

# Merrimack Valley

## CROSSROADS OF AMERICA

Just a half-hour drive from Boston lies the Merrimack Valley, a distinctive region in Massachusetts known for its natural beauty, ethnic cuisine and storied culture. And it may be best known for its prominent ties to American history, from the American Revolution to the Industrial Revolution to the High Tech Revolution.

Today, there is no bigger proponent of this charming region than Brian Bradbury, executive director of the Greater Merrimack Convention & Visitors Bureau, which encompasses 21 cities and towns from Dracut and Lowell to Lexington and Concord.

"I am extremely excited about this opportunity," Bradbury said when he was hired in July. "I have a special love for the Greater Merrimack Valley. I was raised here. My wife was raised here. My kids were raised here. Now our grandson is being raised here. I have 5 generations of family who have made the Merrimack Valley their home, after my great-great-grandfather came from Ireland to Lowell in 1885."

Bradbury says the group's mission is to attract domestic and international travelers; group tours and bus tours; meetings, conferences, and conventions; and sporting events to Merrimack Valley throughout the year. The local economy and particularly small businesses, restaurants and hotels, depend on tourism.

"People come here to discover the history of the birth of our nation and industry and then immerse themselves in the art, music, and diverse food scene, which are the backbone of the character of Merrimack Valley," says Bradbury.

This Christmas season, the Valley is flush with holiday festivities, from parades and lightings to concerts and shopping.



On November 30, the Lowell City of Lights Holiday Parade kicks the holiday season off with family fun activities, a visit from Santa and hot chocolate all around. GoodPickin Farm in Westford has its Holiday Lights Fest, with special guests Santa Claus and Grinch, along with a petting zoo and plenty of treats. On December 7, Billerica has its annual Winter Festival and tree lighting, while Concord holds its 14th Annual Holiday House Tour.

Christmas and Celtic concerts add to the festivities, thanks to Lowell-based music promotor Spectacle Live. At Cary Memorial Hall in Lexington, Irish crooner Daniel O'Donnell performs on November 24, followed by the Vienna Boys Choir on December 5 and

the Irish Tenors: *A Family Christmas* on December 12.

At Lowell Memorial Auditorium, the US Air Force Heritage of America Band presents *A Holiday Salute* on December 10, followed by *A Charlie Brown Christmas* on December 13, and Celtic Woman: *White Christmas Symphony Tour* on December 18.

### WINTER FUN CONTINUES

Winter is a great season to visit Merrimack Valley. Get healthy in the New Year with a First Day hike at famous Walden Pond in Concord on January 1. On January 29, Merrimack Valley's diverse Asian communities celebrate Lunar New Year with a series of cultural and culinary events.

On February 15-16, the popular Lowell WinterFest hosts an epic citywide celebration with live music, local restaurants and food trucks, family activities, art, culture and more.

Spring will burst open with the 2-day Town and City Music & Art Festival on April 25-26. Later in the summer, the largest annual free Folk Festival in the nation returns to Lowell on July 25-27, 2025.

You can find year round details on what Merrimack Valley has to offer by visiting [merrimackvalley.org](http://merrimackvalley.org).

