

A New York City CHRISTMAS

Food Network star Anne Burrell shows us her favorite hometown spots.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAKE CHESSUM



HAIR AND MAKEUP (BURRELL): PIET AAVA
RADIO CITY: GETTY IMAGES

SOMETHING SPECTACULAR

Anne first saw *Radio City Christmas Spectacular* as a kid during a family trip to Manhattan from their home in upstate New York, and she has dreamed about being onstage with the Rockettes ever since. "I've always wanted to be one of them!" she says. Anne has stuck to what she knows best—cooking and hosting *Worst Cooks in America*—but she has seen the show countless times during her 18 years living in New York City. And she has become friends with many of the dancers through charity events, including this year's annual Garden of Dreams Foundation Talent Show. Anne admits she could never keep her place in line for "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers," but she does score backstage passes to the shows. Through January 3; tickets from \$41; radiocitychristmas.com



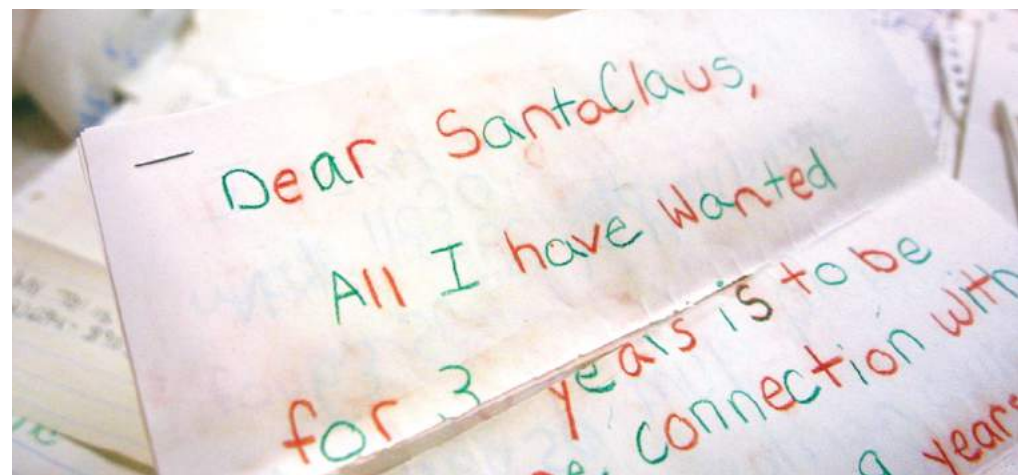


TINSEL TOWN

The owner of Rolf's, a German-French restaurant in Gramercy, decorates his 47-year-old spot with so many ornaments and strands of tinsel, you can hardly see the ceiling. The wait for a table can be long—"Every New Yorker has the same idea!" Anne jokes—so she recommends enjoying the scenery from the bar with a glass of eggnog, her go-to holiday cocktail. 281 Third Ave.; rolfsnyc.com

SANTA'S HELPER

"I love to do something to give back at Christmastime," Anne says. Most years, that means stopping by the grand 103-year-old James A. Farley Post Office (the city's main branch) to take part in the Operation Santa microphilanthropy program. She chooses a wish list sent to St. Nick by an underprivileged kid, shops for the presents and then mails the package. 421 Eighth Ave.; usps.com



TEA PARTY

The Plaza Hotel dates from New York's Gilded Age, and tea in the hotel's Palm Court feels appropriately genteel. Anne's friend and fellow Food Network star Geoffrey Zakarian runs the show there. She usually opts for The New Yorker Tea service, which comes with six kinds of finger sandwiches (including a bagel stuffed with lox and cream cheese) and bite-size versions of iconic Big Apple desserts like cheesecake and a black-and-white éclair. \$65 per person; theplazany.com

HOLIDAY CENTRAL →

After the *Christmas Spectacular*, be sure to admire the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree. Anne makes an annual trip to see the enormous evergreen—in part because she can't put up her own tree (her cats, Nancy and Marcia, swat at the ornaments). Anne suggests skipping the crowded lighting ceremony and visiting on a random weeknight instead (December 2 through January 6; rockefellercenter.com). From there, you can branch off to see the window displays in the city's most famous department stores: One of Anne's favorites, Saks Fifth Avenue, is across the street, and if you continue 10 blocks south, you'll hit Lord & Taylor, which is filling its windows with gingerbread houses and mock candy shops this year.

ROLF'S AND LETTER: GETTY IMAGES. TREE: BART BARLOW.



CITY SKATING

Ice-skating rinks pop up all over Manhattan during the winter, but Anne always heads to Wollman Rink in Central Park. It's situated at the south end of the park, so you'll have an amazing view of the Midtown skyline while you skate. From \$5 for entry, \$8 for skate rentals; wollmanskatingrink.com



SING-ALONG

On the first Sunday of December, Anne heads to The Brick Church on the Upper East Side, where several blocks are closed to traffic. Visitors pack the streets and sing carols (the church's organ music is piped outside) as more than 100 trees are lit. "It's a moment when people come together to celebrate," Anne says. December 6; 62 East 92nd St.; brickchurch.org



HOT SPOT

Anne likes the hot chocolate at Jacques Torres so much, she has to ask the baristas not to make it too hot—"because I can never wait to drink it!" she says. She goes for the classic version (milk powder makes it extra rich), but if you can handle some spice, ask for Wicked-style, which is spiked with cinnamon and ground chipotle chile peppers. Multiple locations; mrchocolate.com

THE BRICK CHURCH: CUTTY MCGILL; SKATING: GETTY IMAGES.