

## Pantomime guide - East Anglia| Things to do

- 'Tis the season for camp slapstick comedy, bad jokes, well placed nods to current affairs, colourful sets, larger than life characters, lots of booing of baddies and the usual catchphrases. Pantomime is back! Oh yes it is! Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without one of the most popular traditions of the season, with pantos in East Anglia ranging from kid's shows about much-loved characters such as Aladdin, Snow White and Jack (of Beanstalk fame), to Robin Hood, to darker adult only shows featuring Jack the Ripper.



Here are a selection of shows available across East Anglia, perfect for a fun night out at panto, a form evolved from an Italian 16th century travelling show called Commedia dell'art. The shows grew popular in England in the 17th century and took on their native own characteristics.

**Cambridge** is a hot bed of panto, with a variety of well know stories to choose from. The renowned Cambridge Footlights will be performing [Robin Hood](#) at the ADC theatre from November 25 to December 5. Expect Robin, Maid Marian, the Sherriff of Nottingham, Freya Tuck and Will Scarlett, amongst others, to give you a laugh with a political bent. If you'd like some medical-based comedy instead, and something to look forward to in January, book up to see Cambridge Clinical School of Medicine annual charity pantomime. This year it's [The Wizard of Obs](#) at Addenbrooke's Hospital Biomedical Campus. Recent pantos have included *Peter Pancreas*, *Star Wards* and *Ward of the Rings*. Running from January 26-30, the show supports Addenbrooke's Charitable Trust and Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption. Warning, not suitable for children! [Jack and the Beanstalk](#) will be entertaining the crowds at Anglia Ruskin's Mumford Theatre from December 18-20 whilst [Snow White and Rose Red](#), performed by acclaimed theatre company RashDash, will be at The Junction December 8-31. There will be special performances for schools, sign language shows and 'relaxed performances', ideal for anyone on the autism spectrum, for example. Meanwhile, at the Cambridge Arts Theatre [Cinderella](#), dazzling Prince Charming from December 3 - January 17, has been produced by the team behind last year's successful Aladdin. For an alternative

to pantomime take the children to the fantastically successful Horrible Histories crew's [Horrible Christmas](#) show at The Cambridge Corn Exchange December 14 January 9.



Outside of Cambridge **Ely's** Maltings (December 22 - January 10) and **Huntingdon's** Commemoration Hall (December 11 - December 19) will be presenting productions of [Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs](#) both by KD productions. Panto fans in **Norwich** can enjoy productions at The Playhouse and Theatre Royal. Head to the Playhouse for an alternative pantomime story featuring a character with an altogether darker side, [Jack the Ripper](#). The extremely popular Jack the Ripper, not suitable for those under eighteen or those easily offended, has sold out performances around East Anglia since 2009. In contrast the Theatre Royal will be hosting the more traditional, and sweet natured, family pantomime [Snow White](#) December 15- January 17. For some festive seaside fun head to **Cromer** Pier for its eleventh annual [Christmas show](#) where you can expect an evening of laugh-out-loud comedy, dancing and lots festive glitz and colour November 28 - December 30. Last year's show received excellent reviews for what is becoming a firm Christmas favourite in the county. Rock and Roll fans in Suffolk will want to head to the New Wolsey Theatre in **Ipswich**, where a new production on [The Sword in the Stone](#) will be entertaining audiences from November 26 - January 30. Expect plenty of magic, sword play, slapstick and fantastic music to keep to the whole family enthralled. Following on from the huge success of Cinderella, Ipswich's Regent Theatre will be hosting [Aladdin](#) starring magician Paul Daniels and his wife Debbie McGee from December 19 - January 3. X Factor runner up Andy Abraham will also be on hand to provide musical entertainment along with a live band.



Alternatively spend an evening in the Suffolk town's Avenue Theatre enthralled 10 December-3 January by [The Tale of Mr Tod](#) an adaption of a Beatrix Potter story involving two villains, Mr Tod and Tommy Brock. Enjoy an evening of mystery, suspense and slapstick comedy from The Red Rose Chain Theatre Company. Bury St Edmunds' Theatre Royal will be presenting [Jack and the Beanstalk](#) November 27 January 10, with a special gala performance on December 13. If you'd prefer to be transported to a land of snow and magic you should head for The Quay Theatre in Sudbury which will be enchanting audiences with [The Snow Queen](#) from December 18 - January 3. In Hertfordshire **Stevenage's** Gordon Craig Theatre [Sleeping Beauty](#) will be charming audiences, starring Coronation Street's Wendi Peters, from November 27 - January 24. Beware if you are sitting in the front two rows as Dame Nellie Night Nurse will be looking for a man! Produced by the team behind last year's successful Aladdin production, expect to be thoroughly entertained. In the original form of panto as commedia del'art, performers would put on productions in market squares and fairgrounds using dance, music, acrobatics and farcical comedy to entertain the public. In England, a harlequin clown was added and became the star of every show and with it an iconic chase scene known as the 'harlequinade'. The traditional show we see today is inspired by the harlequin and the harlequinade. Read [more about the background here](#).

## ARTICLES

