Angel Islington

Winter Guide 2026

Your guide to the festive season in the Angel



Angel Islington BID goes to ballot

This guide is created by Angel Islington Business Improvement District. This year is a big year for us as we go to ballot, which means businesses in and around Angel get to vote on whether Angel Islington BID will continue for a fifth term.

If you own or work for a business in the BID area, you can find out more about the ballot by going to: angelislington.london/2026-ballot



Performers from the King's Head Theatre Panto at the Glow in the Angel event 2025

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The festive season starts here

Here's your guide to all the festive fun to be had around Angel this winter. This year Christmas kicks off in Angel from Friday November 13. Expect an evening of festive themed activities and fun in Angel Central and Islington Square, late night shopping and Christmas light switch on.

You'll also find listings for all the festive shows at the incredible range of theatre and dance venues that we're lucky to be home too. Read on for your guide to festive fun, late nights, perfect gifts and some great spots for eating and drinking.

Wrap up warm and get exploring.



Ben Stephenson
Angel BID
Chief Executive

Light up Angel

Friday November 13



This year Angel's festive activities will kick off from Friday November 13, with the Good Housekeeping Live with Country Living Christmas Market in the Business Design Centre, Christmas light switch ons in Angel Central and Islington Square.

We've also lined up some great freebies and offers to enjoy on the day, including an exclusive time limited free entry to the **Good Housekeeping Live with Country Living Christmas Market.** Find out more on the next page.

Bring your guide with you and show it to redeem any of these offers on the day.

T & Cs apply



Friday November 13

Islington Square

1 **From 4** head to Islington Square for their **Christmas light switch on.** You can also browse their selection of boutiques and brands; including the newly opened Lucy and Yak store and a mix of independent shops, destination dining, cosy bars, beauty and wellbeing and the six-screen ODEON Luxe & Dine cinema.

Business Design Centre

2 **Good Housekeeping Live with Country Living Christmas Market** Exclusive for readers of this guide, we've managed to blag you **FREE entry to the Christmas Market from 2 to 4 on Friday, November 13 only.** Just bring this guide with you and show it on the door!

Angel Central

3 **Head to Angel Central between 4 and 7 as they switch on the Christmas lights,** with entertainment for all the family. You can also start your Xmas shopping from their pick of big name brands like newly opened Søstrene Grene.

As ever, **St Espresso** will be offering **free hot chocolate to all children watching the Christmas light switch on**, on November 13.

Offers & Discounts

4 **Thai Square, Upper Street, will be offering a welcome drink with any main meal purchased on the evening.** House wine (125ml) or Beer (bottle) with any main.

5 **Get 10% off your bill at new Sri Lankan restaurant Coconut Island** on White Lion Street for authentic and fresh curries, hoppers and cocktails, served alongside Island vibes.



Soul Mama comes to Islington



This year, **Soul Mama** opened its second venue in Angel Central; bringing vibrant flavours, live music and a whole lot of heart to the neighbourhood. We sat down with founder **YolanDa Brown OBE** to hear more about the journey behind the restaurant venue hybrid that's already become a local favourite.

"I'm happiest when I'm bringing people together through music,"

A saxophonist, composer and broadcaster, she's spent her career touring the world, presenting the award winning CBeebies show *YolanDa's Band Jam,* and discovering how food and music can turn strangers into friends.



Those experiences inspired *Soul Mama:* a live music venue and restaurant celebrating dishes influenced by African, Caribbean and South American flavours. The journey included a Guinness World Record breaking Kickstarter campaign. “People believed in the idea before they could walk through the doors. That gave us a real sense of responsibility to create somewhere special.”

For YolanDa, the most exciting part has been watching guests make *Soul Mama* their own. “We can choose the menu and programme the music, but it’s our guests who give Soul Mama its personality.”

YolanDa is loving making a home in our neighbourhood “One of the lovely things about being in Angel is having so much to discover around us. I love the mix of independent shops, places to eat and spaces for culture. There’s a real neighbourhood feel alongside all that energy.” Her favourite Angel spots include **James Freeman Gallery, Vue Angel Central, Jam Delish,** and **Third Space Islington Square.**

Looking ahead to 2027, YolanDa tell us she is “particularly excited about introducing audiences to artists they might not have discovered yet. There’s something lovely about arriving without quite knowing what to expect and leaving as somebody’s newest fan. Music education is also very close to my heart, so I’d love to explore that further with local young people.”



Exclusive for Winter Guide readers

Get **£10 Silver tickets using code ANGEL10** on goodhousekeepinglive.co.uk when you book by midnight on November 10.

T & Cs apply

Christmas starts here

Get ready for Christmas at **Good Housekeeping Live with Country Living Christmas Market,** taking place **11–14 November 2026 at the Business Design Centre, London.**



Enjoy a festive day packed with inspiration, entertainment, shopping and delicious food.

Meet favourite celebrities and experts, discover ideas for your home and lifestyle, and enjoy live cooking demonstrations.



Explore the Country Living Christmas Market, where independent makers and artisans offer beautiful gifts, decorations, food, fashion and more. Whether you're shopping for loved ones or treating yourself, there's plenty to discover.

Make a date, bring your friends and start Christmas in style.

11–14 November 2026
Business Design Centre, London

Book your tickets at goodhousekeepinglive.co.uk.



Jane Bruton, Editor-in-Chief of Good Housekeeping, shares her favourite festive traditions, her top tips for shopping at Good Housekeeping Live with the Country Living Christmas Market, and where she'd spend a free afternoon in Angel.

What Christmas tradition do you look forward to most each year?

Making a wreath and decorating the tree. My friends and I get together at our local florist for a wine and foliage session, which can lead to a slightly wonky wreath, but it's the thought that counts. I also add a new bauble to the tree every year. This year's is a Norman conqueror I picked up at the Bayeux Tapestry gift shop; last year's was a Le Creuset pot, a present from my boss, Liz.

Which stall should we make a beeline for at Good Housekeeping Live with the Country Living Christmas Market?

You're asking the wrong person! Last year I did so much shopping that I had to get a cab home, and I only live five minutes away. My favourite purchase was a traditional Welsh blanket. I'm also a sucker for foodie finds (my friend Gaby went wild for some giant pickled eggs), and there were beautiful alpaca scarves and mittens that made lovely gifts.

Are you a planner or a last-minute Christmas shopper?

I always intend to plan but inevitably fail. GH Live has made me much more organised, although also much more prone to going over the top!

Where would you head for a free afternoon in Angel?

I've always loved Upper Street, with its brilliant independent shops. I'd pop into After Noah and Abigail Ahern, and Seconda Mano is a vintage lover's paradise.



Looking Up, Looking Back: Hidden History on our streets

We know Angel as a thriving commercial hub, today. But, when you take a deeper look, you can quickly discover a disappearing layer of London history; faded advertisements, surviving shopfronts and architectural details that reveal how the area worked, shopped and traded in days gone by.

Islington contains one of London's richest concentrations of ghost signage and old shop frontages. It's a perfect place to explore the borough's commercial past nestled amongst the present.



Jansos / Alamy

Camden Passage

Here, you'll find what is probably Islington's best known ghost sign; a large faded **Hovis advertisement** painted high on a building wall. It's high up and you'll find it at number 10. The sign dates from an era when bread manufacturers sponsored local bakers and retailers, using entire building façades as advertising space.

Chapel Market

This street market has served local residents since the nineteenth century. At no. 74 you'll find the old shop front for **M. Manze Pie and Mash.** This shop is now closed so you won't be able to purchase any live eels, sadly, as the shop front suggests. It briefly re-opened as a pop-up during 2026 though, so worth keeping an eye on for future eel activity.



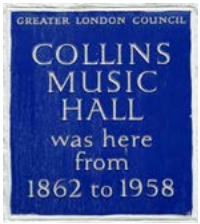
Tucked away around a corner on White Lion Street you'll see the signage for a **costumier and furrier.** This would have been a shop selling and hiring fashionable clothing and garments made from fur, during the late Victorian and Edwardian periods. The sign survives because it was painted directly onto the building façade. Now you'll find a shop selling vintage and second-hand clothes and bric-a-brac, so it's not a million miles away from how it started out.



Just off the market is another remarkable ghost sign for **Redfern's Rubber Heels,** an advertisement stretching across several storeys of a residential building.

Islington Green

In front of the **Waterstone's** on Islington Green, you can still see the façade of **Collins' Music Hall** which opened in 1863 and was named after the comedian and singer Sam Collins. Collins's, like other music halls and variety theatres, declined in the years after the Second World War; it closed in 1958 after a fire.



© Spudgun67/flickr.com
CC BY 2.0

Among the performers seen at Collins's were Charlie Chaplin and Gracie Fields. The façade survived the 1958 fire and since 1994 it has fronted a Waterstones bookshop built behind it.



© Spudgun67/flickr.com CC BY 2.0

Upper Street



On Upper Street, have a look above **Flight Club** for a reminder of when this was a pub called **The Three Wheat Sheaves.** A little further along, above **Franco Manca,** there's a blue plaque dedicated to the aforementioned Gracie Fields, a popular music hall star, who lived here in a maisonette above a sweet shop as she built her performance career.

These are just a few of the old advertisements and shop frontages you can spot around our neighbourhood. A reminder of the shops and commercial life that once thrived here, nestled in amongst our adverts and shops of today. If you know of any others, tag us on Instagram angelislington.london

Gifting top picks



Angel is lucky to be home to an incredible range of shops and boutiques, so you can shop the big brands through to unique artisanal pieces all in one place.

Here are a few of our picks from around the neighbourhood for a lovely shopping experience and beautiful gifts.

Kiehl's
Upper Street
Kiehl's returned to Angel this year with an Upper Street branch, offering their heritage skincare brand combining apothecary expertise with scientific innovation. Amongst their wider range, they also offer a particularly strong men's skincare range including gift sets.

Get a free 15 min skin check and a welcome discount of 15% on your first purchase when you sign up for membership. Book skin check at: kiehls.co.uk


Adventures in Furniture

Adventures in Furniture
Upper Street
Adventures in Furniture (AIF) specialise in versatile designs built for modern living. Manager, Whitney loves these versatile tables, featuring interchangeable, hand-finished glass or wooden trays for a thoughtful festive gift; allowing the recipient to mix, match, and customize your living space for the festive season.

The 192 Collective
192 Upper Street
Head to Upper Street to shop this boutique, bringing together a carefully curated mix of small fashion, accessories, jewellery and lifestyle brands under one roof.


The 192 Collective

Backworks
Camden Passage
For something a bit different, Backworks offer seated massage in their lovely Camden Passage studio. Their gift cards allow your giftee to redeem a seated back massage, fully clothed with no oil and no faff.



Backworks

Sessun
Upper Street
Sessun also recently opened on Upper Street. Bringing beautiful fabrics and a subtle but stunning design ethos. Here is one of this season's top picks from their store manager.

Divilio Bota bag

Colour pictured: Black Leather (also comes in Coffee Leather)

£325


© Sessun Harriboyd

Colibri
Upper Street
This friendly boutique on Upper Street offers a carefully curated selection of premier women's clothes, jewellery and accessories stocking brands such as Max Mara Weekend, Vanessa Bruno and TELA to name a few.

Angel Central
Upper Street
If you're after budget friendly options; Angel Central is a good option, where you'll find a brand new Søstrene Grene shop on the first floor as well as brands including Muji, Oliver Bonas and Rituals, among others.


ISLINGTON

EXPLORE

Winter in the Square

A little festive magic, at every turn. Discover independent shops, destination dining, cosy bars, beauty and wellbeing, and a six-screen cinema. Pick up something special, send Christmas cards and gifts from the new Post Office and soak up the festive atmosphere within North London's historic former Royal Mail sorting office – there's something for everyone.

ISLINGTON SQUARE

116 UPPER ST, N1 1AB ISLINGTONSQUARE.COM @ISLINGTONSQ

Hot tickets

Sadler's Wells

My Fierce Ignorant Step
November 13 and 14
Ten dancers move as one in Christos Papadopoulos' uplifting and exhilarating exploration of movement, memory and togetherness.

Six Lethargies
November 18 to 21
BalletBoyz and a live 37-piece orchestra unite in a powerful new work exploring trauma, empathy and emotional healing through music and dance.

Matthew Bourne's Cinderella
From December 1
Matthew Bourne's beloved wartime reimagining of the classic fairy tale returns, set against the dramatic backdrop of Blitz-era London.


Credit: Sadler's Wells Theatre, 2017 © Johan Persson

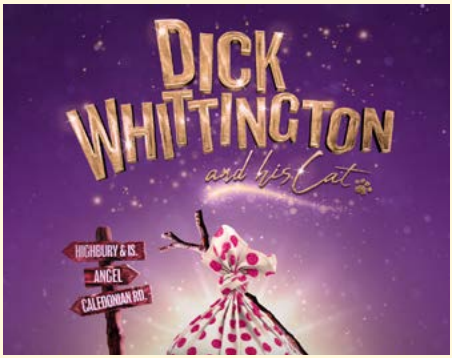
Little Angel Theatre



The Snowflake
November 21 to January 23
A heartwarming festive tale following a little snowflake's magical journey to find the perfect place to land.

Scruff's Christmas Adventure
November 28 to January 3
Follow Scruff on a festive quest filled with surprises, seasonal cheer and enchanting puppetry for young audiences.

King's Head Theatre



Dick Whittington and His Cat
November 22 to January 3
Join Dick and his trusty feline friend on a fun-filled family adventure packed with laughs, music and magical panto mischief.

Dick Whittington: Adults Only
November 26 to January 2
As above but with some more rude bits for the grown-ups!

02 Islington Academy

Max & Harvey
November 4
Social media sensations and pop duo Max & Harvey bring their infectious energy and chart-topping hits to the stage.

Skerryvore
November 27
Scotland's award-winning folk-rock band combines traditional roots with contemporary sounds in a high-energy live show.

Union Chapel



A Christmas Organ Recital with Wayne Marshall
December 9
World-renowned for his musicianship and versatility; a celebrated interpreter of the music of George Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein and more 20th-Century American composers.

Carols by Candlelight
December 20
The ever-popular and free carol service sees the Victorian Gothic Chapel lit with candles and fill with traditional and new music specifically composed for the event


© Emile Holba

Pre-theatre dining



Make a night of it at one of our range of restaurants, from high-end dining to cosy and casual spots.

Sticks'n'Sushi
Upper Street
Serving classic and creative sushi and skewers from the grill in its open-plan dining room, lounge and bar, Sticks'n'Sushi takes inspiration from their half-Japanese, half-Danish background, creating a unique cuisine that combines two culinary traditions.

Their set menu makes for a great start to a luxe night out.


Sticks'n'Sushi

Thai Square
Upper Street
Offer a great pre-theatre menu, with a three-course set menu for £30 per person, along with a complimentary welcome drink (glass of Monsoon Valley Thai Wine (125ml) or a bottle of Chang Beer) Available Daily for orders before 6:30.


Thai Square © Thai Square Group

Humble Grape
Theberton Street
This elegant wine bar offers two courses with a glass of wine for £27 from 5 to 6.30. A great way to try out their seasonal European style food, carefully curated to match their wine.


Humble Grape

Frederick's
Islington High Street
Family-owned bistro Frederick's has a lovely bar area offering a range of high-end bar snacks and great cocktails, making it a great pre-show option for a light bite.

Noci
Islington Green
From Sunday to Thursday, from 5:30 to 7 you can enjoy one of the signature pasta dishes with a perfectly matched glass of Italian wine for just £20, at this modern Italian restaurant.


Noci © RobsonMedia

Crudough
St John Street
This sourdough pizza bar and pub is right next to Sadler's Wells. From 4 to 6 Tuesday to Friday the Beat the clock offer means the time you order is the price you pay for draft beer + fizz cocktails. A great informal option for a pre-show pizza and drink.


Ottolenghi

Ottolenghi
Upper Street
Offer a pre-theatre menu 5:30 to 6:30, Monday to Friday. Dishes are designed to share at £36 per person. There's a range of seasonal dishes to choose from with options such as confit garlic labneh with za'atar oil and lavosh.

Coconut Island
White Lion Street
Sri Lankan food is having a bit of a moment recently and this brand new restaurant means you can try out authentic and delicious traditional hoppers, curry and kothu in a vibrant Island coded setting.

Niche
Rosebery Avenue
Niche offer a unique gluten/ allergen free dining option, and they're right next to Sadler's Wells too. Expect modern European dishes served in a cosy but elegant setting.


Niche © 7 rooms

Celebrating 40 years of Business Design Centre



Putting events, innovation and community at the heart of Angel since 1986.

If walls could talk, many London buildings would have more than a few stories to tell. Few, however, could rival the Business Design Centre.

Standing proudly on Upper Street in the heart of Angel, this iconic Victorian building has been part of Islington's landscape for more than 160 years, albeit under a few different names and serving many different purposes.

Originally opened in 1862 as the Agricultural Hall and later renamed the Royal Agricultural Hall, it was designed to host livestock shows and grand exhibitions. Welcoming Victorian society beneath its distinctive vaulted roof of cast iron and glass, it became one of London's most remarkable and fashionable event spaces.



Yet its future was not always guaranteed. After serving as a parcel depot during World War II, the building fell into disuse and faced the prospect of demolition. Instead, in 1986, it was given a new lease of life when entrepreneur Sam Morris and his family stepped in to rescue and restore the hall. Inspired by the trade centres he had encountered in the United States, Morris transformed the vast space into something entirely new for London: a venue that combined exhibitions and conferences with offices and showrooms under one roof.



Forty years later, the Business Design Centre continues to honour that vision, preserving the character that makes it unique while evolving to meet the needs of modern businesses, audiences and event organisers.

The building has helped put Angel on the map as a destination for business, creativity and events, welcoming everyone from global brands to figures such as Princess Diana and Yoko Ono, hosting the 52nd BAFTA Awards and even serving as headquarters for the Czech Republic team during the London 2012 Olympics.

Today, the venue attracts almost one million visitors each year and remains a hub of activity for local businesses, events and organisations. More than 120 companies now call the building home, creating a thriving community at the centre of Islington.

And yet the Business Design Centre's greatest achievement goes beyond any headlines or famous visitors. For four decades, it has continued to bring people together, whether through exhibitions and conferences, supporting local businesses or community initiatives that place genuine care at the heart of its operations.

As it celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, the Business Design Centre remains rooted in the same spirit that saved it from demolition all those years ago: a belief that great buildings thrive when they are filled with ambitious ideas, inspiring people and authentic stories.

Inspired to visit? Explore the Business Design Centre and browse all upcoming events: bdc.london

Advent at St Mary's Church

As ever, St Mary's have lots going on to mark advent and the Christmas season with plenty of opportunity to get singing:


Carols by Candlelight

On Saturday, November 28 from 11–4 there's the annual **Christmas Fair** with carols followed by **Big Family Carols** at 11 Sunday, December 6. On Sunday, December 13 at 4.30 and 7 there'll be **Carols by Candlelight,** with mulled wine and mince pies.

Angel's annual Menorah Lighting



Angel's annual Menorah Lighting returns to Islington Green on Monday, December 4, marking the first night of Chanukah.


Menorah Lighting on Islington Green © Jeremy Freedman

Hosted by Chabad Islington, this free event brings neighbours together to celebrate the festival of lights.

Expect traditional songs, live klezmer music, a photo pod with instant prints, and delicious latkes, doughnuts and hot cocoa.

Calling young entrepreneurs in Islington



On Saturday, November 21, Chapel Place hosts the **Islington Young Business Showcase (YBS)** giving young entrepreneurs aged 7–17 the chance to launch their own small business.

With only 20 stalls available, participants are encouraged to apply early. The Showcase has supported more than 3,000 young entrepreneurs across 59 events, helping children build confidence, creativity and communication skills.

Applications are now open: youngbusinessshowcase.co.uk



Neighbourhood offers and exclusives

Here's a round-up of some of the best lunch deals, discounts and special offers this winter, to help keep your wallet happy.

Pinkberry
Upper Street

Pinkberry will be offering **10% off a Small Frozen Yogurt** (any flavour) from 13 November to 5 January.



Bottle Cocktail Shop
Islington Square

Try out the new early bird menu, running Tuesday 5 to 10 and Wednesday to Friday from 12 to 7, with **six classic cocktails available for just £8 each.**

Wagamama
Angel Central

From Monday to Friday, from 11 to 3, you can choose from a selection of **mains and drinks for £14 from the lunch menu offering** Wagamama's classic and delicious Japanese dishes with speedy canteen style seating.

Kape Connection
Camden Passage

Pop in try out their festive drinks menu, including a Rose Milk Hot Chocolate and delicious (and huge!) festive toasties.



Terra Rossa
Upper Street

Try out pizza and classic rustic dishes from Puglia in southern Italy at a relaxed neighbourhood restaurant. **Throughout November** they will be offering **20% off food Mondays to Thursdays.**



Rabieng
Upper Street

Offering Bangkok street classics through to elegant regional specialities, Raibeng's recently refreshed set lunch menu is a great way to sample their freshly made food.



Mayvn
Pentoville Road

Indie café and meeting space Mayvn have a new winter warmer offer, with a bowl of **soup and any hot drink for £8.** Available weekdays, 12 to 3, November 5 to January 5.

Boston Drink & Dessert
Upper Street

Specialising in chocolate-based deserts, Boston D & D also does a great breakfast offer with a **coffee and a croissant for £4.90.**



Rosa's Thai
Theberton Street

The Saiphin's Set Lunch is £15, which includes a choice of three rotating Thai dishes and a drink for £15. At the Angel branch you can get this offer at weekends, as well as Mondays to Fridays.

Angel Crackers Festive fun that tackle loneliness!

Local charity Islington Giving join us to tell us about how Christmas Crackers can help give back, this season.

Did you know the Christmas Cracker was invented in Islington?

The idea was the brainchild of a local confectioner, Thomas Smith in 1847. You can still see his statute today in Finsbury Square.

179 years later, we have Thomas to thank for our very own version – Angel Crackers! These crackers are special because each one supports someone in Islington who is facing a difficult time. Loneliness is an ongoing crisis in Islington. Despite its external image, Islington is one of the most deprived places in the UK, with many people struggling to afford even the basics.

Community spaces have also become rarer and priced out of leisure activities, many older residents and families struggling financially are becoming increasingly isolated.

For someone feeling alone, winter is a particularly hard time.

With the purchase of every bespoke Angel Cracker, made by volunteers, you will be supporting grassroots projects that act as a lifeline for vulnerable residents during the winter months.



Good Neighbours Scheme - Help on Your Doorstep

That might be a lunch club where an older resident can have a hot meal and play a game of bingo. It could mean tickets for a family to see The Snowman and enjoy a moment of connection despite facing a challenging time. Or it could pay for someone to attend a men's group, where they can talk openly about their mental health and feel part of a supportive community.



With the SNAP of each Angel Cracker you will also have the chance to find a **GOLDEN TICKET.**

Golden Ticket prizes include **theatre tickets, drinks and meals at local restaurants, and much more!**

£5 donation per cracker. All proceeds will help support some of our most vulnerable neighbours.



On Sale Now!

For more information and to order: Islingtongiving.org.uk/angel-crackers-2026

Cracking Questions

Do Angel Crackers contain a hat?
Of course! As well as a lovely toy or trinket, a conversation starter perfect to spark interesting chats around the table, a festive tea bag, and the chance to find a Golden Ticket and win local prizes!

How much from each cracker goes to supporting the local community?
100%! Thanks to our sponsors, Bolt Burdon and our amazing volunteer elves, every £1 raised through Angel Crackers will help someone in Islington facing challenging times.

What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck?
A Christmas Quacker.

Where can I get my hands on Angel Crackers?
Find us at the Christmas Light Switch on, November 13, Angel Central, pick them up at the Cripplegate Offices: 13 Elliott's Place, N1 8HZ between Monday-Thursday, 9am-5pm or email: mail@islingtongiving.org.uk to order

Thursday November 20
Bellanger
Islington Green

Celebrate the release of Beaujolais Nouveau

Celebrate the annual tradition of the release of Beaujolais Nouveau wine at **Bellanger on Thursday November 20.** Expect an evening of expertly paired wine with cheese from local Islington gem, Pistachio & Pickle dairy.

Tickets are priced at £35 and include four Beaujolais variety tasting glasses paired with complimenting cheeses. Should guests wish to continue their evening and dine in afterwards, they'll also get 20% off food.

About the BID

Angel Islington BID supports and champions Angel's business community and the neighbourhood through services, promotion, events, training and networking. Our three missions are to create **A Great Experience, A Strong Local Identity** and **An Inclusive Economy.** Discover more at **www.angelislington.london**.

Scan the QR code and sign up to our newsletter for the latest news, listings and exclusive offers.

Published by Angel Islington Business Improvement District

Angel Islington