



Three Perfect Days Downtown



You can't help but feel festive when strolling beneath the twinkling, lit-up trees of Old Town Fort Collins' renowned winter light display. So bundle up and hit the town—'tis the season for warmth and good cheer!

DAY ONE **That Lovin' Feelin'**

Book a romantic date night and get decked out for it from head to toe at **Circa Ltd.** (**1, mycirca.com**), Oversized, chunky knit sweaters and scarves are in this season and the look isn't complete without a pair of lacey leg warmers peeking out above your new boots. Accessorize away with their wide selection of moderately priced jewelry, belts, bags, jackets, hats, lingerie items, and more. Finish it off with a professional blowout from **Dryology** (**2, dryologyhair.com**), guaranteed to make you look and feel like an A-lister. Choose from a variety of up-do's, braids, or signature blowouts like the Cat's Meow, the Screen Siren, or the Dryology Secret for supermodel-worthy hair.

Bonus: blowouts last for several days so you can rock the 'do at that upcoming holiday party too.

Head out to dinner early, in time to catch the newly expanded happy hour at **Fish** (**3, fishmkt.com**), and start the date off sharing ceviche, calamari, and baked oyster steamers. With so much fresh seafood and delicious locally-sourced ingredients and dishes to choose from, opt to customize your meal specs from the "you pick it" dinner menu and select one another's starter, side, type of seafood (from ahi to live lobster), and preparation method. After lingering over your meals and some good conversation, stroll arm-in-arm to **Social** (**4, socialfortcollins.com**) for a classy end to the night. You'll feel like you've entered a secret underground portal to the prohibition era as you

flirt and toss back retro cocktails like the bees knees and Hemingway daiquiri, and learn about each drink's history from your well-dressed bartender. Share the panna cotta for dessert, a mash-up of coconut, house-made almond milk, and Mexican chocolate.



DAY ONE Taste Buds

Recruit a friend for a day of edible indulgence and crossing the hard-to-please foodies off your holiday shopping list. Start with a treat from **Mary's Mountain Cookies (5, mmcookie.com)** where new flavor creations debut weekly. Sip hot apple cider while deciding between options like the butter cream frosting cookie sandwich or a cookie stacked with s'more fixings. With party trays and dough to-go available, including edible dough dipped in chocolate, this is cookie heaven—and they deliver. Let your sugar buzz carry you down the street to **Crescendo (6, crescendo-usa.com)** to shop for gourmet oils, vinegars, and spices for the hobbyist chef on your list. Sample unique delights like plum kernel oil and black currant balsamic vinegar while swapping recipe ideas with the knowledgeable staff who will help you put together a thoughtful, personalized culinary gift set.



Break for lunch at **Scrumpy's (7, facebook.com/scrumpyshardciderbar)**, a hard cidery with 18 taps that also features a tantalizing selection of Colorado meads, wine, cocktails, snacks, sweets, and hot sandwiches. Try the candied bacon appetizer, the Snowshoe Sandwich, and a caramel brownie. Wash it all down with a taster flight of ciders made on-site and take home growlers of your favorites, such as the cherry chocolate, for loved ones. Continue the day's tasting theme with a chocolate flight from new-in-town **Nuance Chocolate (8, nuancechocolate.com)**, where you can see and smell samples from each stage of the chocolate making process while staff walks you through the steps and introduces you to the distinct vocabulary of chocolate connoisseurs. Compare the earthy, herbal layers of the single-origin Ecuador to the bright fruit and green tobacco notes of the Venezuela Canoabo before settling on a gift of artisan chocolate that's just right for that sophisticated someone.

DAY THREE Me Time

Wind down from the holiday madness and treat yourself to a lazy afternoon—you deserve it. Duck into **Sparrow House of Design (9, fortcollinsreupholstery.com)**, a one-woman workroom devoted to interior design and creative furniture upholstery, and chat with the owner, Gayle, about the space-planning ideas you're dreaming of. She'll give you advice and provide you with what you need—from custom window coverings and wallpapers to bedding and fabrics of every imaginable color, pattern, and texture—to revive and reinvent your personal space in 2015.

Look for further inspiration at **Al's Newsstand (10, alsnewsstand.com)**, an Old Town staple since 1947 boasting a selection of more than 3,500 magazines organized by genre. You'll be able to find a title on whatever you're into, most of which can't be found elsewhere in retail, and many that you never knew existed. While there, check *The Old Farmer's Almanac* and browse the cigars, rare tobacco accessories, books, newspapers, and vintage postcards on display. Take your magazine purchase over to **La Luz Mexican Grill (11, laluzgrill.com)** and flip through it from a spot at the counter. Order a marg made from a selection of over 30 tequilas, whet your appetite with chips and fiery chipotle salsa, and peruse without the use of lard, MSG, preservatives, or microwaves. Whether you go for tasty street tacos or the fish plate, a leisurely lunch here always hits the spot.



Getting There

Park It

Downtown offers five surface lots, on-street parking for two-hour limits, free all-day parking on the periphery of town, and two paying parking structures; the Civic Center garage on N. Mason St. and the Old Town garage on E. Mountain Ave. If you pedaled yourself to town, you'll find racks on most curbs and six large corrals that can fit up to 20 bikes. Rent a bike from the Fort Collins Bike Library for free at the downtown transit center.

250 N. Mason St., fbikelibrary.org

Local Motion

For a \$1.25 fare, hop on MAX, the new rapid transit bus line providing service every 10 minutes along a five-mile corridor on Mason St., from Cherry St. to Harmony Rd., with four convenient stops in Old Town. Bikes welcome on board.

fcgov.com/max

More to Love

If perfect downtown days are your thing, you're usually in luck on Fridays. Check out the self-guided art gallery tours the first Friday of each month, watch for retail shops open late on the second Friday, and enjoy a foodie walk on the third Friday.

downtownfortcollins.com

