

National Railroad Museum

2026 Polar Express Train Ride Event Overview and Frequently Asked Questions

Prepared by: Jacqueline Frank (Jan. 2026)

About the Show & Tickets

What is the Polar Express Train Ride at the National Railroad Museum?

THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride is a magical, re-creation of the classic children's Christmas story. Following the events in the original book and 2004 movie, you will be immersed in the Polar Express adventure.

When you arrive at the Museum, you will enter our main lobby and walk through the Museum store and small exhibit areas until you arrive at the Lenfestey Center. There, the doors open 30 minutes before the show. During that time, you are welcome to explore the full-size trains, play holiday-themed games, shop exclusive Polar Express gifts, take a photo with a Polar Express conductor or engineer, and stroll among the Festival of Trees provided by area businesses that decorate the Museum during the holiday season.

Your show starts promptly at the time your ticket lists. Please be seated in the Lenfestey Center by this time. The show begins with the Hot Chocolate Dance in the aisle and front of the room, after which waiters will serve a cup of hot chocolate and a cookie for you to enjoy while listening to a dramatic reading of the original Polar Express book. At the end of the story, our conductor calls "All Aboard", inviting you to follow him as you walk outside to the Museum's depot and board the vintage train cars for a ride on the Polar Express to the North Pole.

On board a real, full-sized train your adventure continues. As the train travels, families will be able to interact with the characters from the story. This is not a train ride where the focus is on holiday decorations outside the windows. Instead, expect an interactive recreation of the book inside the train where you are riding; outside you will travel through cold, dark forests, encounter a hobo, view the Northern Lights and see polar bears in the Arctic Circle.

Near the end of the show, Santa will stay on board the train to visit leisurely with passengers on board the Spirit of the Season and the Arctic Circle. Santa will move through the car speaking briefly to children on Glacier Gulch. On the Northern Lights, expect to see Santa wave "hello" and invite you into the depot at the Museum's North Pole, where children will be able to speak to him more leisurely. Children on the Glacier Gulch may also stop in the depot to visit Santa before he heads around the world on Christmas Eve.

If you arrive at the Museum when the doors open 30-minutes before your show, expect to spend the following time at the Museum:

30 minutes – Check – in, preshow activities and 2026 show-exclusive shopping in the Lenfestey Center

60 minutes – Polar Express Show & Train Ride

Optional additional time in the Depot available for those on the Northern Lights and Glacier Gulch to visit Santa at a more leisurely pace.

The Museum's main store will be open after the train ride for additional shopping opportunities.

What are appropriate ages for the Polar Express?

Everyone is welcome to participate in the Polar Express. The program may be more meaningful for children are at the age where they can remain engaged in the program for 90 minutes. Please note: Children ages 0 – 100 + are required to have a ticket to enter. Children brought in as "lap sitters" will also require a ticket and will be stopped at check in if no ticket is present.

Where is the event held?

At the National Railroad Museum, 2285 S. Broadway, Green Bay, WI 54304.

National Railroad Museum

2026 Polar Express Train Ride Event Overview and Frequently Asked Questions

Prepared by: Jacqueline Frank (Jan. 2026)

How long is the program?

Total: approximately 105 min. Pre-show: 30 min. Program/Train Ride/Visiting with Santa: 75min.

2026 Dates and Show times (Shows available for public purchase)

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|-------------------------------|--------|------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| November 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| | | | | | Polar Express 4, 6, 8 p.m. | Polar Express 2, 4, 6, 8 p.m. |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| Polar Express 4, 6, 8 p.m. | | | | Thanksgiving | Polar Express 4, 6, 8 p.m. | Polar Express 2, 4, 6, 8 p.m. |
| 29 | 30 | December 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Polar Express 4, 6, 8 p.m. | | | | | Polar Express 4, 6, 8 p.m. | Polar Express 2, 4, 6, 8 p.m. |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Polar Express 4, 6, 8 p.m. | | | | | Polar Express 4, 6, 8 p.m. | Polar Express 2, 4, 6, 8 p.m. |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| Polar Express 4, 6, 8 p.m. | | | | | | |

When do tickets go on sale?

Tickets for the 2026 Polar Express will be available beginning at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 25, 2025. The 2026 sale start date is held on a Saturday to accommodate those who have had trouble purchasing tickets during the week.

Ticket Prices by Train Car

There is only one Polar Express event and train at the National Railroad Museum. Once you go to the train, passengers will take a ride in different train cars, each with its own name. Ticket prices are different depending on which train car you ride:

- **Northern Lights:** \$35.00 all seats, all ages – 154 seats per show; general seating (1960s, Coach with a second, upper level)
- **Glacier Gulch:** \$50.00 all seats, all ages – 62 seats per show; first class (1920s, Single-level Coach)
- **Arctic Circle – Table:** \$70.00 all seats, all ages – 48 seats per show, premium (1920s Dining Car) – **Tickets in this class must be purchased in blocks of four.**
- **Spirit of the Season – Table:** \$70.00 all seats, all ages – 24 seats per show, premium (1939 Dinette/Observation Car) – **Tickets in this class must be purchased in blocks of four.**
- **Spirit of the Season – Lounge:** \$75.00 all seats, all ages – 20 seats per show, premium

National Railroad Museum

2026 Polar Express Train Ride Event Overview and Frequently Asked Questions

Prepared by: Jacqueline Frank (Jan. 2026)

All Polar Express Train Ride ticket sales are final. There are no exchanges. Refunds will be made only if the National Railroad Museum cancels a show.

Who needs a ticket to participate in the Polar Express?

Everyone, regardless of age, needs a ticket to attend a Polar Express show. Even if a child lap sits during the event, children ages 0 - 17 are required to have a ticket. If a lap sit child is found to not have a ticket, the Museum will require purchase of a ticket before entry.

What is the difference between the four cars that make up the Polar Express Train Ride?

| Program/Amenity | Northern Lights | Glacier Gulch | Arctic Circle | Spirit of the Season |
|--|-----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Pre-Show Games, View Festival of Trees, Explore Historic Trains | X | X | X | X |
| Seated in row "A" of the Lenfestey Center for Polar Express reading | | | | X |
| Seated in rows "B" - "D" of Lenfestey Center for Polar Express reading | | | X | |
| Seated in rows "E" - "H" of Lenfestey Center for Polar Express reading | | X | | |
| Seated in rows "H" - "O" of Lenfestey Center for Polar Express reading | X | | | |
| Watch Hot Chocolate Dance, enjoy a cup of hot chocolate, Listen to <i>Polar Express</i> story | X | X | X | X |
| Ride the train in a restored 1939 observation-lounge car (<i>Lounge chair seating</i>) Only 20 lounge seats per show | | | | X |
| Ride the train in a 1920s dining car or 1939 observation-lounge car (<i>table seating</i>) 72 table seats per show (18 tables available) | | | X | X |
| Ride the train in a restored 1920s passenger car (64 seats per show) | | X | | |
| Ride the train in a 1955 double-deck passenger car (154 seats per show) | X | | | |
| Receive a commemorative ceramic <i>Polar Express</i> mug (<i>presented on train</i>) | | | X | X |
| Receive a Polar Express bell from Santa | X | X | X | X |
| Enjoy extra beverages and light refreshments on the train | | | X | X |
| Visit with Santa on the Train | | X | X | X |
| Visit with Santa in the North Pole Depot after the train ride | X | | | |

How soon should I purchase my tickets?

In 2025 Polar Express tickets sold out in less than 3 hours. Plan to purchase your tickets as soon as possible.

Once tickets are sold out, they are gone. **There is no waiting list as there are no returns, refunds or exchanges.**

Is there a ticket "pre-sale"?

No. There is no public sale of the tickets prior to July 25, 2026. All tickets are sold through Ticket Star

(www.ticketstaronline.com)

How many shows will you have this year? Will you add more on demand?

There are 40 shows over four weekends available, providing the Polar Express experience to 312 people each show. The event is largely put on by Museum staff and volunteers. So that they may also enjoy the holiday season with their families, no additional shows will be added.

How do I purchase tickets online?

Tickets to the Polar Express are sold by Ticket Star. Please visit www.ticketstaronline.com. Due to the high demand and our first come, first served policy, those purchasing tickets will be placed in a virtual queue. When it is your turn to purchase tickets, you will be able to place tickets in your basket and complete your purchase. **As a note: when purchasing online, you will receive a faster connection and better experience by using a computer rather than a**

National Railroad Museum

2026 Polar Express Train Ride Event Overview and Frequently Asked Questions

Prepared by: Jacqueline Frank (Jan. 2026)

cellphone. Please ensure that your computer's firewall allows you to make a purchase with Ticket Star; some individuals have found that without this allowance, they can put tickets in their cart but are unable to complete the purchase.

Is there a phone number I can call to purchase tickets?

Yes! Tickets to the Polar Express are sold by Ticket Star. Please call 1-800-895-0071. As online, you will be placed in a queue. First come, first served.

Can I purchase tickets at the Museum?

NO, all tickets for the 2026 Polar Express Train Ride will be only sold online or by telephone through Ticket Star. You may purchase online at www.ticketstaronline.com or by telephone at 1-800- 895-0071.

Can I purchase tickets at the Ticket Star box office?

No, all tickets for the 2026 Polar Express Train Ride will be sold online or by telephone through Ticket Star. You may purchase online at www.ticketstaronline.com or by telephone at 1-800-895-0071.

Can you guarantee that I will get the show date and time I want?

There is no guarantee you will get your first choice of date and time. Tickets are sold on a first come, first served basis. The key to getting tickets for THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride is to be flexible. The premium cars sell out fast, so do certain dates and times. Make sure you have multiple options before starting the purchasing process.

Post Ticket Sale

When will I receive my digital tickets?

Ticket Star and the Museum work hard to ensure all the tickets are correct before they are sent to the purchaser. Please expect to receive your ticket from Ticket Star by email around September 15, 2026. Depending on your email settings, your tickets could arrive in your main inbox or in "junk" or "spam" folders.

I have a problem with my ticket purchase. What do I do?

Ticket Star can help! Just call 1-800-895-0071 for assistance. The Museum is unable to assist until the date of the show.

I lost my tickets. What should I do?

Don't panic! We can help.

- If you lose your tickets before your show, call Ticket Star at 1--800-895-0071.
- If you misplace your printed tickets on the date of your show, please come to the Museum for your show. When you arrive visit the special Polar Express ticket desk in the Lenfestey Center lobby. We will ask you to present a photo ID; and will then verify your tickets.

How do I know if the tickets I purchased are legitimate?

The only tickets that the Museum will accept for THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride are those purchased through the Ticket Star ticketing system. These tickets will indicate the date and time of event and the name of the train car you will be riding. Be aware there is no mezzanine or other stadium seating notations on the ticket.

The National Railroad Museum is not responsible for third party ticket sales.

We are unable to honor fraudulent tickets. Due to the finite number of seats inside a train, we cannot guarantee seating should you arrive without tickets. While we've worked to reduce the possibility for fraudulent ticket sales, should you choose to purchase your tickets through a third party, you do so at your own risk.

Can I print the tickets or use a screen shot when I am checking in?

Jacqueline D. Frank, CEO

National Railroad Museum – 2285 S. Broadway, Green Bay, Wisconsin 54304

Telephone: 920-274-0517 E-mail: jdfrank@nationalrrmuseum.org

National Railroad Museum

2026 Polar Express Train Ride Event Overview and Frequently Asked Questions

Prepared by: Jacqueline Frank (Jan. 2026)

No, please show your QR code for each ticket or your physical ticket from Ticket Star when checking in. If ticket transfers are needed, please ensure that the ticket is transferred using the ticket star app or by calling Ticket Star directly for assistance.

With my Polar Express ticket can I tour the Museum during regular hours on the day of my show?

No, your Polar Express ticket is good for your specific show only. It will not be honored for Museum admission during regular hours on the day of your show. As part of the Polar Express program, you will experience most of the Museum's indoor exhibits. Be sure to arrive 30 min. before your show time. This will be your opportunity to see the Museum, enjoy the Festival of Trees, participate in the children's activities, take photos and shop in the Museum Store.

My scheduled changed. Can I just come to the Polar Express when I have time?

The Polar Express has a limited amount of seating that cannot be expanded to accommodate more people. In years past we have sold out making us unable to honor tickets from other shows as other guests will be using those seats. Refunds are not available. We ask that you make every effort to attend on the date you purchased your ticket.

I bought ticket to a Polar Express event in another city. Can I use them at the National Railroad Museum?

The National Railroad Museum's Polar Express event is not affiliated with Polar Express events in other cities. We are unable to honor tickets to other events.

I bought tickets on different train cars. Can my family sit together?

Each ticket level includes different seating in different parts of the Lenfestey Center and on the train. We cannot guarantee seating together, nor seating in any specific section should a change be made on your behalf. No refunds will be made on any tickets when seating changes are made to accommodate your group's request to sit together. Guests will be asked to pay the difference if they are moved to a higher level of seating.

Day of Event

What time should I arrive at the Museum?

We strongly recommend that you arrive 30 - 40 minutes before your show. Doors also open 30 minutes before each show. This will be your opportunity to park your car, see Museum exhibits, enjoy the Festival of Trees, participate in the children's activities, take photos and shop in the exclusive Polar Express store. **Please do not arrive any earlier than this.**

What happens if I arrive late?

The show starts promptly at your ticketed time. *Those arriving late should check in at the ticket counter first and wait for assistance from an usher for seating.* **Portions of the show take place in the isles; do not stand in the isle or place anything in the isle once the show starts.** Those arriving more than 30 minutes after the start of the show will find that the train has departed. The train does not stop to pick up late passengers; no refunds are made for late arrival.

Can I take photos with my camera during the show?

Please take all the photos with your camera that you would like. No tripods are permitted. We ask that the photos you take are for your own personal use. Photos taken during the Polar Express or on the Museum grounds may not be used for commercial purposes unless prior permission has been granted by the Museum. Please contact the Director of Communications, at [\(920\) 274-0522](tel:920-274-0522) for media or commercial use opportunities.

Should I wear my pajamas to ride the Polar Express?

Of course! Children and Adults are welcome to wear their pajamas when they ride the Polar Express (and many of them do)!

Will we ride a real train?

Yes, you will be riding aboard real, full-size vintage train cars. The train only travels around the Museum's grounds.

National Railroad Museum

2026 Polar Express Train Ride Event Overview and Frequently Asked Questions

Prepared by: Jacqueline Frank (Jan. 2026)

Will dinner be provided at THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride?

There is no dinner served at THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride. Hot chocolate and cookies will be served during the show.

Health and Safety

Are there restrooms on the train?

No. Restrooms are located in the depot, the lobby at the entrance of the Museum, in the lobby outside of the Lenfestey Center, and in the Fox River Expansion. Please make sure encourage your children to use the restroom before the start of the program and board the train.

Will it be cold?

Half of the program will be inside the Museum's climate-controlled Lenfestey Center, which will be heated to 68 – 70 degrees F. After this portion of the program, you will walk outside and into the winter weather before you board a vintage train waiting at the depot on the other side of the parking lot. Many of the vintage train cars have limited heating systems and may not be as warm or cold as you would like. Please remember to wear layers so that you can be comfortable in all environments during your visit; on very cold days, expect that the floors will be colder than the air temperature.

Is the Polar Express handicap accessible?

Yes, Museum buildings are handicap accessible as well as the Glacier Gulch that will be used for the Polar Express. The Museum has a wheelchair lift available to assist passengers with train boarding. **Please inform our staff of any special needs you may have when you arrive at the Museum to enjoy the show, so we can be ready to assist as needed.** Northern Lights, Arctic Circle and Spirit of the Season are not handicap accessible; please purchase handicap accessible tickets on Glacier Gulch.

Please note — historic trains that are on exhibit within the Museum's facilities may not be accessible due to the irreversible modifications that would be required to make them open for all. In such cases, additional interpretive materials have been provided at floor level so that everyone may experience the piece, albeit from a different perspective.

Can I bring my pet, emotional support animal or service animal?

NO pets or emotional support animals are allowed at the Museum. Trained service animals are welcome at the Museum, following ADA regulations. For details on our pet policy, please visit our [website](#).

Do you have a sensory-friendly version of THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride?

No. To bring the book and the movie to life in a live-action performance, there will be loud sounds, lighting, music and dancing. Noise reducing headphones have been helpful for children or adults who need to reduce the sensory experience. **The Museum has noise cancelling headphones available for loan during the event.** Each set of headphones are sanitized after every time they are worn. If you are in need, please stop by the ticket table in the Lenfestey Center's lobby to request their use.

What if my child has food allergies?

The Museum serves sugar cookies and hot chocolate during the show. The cookies do not contain nuts but may come from a bakery that processes nuts. The cookies and hot chocolate contain dairy products. Anyone with a food allergy or special dietary needs is welcome to bring an alternate treat or drink item to enjoy. Please contact us if you would like to review an ingredient list.

To ensure the health and safety of all of our visitors, please be aware of the following:

The National Railroad Museum is required to follow all Federal TSA and State of Wisconsin guidelines regarding mask use due the public transportation attractions on site. The Museum may also require masks for individuals two years old and older during periods of time where COVID or other disease transmission is determined by the CDC and local health agencies to be "high", "very high" or "critically high". Decisions about mask use may be made as late as the day of the event

National Railroad Museum

2026 Polar Express Train Ride Event Overview and Frequently Asked Questions

Prepared by: Jacqueline Frank (Jan. 2026)

based on community transmission on that day. Those who chose not to follow Museum mask policy or TSA guidelines will not be able to take part in the Polar Express. No refunds will be made.

The National Railroad Museum follows CDC guidelines for disinfection of its facilities. The Museum, however, cannot guarantee you will not be exposed to COVID-19, Influenza, Norovirus and other communicable diseases. By entering National Railroad Museum premises, visitors accept all responsibility for medical risk associated with their presence in a public place for themselves and for those for whom they act as guardian on site. The National Railroad Museum is not liable for illness or injury beyond what may be prevented through reasonable accommodations. Please avoid touching surfaces, wash your hands or use hand sanitizers frequently, and please follow all signage posted to provide you with a safe experience. **Those who are exhibiting any signs of illness are asked not to enter the Museum. Any individuals who are actively vomiting or are showing acute symptoms of a communicable disease will be asked to leave.**

What happens if someone is disrupting the show or is exhibiting bad behavior?

The Polar Express is a show for families to enjoy together. To ensure that everyone can see, hear and have a positive experience, individuals who are disruptive to the show, abusive to other guests, staff or volunteers, or are exhibiting behaviors that are upsetting others will be asked to leave at the discretion of the CEO or CFO. No refunds will be made if an individual or family is ejected due to bad behavior.

What Else Should I Know?

Is this a museum fundraising event?

Yes! You are not only sharing in a great holiday tradition and family experience, but your ticket fee helps support the educational programs and operations of the National Railroad Museum. Because services are given in exchange for payment, this event is not tax deductible. Thank you for your support!

Who presents THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride?

THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride at the National Railroad Museum® is operated by the Museum's staff along with more than 80 volunteers and actors performing during each of the 40 shows that are spread over 12 nights. We can't thank our volunteers enough for their continued support and passion in providing such a quality show.

Visit Logistics

When Should I Arrive at the Museum to Make the Show on Time?

The time on your ticket is the time that the show starts. Doors open 30 minutes before your show starts. Please remember to allow yourself enough time to park, walk into the Museum, and to check in and find your seat in the Museum's Lenfestey Center before the start of the show. For example, if you would like take part in the pre-show activities in the Lenfestey Center and your show starts at 6:00 p.m., arrive in the parking lot at 5:20 p.m. This will give you time to park, then get in line to check in. After you find your seat, you will still have time to take photos with the cast, view the Festival of Trees, and shop.

Where do I park?

There is parking available on the Museum grounds in both the main lot and the new Fox River Expansion lot. Overflow parking will be located across the street at Cormier School. Parking attendants are available to assist you.

Where do I go when I arrive for the Polar Express?

The Polar Express starts inside the Museum building. Please enter the main doors. You will be directed to check in. The show will start inside the Museum's Lenfestey Center. When the story is finished, a conductor will bring you to the train for the immersive train ride.

Is there lodging available in the area?

National Railroad Museum

2026 Polar Express Train Ride Event Overview and Frequently Asked Questions

Prepared by: Jacqueline Frank (Jan. 2026)

Yes, there are many hotels in the area around the National Railroad Museum. For a complete listing, please consult the Green Bay Convention & Visitors Bureau website — www.greenbay.com. From the home page click VISITOR INFORMATION > HOTELS & MOTELS. Next narrow your search to the STADIUM AREA. These hotels will all be within two miles of the Museum.

Can you give me directions to the Museum?

From the North:

Follow I-41 S. to Exit 165. Take the ramp right for WI-172 East. Take ramp towards Ashland/Oneida St. Turn left on Vanderperren Way/CR-HH. Turn left onto I-32 N/Ashland Ave. Turn right onto Cormier Rd. Turn left onto S. Broadway and the Museum is immediately on the right.

From the South:

Take I-41 N to S. Ashland Ave. in De Pere. Take exit 163B and follow Ashland Ave for 2.75 mi to Cormier Rd. Turn right on Cormier Rd., go .25 miles, turn left on S. Broadway and the Museum is immediately on your right.

From the East:

Follow I-43 N to 172 W. Take the exit toward WI-32/Oneida St./Ashland Ave. from W-172 in Ashwaubenon. Turn right on Pilgrim Way, turn left on S. Broadway to the Museum.

To Use GPS: Enter 2285 S. Broadway, Green Bay WI 54304