



LUDINGTON WINS USA TODAY 10BEST READERS' CHOICE AWARD FOR "BEST NEW YEAR'S EVE DROP"

Ludington Only Michigan Destination on List of 20, Beating Times Square Ball Drop

LUDINGTON, Mich. – Dec. 13, 2024 – Contrary to popular belief, the Best New Year's Eve Drop *isn't* in Times Square. It's in the Lake Michigan town of Ludington, which has celebrated its [New Year's Eve Ball Drop](#) for 15 years and was voted [Best New Year's Eve Drop](#) in the USA Today's 10Best Readers' Choice Awards.

The only New Year's Eve Drop in Michigan among 20 nominees from across the United States, [Ludington's New Year's Eve Ball Drop](#) landed the #1 spot, well above the Times Square Ball Drop at #10 – also beating competitors as varied as the Pierogi Drop, PEEPS Chick Drop and Pickle Drop.

"Ludington's New Year's Eve Ball Drop is one of our top two most attended events, a perennial favorite that attracts thousands of people annually," said Brandy Miller, executive director of the Ludington Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. "We are ecstatic to be recognized nationally for this honor, and we encourage everyone to come to Ludington later this month to experience the best ball drop firsthand!"

Following is how USA Today 10Best described Ludington's New Year's Eve Drop in the contest:

"Michigan embraces the holiday spirit each year with Ludington's New Year's Eve Ball Drop, an event that takes place on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan. This festival invites Michiganders and visitors alike to kick back and enjoy wine and local craft beer as they marvel at colorful fireworks and a ball drop stage that's clad in thousands of flashing lights."

The top 10 winners for [Best New Year's Eve Drop](#) are ranked as follows, who were shortlisted from an initial list of 20 nominations as the best in the United States that were curated by a panel of subject matter experts and USA TODAY 10Best editors before being voted on by the public:

- 1. Ludington's New Year's Eve Ball Drop**
2. Idaho Potato Drop
3. New Year's Eve Shrimp Drop
4. Pierogi Drop
5. The Great Pinecone Drop
6. PEEPS Chick Drop
7. New Year's Eve Beach Ball Drop
8. The Possum Drop
9. Pickle Drop
10. Times Square Ball Drop

"The New Year's Eve Ball Drop in Ludington, Michigan, combines the charm of a small-town celebration with the excitement of a grand countdown," said USA TODAY 10Best Readers' Choice Awards editor Maggie Tyner. "Our readers clearly enjoy the welcoming, festive atmosphere that celebrates the new year with joy and camaraderie."

Ludington is no stranger to winning USA Today 10Best Readers' Choice Awards – it also was voted "[Best Historic Small Town](#)" in the country in April 2024, the only Michigan city on the list of 20 nominated small towns with fewer than 25,000 people.

"Both of these awards validate that people are looking for authentic, small-town experiences that Ludington delivers," added Miller. "We're the antithesis of Times Square, with all the fun and festivities but without the

hassle. And we're only a 90-minute drive from Grand Rapids and four hours from Detroit and Chicago via expressway. We're a convenient getaway."

Kicking off Nov. 11, the "Best New Year's Eve Drop" contest lasted four weeks, closing Dec. 9 at 11:59 a.m. Individuals 18 years and older could vote online once a day. The [USA TODAY 10Best Readers' Choice Awards](#) highlight top-notch attractions and businesses, providing readers with trusted recommendations. Nominees are chosen by a panel of relevant experts, including a combination of editors from USA TODAY; editors from 10Best.com; relevant expert contributors; and sources for both these media and other Gannett properties.

Ludington New Year's Eve Ball Drop

Ludington's biggest winter celebration and one of West Michigan's largest New Year's Eve ball drops, the [Ludington New Year's Eve Ball Drop](#) offers something for everyone – featuring an outdoor beer garden and music, ball drop and fireworks, plus restaurants and shops open late.

The main event takes place at Legacy Plaza starting at 9 p.m. with an open-air street party with a live DJ. The party is free, though beer, wine, seltzer, and non-alcoholic options plus souvenir light-up glasses are available for purchase. The plaza fireplace will be roaring and heaters will be scattered throughout the plaza, and Ludington Avenue will be closed to pedestrian-only traffic from 9 p.m. to midnight. The DJ leads the crowd in a countdown to midnight, marked by the ball drop with 6,000 LED lights, followed by fireworks lighting up the downtown sky.

Most downtown restaurants and pubs are open late for New Year's Eve dinner and drinks, and many shops are also open late to browse and step out of the cold. Six companies are offering free, safe rides throughout the evening (see [service area](#)), and various accommodations will feature lodging specials. For all event-related information, visit pureludington.com/nye.

Below are additional events and activities on New Year's Eve in downtown Ludington:

- ***New Year's Eve Balloon Drop – 5 to 8 p.m., Sandcastles Children's Museum***
This family-friendly [Balloon Drop New Year's Eve Party](#) includes snack food and refreshments, House of Flavors ice cream, face painting and more. Admission is \$60 per immediate family or \$15 per person. Purchase tickets at Sandcastles or reserve by calling 231-233-9326.
- ***Party at the Library – 8:30 to 11:30 p.m., Mason County District Library – Ludington Branch***
The New Year's Eve party at the library features light snacks, games, crafts for kids, a big pile of Legos, and more. All programs are free. Children under 8 must be supervised by an adult.
- ***After-Party – 12:30 to 4 a.m., Timbers Prime***
This NYE after-party offers live music, late food and lots of fun.
- ***New Year's Resolution Run 5K – Jan. 1, 2025, 11 a.m., Loomis & James Streets (start and end)***
Start the year on the right foot with this fun 5K. Cost: \$30 (\$35 on race day). [Register here.](#)

About Ludington

Located on the shores of Lake Michigan with 28 miles of beachfront and water access, Ludington, Michigan, offers a quintessential “Up North” experience close by. Ludington and Mason County deliver the perfect combination of unspoiled natural resources and unrivaled outdoor recreation with historic, small-town charm from its 1873 roots – all within easy reach at the intersection of U.S. 31 and U.S. 10. For more information, visit pureludington.com, [Facebook.com/PureLudington](https://www.facebook.com/PureLudington) and twitter.com/@Pure_Ludington.

About the Ludington Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

The [Ludington Area Convention & Visitors Bureau \(LACVB\)](http://pureludington.com) is the official destination marketing organization for Mason County, Michigan, promoting the region to business and leisure visitors to maximize economic impact. An independent nonprofit organization, the LACVB collaborates with its partners to champion the continuous improvement of the region as a unique and memorable tourism destination. For more information, visit pureludington.com, [Facebook.com/PureLudington](https://www.facebook.com/PureLudington) and twitter.com/@Pure_Ludington.

About USA TODAY 10Best Readers' Choice Awards

[USA TODAY 10Best Readers' Choice Awards](http://10best.usatoday.com) highlight the very best in travel, food + drink, and lifestyle. Every week, USA TODAY 10Best invites a panel of relevant industry experts to nominate their favorite points of interest and businesses across a wide range of categories. 10Best editors then vet these nominations and select a final set of nominees to be presented to the voting public. 10Best readers are allowed to vote once per day per award category for a period of four weeks. Winners are announced on 10best.usatoday.com and promoted across the USA TODAY Network and through Gannett Media partners.

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