Christmas. They construct the Candy Cane Lane Santa House out of canvas and foam, where kids 13 and younger can stop by for a gift, while supplies last, and a visit with Mr. and Mrs. Claus. For a small fee, parents can take photos of their children with the Clauses, which the Robles use to purchase the next year's gifts. There's music, snow, and a jolly good time.

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Hancock Park/Windsor Square

Where: All over Hancock Park

When: Night-time

Though a bit more subtle than the flashy Valley shows, a casual stroll or drive through the already scenic neighborhoods of Hancock Park and Windsor Square will yield more than a few breathtaking sights. Larchmont Village itself is feeling magical, with giant wrapped presents in the boulevard, meters wrapped like candy canes, and captivating window displays. But for DIY cheer, we'd recommend hovering around Third starting at St. Andrews Place and heading west. There's a very festive inflatable dachshund and a giant teddy bear at Third and Irving, and a house that oozes California Christmas on Plymouth, just north of Third. Then you can stop by Salt & Straw for one of their seasonal ice cream flavors.





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The Music House

Where: 3600 W Clark Ave, Burbank

When: Most nights starting at dusk

This extraordinarily decorated house in Burbank next-levels their christmas cheer with a low-level radio transmitter that broadcasts Christmas songs ranging from "The Little Drummer Boy" to "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" -- and lights that dance according to the music you're listening to in your car. It's a perfect way to have one of those insane viral-style displays without annoying the neighbors... other than all the cars blocking traffic while they're parked in the street to get a good view.

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