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## 9 L.A. Holiday Feasts With Flair

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Terranea's Mar'Sel

*Photo Courtesy of Terranea Resort*

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas — everywhere you go around [L.A.](#) And even if you don't celebrate the holiday, restaurants are rolling out feasts worthy of a toast or two. From a Bollywood-meets-Chinese dinner to white truffle-laced lobster pot pie, here are the most festive dinners for when Santa comes to town:

### **Sāmbār**

A Christmas Eve at this Culver City wonder will have you (or at least your taste buds) dancing on the tables with a Bollywood-inspired Chinese menu hailing from the Indian-

Chinese cuisine prevalent in India's Kolkata region. A hard-to-find cuisine in Los Angeles, "Chindian" specials include tandoori duck, mushroom buns and shrimp hakka noodles.

### **One Pico**

One Pico, one of Santa Monica's top fine-dining destinations and the signature eatery at Forbes Travel Guide Four-Star Shutters on the Beach, will offer a set menu for both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. On December 24, choose a market fresh starter (think Kumamoto oysters or cauliflower soup), a delicious entrée (see crisp organic duck a l'orange or pumpkin tortelli) and an indulgent dessert (mascarpone cheesecake or a chocolate, sponge-like "yule log." Highlights of the Christmas Day lineup include appetizers like the Dungeness crab chowder and brown butter brandade and poached egg; savory main courses such as free-range rotisserie chicken and grilled angus prime rib; and sweet treats like the Meyer lemon pound cake and grapefruit panna cotta.

Tanzy's Holiday Prime Rib, *Photo Courtesy of Dylan Jeni*



### **Tanzy**

Spend Christmas Day at Tanzy in Westwood this year and enjoy a meal with culinary offerings from three-time James Beard Award-winning chef Sherry Yard. The restaurant will offer a four-course prix-fixe menu along with a gift from the chef. Menu items will include winter squash soup with puff pastry dome, herb-crusted prime rib with yukon gold potato rosti and spicy broccolini, and dark chocolate Bûche de Noël, a flourless chocolate cake with chocolate mousse and chocolate ganache frosting.

### **Mélisse**

Five-Star Mélisse goes far beyond its usual regal culinary splurges in honor of Christmas Eve. On that special evening at the Santa Monica establishment, owner-chef Josiah Citrin will prepare an elegant five-course, prix-fixe menu. Highlights include caviar-topped Hokkaido scallop; chestnut soup with black truffle mousse; foie gras terrine; orange-infused aged liberty duck; and chocolate gateaux with hazelnuts.

### **Viviane**

Viviane's "Dinner at Chop Suey Palace" Christmas menu is a unique culinary adventure at the Kelly Wearstler-designed restaurant in the Avalon Hotel. (Fun fact: Chop Suey Palace is the name of the restaurant the family in *A Christmas Story* had to eat its fateful holiday

dinner.) Served family-style, the six-courses of playful yet refined dishes pay homage to chef Michael Hung's Asian heritage, while maintaining his signature French flair. Standout dishes include roasted duck leg covered in soy; gulf shrimp, bay scallop, smoked chicken ragout and almond milk panna cotta with winter citrus steeped in chrysanthemum.

### **The Front Yard**

Celebrate with a Scrooge-shuttering spread at The Front Yard, The Garland's cozy neighborhood restaurant located in the heart of NoHo. Executive chef Chris Turano will showcase quintessential favorites while incorporating his own unique twists. This is most evident in holiday items like herb-roasted prime rib with horseradish sauce, cider-brined turkey and sage gravy, roasted local winter vegetables, chocolate peppermint cupcakes and gingerbread cake topped with poached pear.



*Cavatina, Photo Courtesy of Cavatina*

### **Cavatina**

There is much to celebrate at the legendary Sunset Hotel's Cavatina, but there's nothing more exciting right now than the sight of new executive chef Jonathan Kim working alongside James Beard Award winner Michael Schlow. As the ideal opportunity to showcase Kim's talents, Cavatina is serving up two

delectable pre-fix menus for the holidays. On Christmas Eve, you'll find a four-course roster with roasted chestnut soup, Belgium endive salad, braised beef cheek with roasted fingerling potato, apple cranberry pie and more. On December 25, Cavatina will feature items like creamy polenta with forest mushrooms, calypso beans with escarole and sub dried tomato, and balsamic glazed heirloom carrots served family style.

### **mar'sel**

Get in the seasonal spirit on the day before the big day and the big day itself at Four-Star Terranea's fine-dining option. If the magical view from the Palos Verdes Peninsula isn't enough to warm your soul, four-course dinners filled with smoked quail, lobster pot pie with truffle crust, crispy duck confit with heirloom carrots, wagyu braised short rib and other items should do the trick. On both nights, mar'sel will close things with two delightful desserts — Bûche de Noël and peppermint tiramisu.

### **Stonehill Tavern**

Chef Michael Mina's dining institution at Five-Star [The St. Regis Monarch Beach](#) is a can't-miss dinner destination any time of year. Around the holidays, things are turned up a notch with a decadent four-course menu (with optional wine pairings). Don your finest stretchy pants because, with a kitchen serving everything from ham topped with bourbon and red currants and Cape Cod sea scallops with kuri squash to fromage blanc cheesecake with pickled cranberry, sultanas and walnut nougat, you're going to need them.