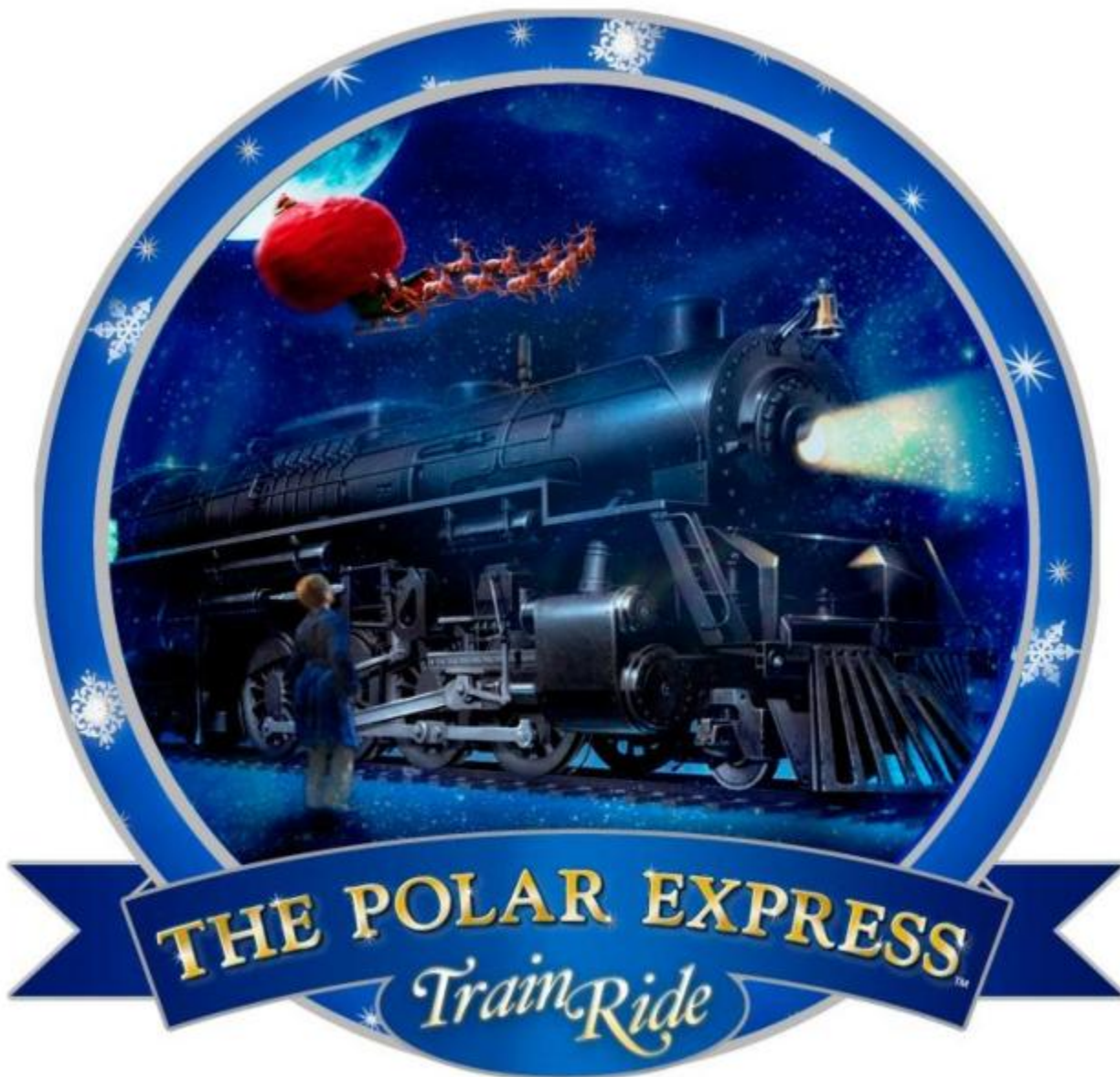




New seats released for The Polar Express train ride at St. Louis Union Station

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ST. LOUIS - To meet increased demand for the 2018 season, new seats have just been added to The Polar Express Train Ride at St. Louis Union Station.

Additional seats are now available for all dates. Tickets for the popular holiday event are available at www.STLPolarExpressRide.com.

Kids and their families -- dressed in their Christmas pajamas -- sing with the Polar Express chefs, enjoy hot chocolate and cookies and hear the classic story of The Polar Express on their journey to the North Pole. Each child meets Santa Claus and his elves and receives the first gift of Christmas - a silver bell - from St. Nick himself during the train ride.

The real trains depart Union Station at 4:30, 6:00, 7:15 and 8:30 p.m.

ABOUT THE POLAR EXPRESS TRAIN RIDE AT ST. LOUIS UNION STATION:

The Polar Express Train Ride™ at St. Louis Union Station is underway for the 2018 holiday season. Trains are running from St. Louis Union Station to the North Pole tonight on selected dates through December 30, 2018.

Riders can save 20 percent on their train tickets by pairing a hotel room at the St. Louis Union Station Hotel. Value pricing options also are available on selected trains booked online. Tickets are on sale at www.STLPolarExpressRide.com.

The Polar Express Train Ride tells the magical story of a boy's search for the meaning of Christmas. The beloved tale comes to life as real trains depart St. Louis Union Station for a round-trip journey to the North Pole this season.

Set to the sounds of the motion picture soundtrack, passengers will relive the magic of the story as they are whisked away on The Polar Express. Once onboard, passengers are served hot chocolate and cookies by the Polar Express chefs as they read along with the classic children's book, The Polar Express, by Chris Van Allsburg.

Santa and his helpers greet passengers at the North Pole and then board the train. Santa interacts with each child and gives them the first gift of Christmas — a silver sleigh bell. Chefs and Santa's elves lead passengers in singing Christmas carols on the ride back to St. Louis Union Station.

Trains depart St. Louis Union Station at 4:30, 6:00, and 7:15 p.m. Trains also will run at 8:30 p.m. on selected dates. Passengers are encouraged to arrive at least 30 minutes before departure to enjoy holiday activities and photo opportunities in the boarding area.

Riders may choose from two classes of service on The Polar Express — Coach and First-Class. Coach tickets start at \$39. First-class ticket holders will receive a Polar Express mug and will be seated at four-top tables on the train.

Guests can save 20 percent on The Polar Express Train Ride when they purchase their tickets along with a hotel package at the St. Louis Union Station Hotel, a Curio Collection by Hilton. Hotel rooms decorated with Christmas trees are available for a special holiday treat.

More information about dates, fares and excursion times is available by calling 314-942-6942, or by visiting www.STLPolarExpressRide.com. Families are encouraged to wear their holiday pajamas for the ride.

In addition to the train ride, St. Louis Union Station will continue its popular holiday fire and light show set to Christmas music on the train shed lake each evening during the holiday season.

St. Louis Union Station also will host a series of Magical Meals — holiday character dinners in the beautiful Grand Hall of the historic train station during the Polar Express season. Featuring 3-D light shows projected on the ceiling and visits with Santa's elves chefs and The Polar Express Conductor, the dinner sessions are available on selected days when the Polar Express Train Ride is in operation. Dinners are served buffet style with separate adult and children's selections priced between \$20 and \$25. Children ages two and under are complimentary. An elaborate holiday dessert buffet accompanies the dinners. Reservations for the 5:45 p.m. and 7:15 p.m. dinners may be purchased online at www.STLPolarExpressRide.com. Tip: Select dates for the Magical Meal first, then purchase train tickets for the same date.

This year, a Build-A-Bear pop up shop will be located in the activities tent for the first time. An event-themed bear will be available for children to create on site. For more information, visit buildabear.com.

St. Louis Union Station is located at 1820 Market Street in downtown St. Louis. Parking is available in the Union Station lot at 18th and Clark for just \$5 for all Polar Express ticket holders.

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