

Santacon Guide 2011

Merry Ho!

It's that time of year again. The mailing list has sprung into life and the red costumes are steadily leaving the shelves, Folk are deciding their Santa names and customizing costumes, gathering little things to give out to strangers and learning the carols. Santacon is almost upon us!!

Santacon will be taking place on Saturday 10th December and will be in the customary form of the divine trinity of STREETS, CINEMA and FINALE PARTY. While all of you can no doubt feel the buzz beginning to build already, hold on to your pants and clench your buttocks—there's more than ever before! This year we upgrade to an all day movie-fest, and we have lane bowling for santas at the Finale Party, and some more stuff that Santa is trying to remember. You know the routine Santa....

There will be an Early Santa Start, a Lazy Santa Start, a quieter all-day Santa movie matinee and the all-singing, all-dancing, all-bowling, all-jingling Santa Finale Party at the Bloomsbury Bowling Lanes, Bloomsbury!

For those of you who have attended Santacon before, the pages that follow may be nothing more than a refresher. For those who are about to be baptized into the Santacon massive, what follows is unbelievably important—even as important as remembering to book tickets in advance for the Finale Party!

Love and Peace, Brethren!

The London Santae

* **S**antacon is the meeting of likeminded Santae from the four corners of the earth. Anyone is welcome. The only prerequisites are that you arrive in a complete Santa outfit (though occasionally we have a few reindeer turn up) and possess the Santa cheer. A Santa hat alone will not make you eligible for the Santacon! Your Santacon outfit is however absolutely essential— customise it in any way you see fit. The wackier the better and we guarantee you won't feel over dressed!! There is only one Santa but he has many forms. We have had Pimp Santas, Robot Santas, Punk Santas, Cricket Santas, Sexy Santas, Superhero Santas...and an assortment of magical beards. Dazzle Japanese tourists with your flair and panache. And new this year: ELVES ALLOWED. Santa has got liberal. Hey you can even come as the Christmas Turkey if you want, but the majority of us will be SANTA!

* **S**antacon is a mysterious little beast and, in keeping with tradition, the start time and location will not be revealed until the afternoon of the day before.

* **F**rom the start points Santa will begin his epic journey through the streets of London, spreading cheer and frequenting a few bars and notable landmarks along the way.

* **W**arning: Some people think it's all big and clever to bring their own alcohol along with them so they don't have to queue at bars! This can be true, but it depends if you have the willpower to pace yourself. Sharing will make you Santa friends. Some Santae have been known to carry rucksacks containing a noxious alcoholic elixir that would remove the pants of a sexy Elf from up to 20ft away (or, as we're in Europe, 6.096 metres). Be aware that this might mean you're not able to enter the occasional public house that we visit so will have to stand outside with the other 450 Santa who can't get in...or be really sneaky beaky by hiding it in the front of your suit as your 'belly'. Of course if you're a bit of a porker then this space is already taken. Improvise Santa! — spare space down the front of your boxers? According to Mrs Claus, the answer's an unsatisfying yes...

* **W**e know that somehow, astonishingly, it can be difficult to know who to follow given that there are hundreds of Santae. So look out for Santa herders. Some will have megaphones, while others will have red flags or standards to provide a reference point to follow. If one of the organisers comes into a bar and says we're off then drink up Santa...we're moving out fast. Generally you will only have time for one drink before we move on, so consider buying bottles rather than pints, or halves if you are a slow drinker. You may also find that there is a musical lead. And if you really get lost, you can fire up your smartphone and visit the Santanav on Twitter. Details of Twitter accounts are announced together with the start points the day before.

* **W**e are Santa and, as such, we have no agenda. We are here to spread cheer and enjoy ourselves. If you've been on Santacon before, you'll know it is worth doing just to walk the streets and see the bemused look on the faces of the shoppers, shop keepers, tourists, security guards, police, children and pets that we encounter. Just know where the line is and obey the Four D's:

* **D**on't mess with kids (they'll stab you)

* **D**on't mess with security (they never understand)

- * **D**on't mess with the police (they'll shoot you several times and link you to terrorism, particularly because you have a beard)
- * **D**on't mess with Santa (Chuck Norris will be attending in a Santa outfit – you really want to take that chance?)

* **S**anta loves to include not exclude and therefore we say that anyone can come yes, even ELVES. You can bring your kids, but understand however, that this is not a child 'friendly' event in that we enter several pubs where they may not be allowed. Similarly we've had pets come along and while they're cute, they get scared and have no idea which of the hundreds of Santas they belong to. So bringing animals that are not human reindeer is a bad idea!

* **L**oad yourself up a good belly-lining breakfast and bring snacks and water for the day too. You may be prepared to run into shops and buy some on the day, but many Santae get left behind this way. Santa T pities the fool who thinks Santacon stops at a restaurant for food. You've been warned Sucka!

* **L**ook after your feet – Slack Reindeer and the Coalition's cuts to the National Elf Services means Santa walks quite a lot on the day. Wear comfortable/sensible shoes or boots. Bring plasters if you are delicate of foot.

* **L**ikewise, you'll be spending a fair amount of time outside in between bars so wear many layers of something warm under your Santa outfit! It is meant to be below freezing this weekend so a thermal Santa is a Warm Santa and a Warm Santa is a Hot Santa!

* **O**ccasionally you'll find a lot of other Santas in the bars we visit. Use your Santa sense and find other bars next door to make sure you get served and spread the cheer. **Stay with the massive though** – it's strangely easy to lose nearly a thousand Santas and we won't come looking for you. Be responsible for yourself.

* **B**e patient in the pubs at the bar. Santa was there before you. Ask nicely though and he might buy you a beer

* **S**hare the love! Make/Bring badges to stick on passers by, wrap brussel sprouts and coal for those who have been good/bad. Full blown signs and banners will make you a hit for the tourist photos. Maybe make some hug vouchers - people luurve to hug Santa. Hug vouchers encourage people to molest your fellow Santae! Other people touching Santa means Santa doesn't have to touch himself ☺

* **S**easoned veterans of Santacon know all too well the folly of trusting in the belts that come with Santa outfits. Sort yourself out with a proper belt or black tape. Some Santae have been known to attach a cotton backing to their beards to avoid the itching sensation. It also more than a little useful to carry safety pins, a needle and thread, some wonder web hemming stuff, a bicycle pump, a snake bite kit, an assortment of aromatic oils and a guide to the Shipping Lanes and Tidal movements of the South East Coast. We're not saying it's going to be exactly like last year but it pays to be prepared. Kendal Mint cake is optional

✳ **D**on't forget to print out a copy of the carols that we'll be singing, and perhaps one for the santa that lost his? Print off Santa Bingo and see how many tasks you can complete! This is not compulsory – this is for FUN. This year see the inaugural Santa X-Mas Factor Awards! See Facebook and the website for details of categories. If Santa nominates you, please be at the afterparty for Cheers and Medals and gloriously tacky prizes!

✳ **L**astly, and we **hate** to say this but previous years have occasionally seen unwanted behaviour at Santacon. Santacon is a surprisingly delicate operation and can only take place because of the goodwill, generosity and seasonal spirit of the partaking Santas. Some, however, see it as an occasion to use the anonymity of hundreds of Santa to steal, cause trouble or become aggressive. We do not want this because it threatens the future of the whole event, and so— believe us—it **WILL NOT** be tolerated. We need all Santas to keep an eye-out for any behaviour unbecoming of Santa and to advise troublemakers that their actions jeopardise Santacon. We will involve the Police, as we have done before, should individuals or groups behave in the manner outlined above.

DISCLAIMER

- ✳ Santacon does NOT endorse drinking irresponsibly – it's bad for your elf.
- ✳ Santacon does NOT endorse the wearing of red suits with white fur trim or any other Christmas regalia.
- ✳ Santacon does NOT endorse the manipulation of traditional festive songs to satisfy Santa's comedic requirements.
- ✳ Santacon features stunts performed by professionals. Do not attempt these unless surrounded by a suitably large audience armed with cameras.
- ✳ No animals were harmed in the making of Santacon.
- ✳ Refrigerate Santacon after opening, and consume within 3 days.
- ✳ Santacon expects all participants to fully conform to the law at all times.
- ✳ Santacon is for educational purposes only.
- ✳ Santacon is a novelty toy and should not be used internally.
- ✳ Santacon is not designed or intended for use in on-line control of aircraft, air traffic, aircraft navigation or aircraft communications; or in the design, construction, operation or maintenance of any nuclear facility.
- ✳ The views and opinions expressed on Santacon are purely those of Santa and are not paid for by special interests.
- ✳ Santacon may not be used for advertising or product endorsement purposes .We do not like to see corporate branded Santas or companies hijacking the wcnenes for commercial publicity.
- ✳ All Santacon models are over 18 years of age.
- ✳ Any similarity to persons living, dead or fictional is completely coincidental.
- ✳ Do not attempt to operate motor vehicles while under the influence of Santacon.
- ✳ Santacon may cause severe cramps, nausea, nose bleeds, dizziness, munchies, redundancy, headaches, embarrassment, loss of voice, loss of clothes and loss of dignity. Use at own risk!
- ✳ References in Santacon to any specific commercial products, processes, or services by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise, does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring, unless otherwise specified. This includes, but is not limited to, alcoholic beverages, brussel sprouts, white beards, red outfits or coal.
- ✳ All images, sounds, and quotes used in Santacon are copyright of their respective originators from whom we may or may not have permission.
- ✳ Santacon may contain trace amounts of nuts.
- ✳ Santacon may contain trace amounts of wheat, hops, barley and/or malt.