

OUT OF HOME

## Ritz-Carlton turns New York into a winter wonderland for guests

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*Ritz-Carlton, Central Park*

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

The Ritz-Carlton New York, Central Park, is hoping to prove to its patrons that it really is "the most wonderful time of the year."

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From Thanksgiving through New Year's, the hotel will be offering a variety of holiday-themed products, packages and experiences to help its patrons enjoy the winter wonderland. Given the sentimental attachment so many people have to the holiday season, a wide-ranging attempt to appeal to those guests could make Ritz-Carlton an integral part of a memorable year, holiday or experience for entire families at a time.

"Elaborate holiday packages are a great way for hotels to take the hassle out of the holidays for guests," said Tiffany Dowd, founder and president of [Luxe Social Media](#), Boston. "By offering different types of holiday experiences, both guests and locals can enjoy the festivities in New York while letting someone else do the planning."

Ms. Dowd is not affiliated with Ritz-Carlton, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

**Ritz-Carlton** was unable to respond by press deadline.

### Winter wonderland

Although most of the hotel's offerings are secular, the hotel is offering a three-course, pre-fixe menu at its Auden Bistro restaurant for \$125 per person and \$65 for kids. A traditional meal will also be offered on Thanksgiving at the same location and price. Instilling itself into a family's Christmas memories will likely be an effective way to build brand sentiment and loyalty among all its diners.



*Ritz-Carlton holiday package photograph*

Among the less extravagant seasonal offerings are seasonal food and drink, such as the hotel's Star Lounge's winter afternoon tea which offers peppermint-flavored drinks, sweets and savories; its holiday cocktails; and gourmet hot chocolate, available with something extra added in for adults each evening.

Other packages are more experiential. The "Holiday Culture and Couture" package includes a pair of tickets to the Nutcracker at Lincoln Center and a \$500 gift card to Bergdorf Goodman for those looking to find a souvenir or take care of some holiday shopping, in addition to overnight accommodations and breakfast in bed.

Those with kids less inclined to sit still and who do not mind the cold might prefer the Central Park Ice Skating Package, which includes all necessary gear, ice skating tickets and the aforementioned hot chocolate.



*Ritz-Carlton New York, Central Park*

Couples and large families might opt for any of the four holiday spa packages, which range in length from 45 minutes to three hours, or consider throwing a party the private dining room, which will accommodate between 15 and 35 guests, or up to 75 with a buyout.

Ritz-Carlton will also invite its guests to ring in the New Year with a caviar cart, Champagne and a tasting menu, and then will have their backs the next day with the "New Year's Day Recovery Brunch" at Auden Bistro.

The variety of offers appeal to both couples and families, with a number focusing on experiences in the city or fine-dining in the hotel, either of which will expand in the eyes of the consumer what the Ritz-Carlton brand can provide its patrons with. Travelers are always looking to make the most of both trips and holidays, so Ritz-Carlton seeks to gain an edge on its competition with its inclusive range of holiday packages.

#### Spa-lidays

After the holidays, it will not be a surprise if Ritz-Carlton tries to keep the holiday memories forming by offering more visible spa and wellness promotions.

Last year, numerous luxury hotels invited guests to rejuvenate from the stress of the holidays with packages designed to relax and revive individuals from the stress of the end of the year.

Four Seasons, Trump Hotels, Mandarin Oriental and Peninsula Hotels were among the luxury brands offering guests the opportunity to de-stress from the holiday season. Presenting guests with the chance to reflect on the past year and start fresh for 2015 created an experience that allowed guests to connect with the hotel in a different manner than ever before ([see story](#)).

Despite the Christmas focus of the packages, Ritz-Carlton has previously extended holiday offers to those of other religions.

In July, the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company encouraged Middle Eastern travelers to celebrate the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr by visiting some of its most beautiful locations in the United States.

The promotion suggested that Middle Eastern families "break from the ordinary" to experience the natural beauty of states including Georgia, Arizona and Colorado. By offering specific travel suggestions, The Ritz-Carlton may have made it easier for families to celebrate the holiday with a spontaneous vacation ([see story](#)).

"New York is renowned for its traditional holiday celebrations, and such events cater to the high expectations of visiting guests looking for an unforgettable experience," Ms. Dowd said. "It taps into the best of the holidays without trying to be all things to all people."

Final Take

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