

Need a winter lift?



Snow getaways for you and your family that won't break the bank

USA TODAY NETWORK

Let's face it – skiing is expensive. Never more so than now, with many big resorts charging north of \$200 a day for adult lift tickets. So, we wanted to find places across the United States where families could go for a day or a weekend without bankrupting their children's college funds. Our criteria: Adult passes under \$100 (more or less); a good mix of expert, intermediate and beginner terrain; available lodging either at the resort or nearby; and overall positive reviews. We picked 10 sites each in the Northeast, the Midwest and the West. The list is nowhere near exhaustive, but we hope it provides a starting point for you and your family as you plan your winter getaways.

NORTHEAST

YOUR BEST BETS FOR AFFORDABLE WINTER RESORTS IN THIS REGION



1

PROVIDED

Old Forge, New York

Old Forge in New York's Adirondack Mountains is a snowmobiler's heaven, with hundreds of miles of groomed trails and annual sled-centric festivals in December and March and a winter carnival in February. Skiers and snowboarders also can hit the slopes at the McCauley Mountain Ski Area. Inexpensive lodging is nearby. The mountain has 21 downhill trails, as well as several miles of cross-country trails. Adult lift tickets on weekends/holidays are \$40; teens (ages 13-19) and seniors (ages 60-69) are \$35; juniors (ages 6 to 12) are \$30. Patrons age 70 and older or 5 and younger are free. Rates are \$10 less on weekdays. mccauleyny.com

— Victoria Freile



LINDA LABAN

2



3

PROVIDED

Camelback Mountain, Pennsylvania

Located in the heart of the Pocono Mountains in northeastern Pennsylvania, Camelback Resort in Tannersville has 39 trails for downhill skiing and snowboarding and a 42-lane snow tubing park. The Pocono Mountains, about a 90-minute drive from New York City, offer a variety of lodging, both at the resort and in small towns throughout the region. There are numerous state parks nearby, which offer opportunities for winter hiking, ice fishing, ice skating and Nordic skiing. Lift tickets start at \$55 for ages 6 and older. Children 5 and younger receive a complimentary lift ticket with the purchase of an adult ticket. Tubing tickets start at \$40. Camelbackresort.com

— Victoria Freile

Cranmore Mountain, New Hampshire

Cranmore Mountain Resort in New Hampshire offers 56 trails for all abilities with a mix of novice, intermediate and advanced trails. The ski area includes three separate terrain parks. A snow tubing area also has a mountain coaster, zipline and giant swing. The ski area is a mile east of the village of North Conway, where inexpensive lodging is aplenty. More luxurious slope-side housing (both larger condos and smaller hotel-style rooms) is available at the resort. Adult and teen (ages 13-64) lift tickets start at \$89 on weekdays and \$99 on weekends. Children (6 to 12) and seniors (65 and older) start at \$69. Tubing tickets are \$45. Cranmore.com

— Victoria Freile



SNOW GETAWAYS **NORTHEAST**



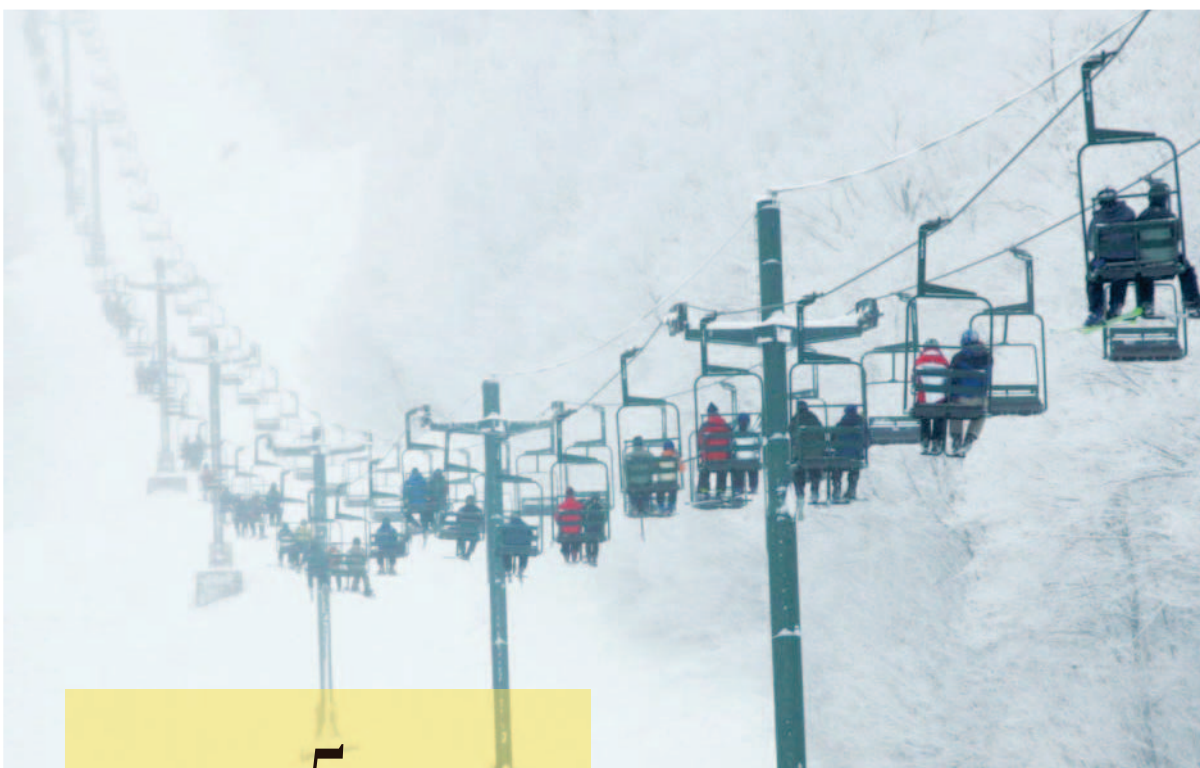
GUNSTOCK MOUNTAIN RESORT

4

Gunstock Mountain Resort in New Hampshire

Located in the heart of Central New Hampshire's Lake Region, Gunstock Mountain Resort has 49 Alpine trails and 30 groomed Nordic skiing trails and two terrain parks. The resort also offers eight lanes of snow tubing. Several affordable hotels are within a few miles and near Lake Winnepesaukee and Lake Winnisquam. Last season's weekend and holiday lift tickets cost \$99 for adults, \$75 for youths and seniors. Children 5 and younger and patrons 70 or older ski free. Check their website for the latest prices. gunstock.com

— Victoria Freile



ALDEN PELLETT/AP FILE

5

Smugglers' Notch Resort, Vermont

Smugglers' Notch Resort is an affordable treasure due to its sheer magnitude and variety of winter pastimes. Boasting three large mountains for skiing and snowboarding, Smugglers' Notch, known informally as "Smuggs," prides itself in having the fourth-largest vertical drop in New England. Additional seasonal ventures include ice skating, snowshoeing, tubing, a weekly winter carnival and countless family oriented activities. A year-round resort, Smugglers' Notch offers five of its own lodging options. Visitors have many other lodging options within a 30-minute drive. Adult (ages 19-64) full-day lift tickets start at \$89 during the regular season. Youth (6-18) and senior (65 & older) full-day tickets start at \$70. Youths (5 & younger) are free. Prices drop between \$25 to \$30 on April 1. smuggs.com

— Megan Stewart



6

Black Mountain of Maine

This nonprofit-run ski area is in northwestern Maine and has 31 Alpine trails, 17 glades and a terrain park. The mountain also has more than 20 miles of Nordic trails. Snow enthusiasts can ski, ride a fatbike or snowshoe in the picturesque area. Located in Rumford, Oxford County, in Maine, hotels are affordable. Lift tickets last season were a bargain at \$55 on weekends. Check the website for 2023-24 rates. skiblackmountain.org

— Victoria Freile

PROVIDED BY BLACK MOUNTAIN OF MAINE

NORTHEAST

YOUR BEST BETS FOR AFFORDABLE WINTER RESORTS IN THIS REGION



1

PROVIDED BY OTIS RIDGE

Otis Ridge, Massachusetts

If you or your family are beginners and simply seeking an easy casual ski experience for a low price, Otis Ridge is the place to visit. A smaller mountain with only a 400-foot drop, experienced skiers might be more interested in visiting a larger resort. After skiing, visitors can grab some refreshments and a quick bite to eat at the Grouse House, the resort's on-site restaurant. Although there are not as many nearby lodging options as other winter getaways on this list, there are still a decent amount within a 30-minute drive. Adult (ages 13-69), junior (7-12) and child (6 and below) day lift tickets start at \$55, \$50 and \$25 respectfully. Senior (70 and up) admission is free. Depending on age, tickets are cheaper in the afternoon and evening. [otisridge.com](https://www.otisridge.com)

— Megan Stewart



2

PROVIDED BY MIDDLEBURY SNOW BOWL

Middlebury Snow Bowl, Vermont

Owned by Middlebury College, the Middlebury Snow Bowl is one of Vermont's oldest ski areas and boasts 17 trails, 700+ acres and 200 inches of average annual snow. It is nestled in the Green Mountains, 20 minutes outside the town of Middlebury. There is also a plethora of lodging options within a 20-minute drive, from inexpensive motels and hotels to more luxurious inns and vacation rentals. Full-day adult (19-69), student (7-18) and Middlebury College alum lift tickets start at \$29 on weeknights and \$45 on weekdays. Preschool (6 and under), Middlebury College student and senior (70+) tickets are \$15 on weeknights and \$20 on weekdays. [middleburysnowbowl.com](https://www.middleburysnowbowl.com)

— Megan Stewart



PROVIDED BY MAGIC MOUNTAIN SKI AREA

3



Magic Mountain, Vermont

This 1960s-era resort is located in Southern Vermont on Glebe Mountain, a dead ringer for the Swiss Alps, according to Swiss founder Hans Thorer. With a 1,500-foot vertical drop, Magic Mountain markets itself as having laid back and nostalgic vibes, with virtually unchanged terrain since the '60s. It's also a popular place for tree-skiing. Additionally, there are plenty of affordable lodging options within a 15-minute drive, with the closest, The Upper Pass Lodge, less than 500 feet away from the resort. Adult (ages 18-69) lift tickets cost \$89 online and \$99 on site. Youth (6-17), senior (70+) and active military, police and firefighter tickets are \$79 online and \$89 on-site. [magicmtn.com](https://www.magicmtn.com)

— Megan Stewart



4

PROVIDED

Mohawk Mountain Ski Area, Connecticut

Connecticut's oldest and largest ski area, farm-owned Mohawk Mountain is the birthplace of man-made snow. Today, the slopes are composed of 100% man-made snow. Visitors have access to 26 trails and 112 skiable acres with a summit elevation of 1,600 feet. It's a popular destination for night skiers, as well. Snow tubing is also available at the resort. Although there are no on-site lodging options, there are plenty of bed and breakfasts, inns and vacation rentals within a 20-minute drive of the resort. Adult (ages 13-64), junior (5-12) and senior (65+) lift tickets start at \$42 on weekdays. Child (ages 0-4) and active military tickets start at \$20. [mohawkmtn.com](https://www.mohawkmtn.com)

— Megan Stewart



NATION'S CENTER IS A HAVEN OF AFFORDABLE WINTER FUN

MIDWEST



PROVIDED BY GRANITE PEAK SKI AREA

1

Granite Peak Ski Area, Wisconsin

Granite Peak Ski Area in the Central Wisconsin town of Rib Mountain features 60 trails spread out over more than 200 acres on the slopes of a 1.7 billion-year-old hunk of quartzite that looms above the surrounding landscape. During the regular season, adult lift tickets cost \$109. On holidays they are \$119. Looking to save? Lift fees are \$30 for night skiing from 5 to 9 p.m. You can cut costs by going early in the season, too. Lift tickets before Dec. 14 are \$85 for adults, and \$25 for nights. The ski hill often opens at least a few runs in late November. Visitors have plenty of choices when it comes to lodging in Rib Mountain and its larger neighbor Wausau. The cities offer a deep bench of winter activities within minutes of Granite Peak, including snow tubing, skating and Nordic skiing. Warm up with visits to Wausau's two art museums or downtown shopping and dining. Skigranitepeak.com

— Keith Uhlig



PROVIDED BY CASCADE MOUNTAIN

2

Cascade Mountain, Wisconsin

Located just off Interstate 90 about a half-hour drive north of Wisconsin's capital city of Madison, Cascade Mountain ski area offers 11 ski lifts and 48 trails for skiers and snowboarders. Adult lift tickets range from \$79 to \$95 and up to five children ages 5 and under can ski for free. Looking for a different kind of thrill? Try whooshing a 900-foot-long snow chute on a snow tube. Tubing fees range from \$15 to \$40. There are plenty of options for lodging in the nearby cities of Madison, Portage and Wisconsin Dells. The Dells is known as a summer getaway, but there are plenty of winter activities there, too, including indoor water parks. Cascademountain.com

— Keith Uhlig



PROVIDED BY AFTON ALPS VAIL RESORTS

3

Afton Alps, Minnesota

At nearly 300 acres, Afton Alps is the largest skiing and snowboarding resort in the Twin Cities area. Located in the St. Croix Valley east of St. Paul and Minneapolis, the Afton Alps terrain offers challenges for beginning to expert skiers and riders. Being within a 40-minute drive from Minneapolis gives visitors plenty of options for fun off the slope. The Twin Cities always have plenty of winter activities going on, including the St. Paul Winter Carnival, which begins Jan. 25. There are parades, scavenger hunts and more. Find details at wintercarnival.com. Lift tickets at Afton Alps range from \$59 to \$99 for adults, and can vary by date. Prices for seniors and young children are discounted. There's a wide variety of lodging options located within a half hour of the ski area. Aftonalps.com

— Keith Uhlig



MIDWEST

NATION'S CENTER IS A HAVEN OF AFFORDABLE WINTER FUN



1

PROVIDED BY THE HIGHLANDS AT HARBOR SPRINGS

Highlands at Harbor Springs/Boyne Highlands Resort, Michigan

At 435 acres, The Highlands at Harbor Springs, formerly known as the Boyne Highlands Resort, still ranks as the largest ski resort in Michigan. Its collection of 53 downhill runs ensures there are choices to welcome all skill levels, while also hosting the highest vertical drop in the region. Lift ticket prices start at \$52 and rise to \$90 for open-to-close ski lift access, depending on the day of the week, and on select winter evenings, from 5 to 9 p.m., a night ticket entry is available from \$25-\$50. Located within 30 miles of local hotel rooms in the towns of Petoskey, Mackinaw City, Bay Harbor, Walloon Lake and Charlevoix, the resort accommodations are topped off by the ivy-clad Main Lodge modeled after an English country estate, with more affordable options including condos with full kitchens and multi-bedroom townhouses. highlandsharbor-springs.com

— Susan Stapleton



2

PROVIDED BY CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN



3

PROVIDED BY SKI BRULE

Ski Brule, Michigan

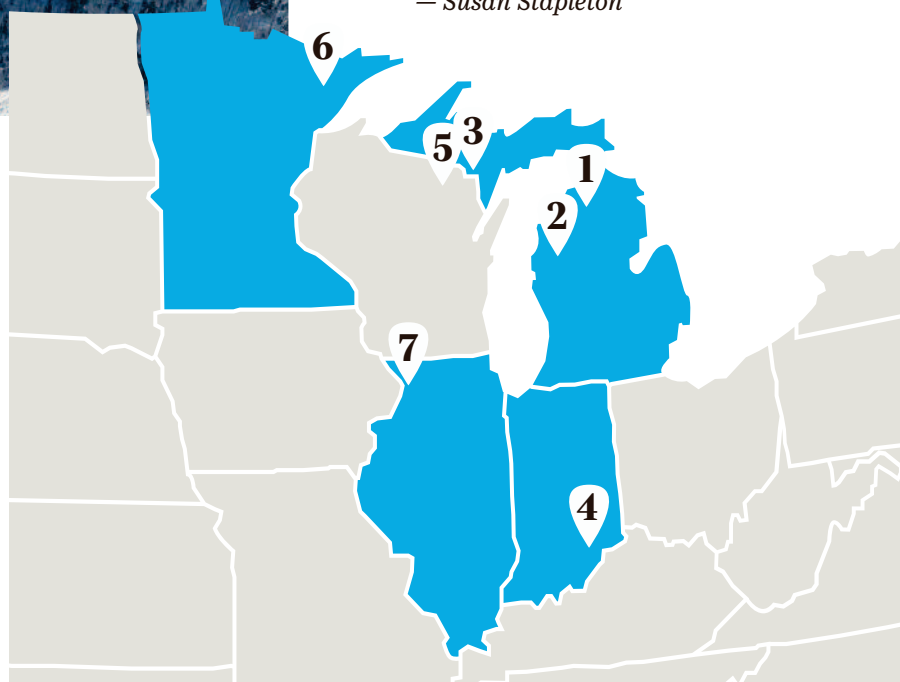
Located about 8 miles southwest of Iron River, Michigan, just north of the Wisconsin and Upper Peninsula border, Ski Brule offers some of the most economical downhill skiing in the Midwest. The ski resort has about 150 acres of terrain, and has 11 lifts and 17 trails, the longest of which are about a mile long. For the 2023-24 season, lift tickets are \$73. But skiers who plan ahead and order advanced lift tickets before Dec. 24 will pay \$58 per ticket. There's a variety of lodging options on resort property, and across the region. The resort also has about 15 kilometers of groomed cross-country ski trails, along with areas for snowshoeing and fat-tire winter biking. SkiBrule.com

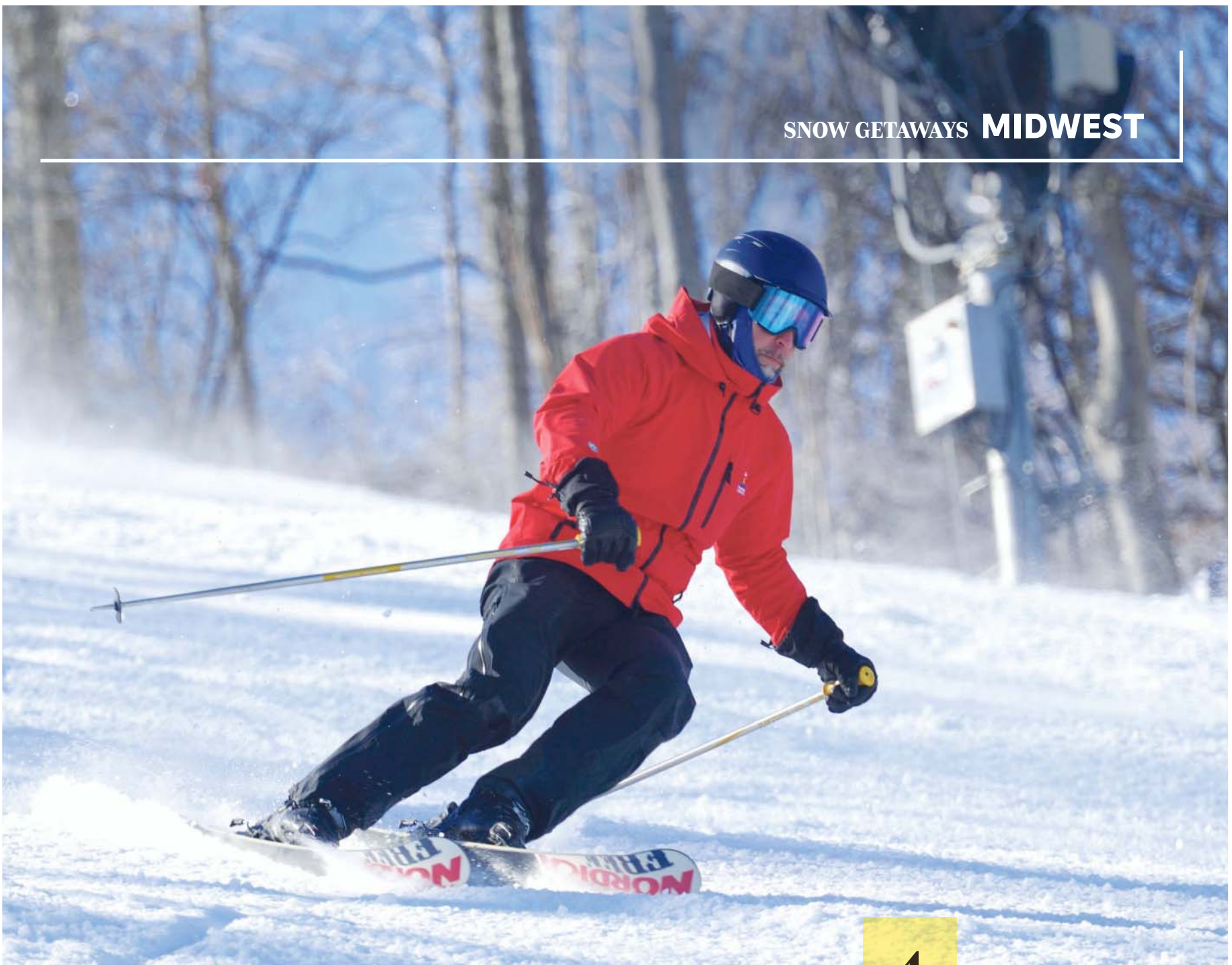
— Keith Uhlig

Crystal Mountain, Michigan

Billed as “northern Michigan’s premier family resort,” Crystal Mountain welcomes beginners, kids, seniors and also experienced outdoor enthusiasts looking to challenge themselves on the black diamond slopes that comprise 30% of the terrain. As many as 27 runs also are lit to encourage memorable night skiing sessions. Check the website for 2023-24 lift ticket prices. In previous years, a full-day pass hovered at about \$89 for adults. Accommodations range from stylish hotel rooms inside the resort’s Inn at the Mountain, to bedroom condos, cottages and a selection of townhomes that can sleep up to 14 guests. Apres-ski options include fine dining at the Scottish-themed Thistle restaurant, while the Mountain Market store stocks a plentiful supply of grocery favorites to conveniently fill your resort fridge. crystallmountain.com

— Susan Stapleton





SNOW GETAWAYS **MIDWEST**

PROVIDED BY PERFECT NORTH SLOPES

4

Perfect North Slopes, Indiana

A popular attraction since 1980, Southern Indiana's Perfect North Slopes is home to 23 trails across its 100 acres and favors intermediate skilled skiers, or above, with five runs suitable for the beginner. Lift tickets are priced at \$79, discounted to \$64 for children under 12, plus seniors age 60 or older, and military members. There is also a \$39 ticket option for visitors only planning to spend a fun-filled day on the snow tubing lanes. The Main Lodge serves a casual dining menu, but the resort does not offer its own overnight lodging. Familiar hotel chains are located within driving distance, and as close as six miles from the resort on Lawrenceburg's East Eads Parkway. perfectnorth.com

— Susan Stapleton



5

PROVIDED BY PINE MOUNTAIN

Pine Mountain, Michigan

Easily accessible from Ford Airport and U.S. 2, family friendly Pine Mountain Ski & Golf Resort operates 27 trails and slopes across its 160-acre footprint, large enough to also feature cross-country ski trails. While offering beginner-friendly runs, intermediate and expert skiers will find plenty of challenging trails, as well. Check the website for latest lift ticket prices. Last year lift prices have ranged from \$59-\$65 with free skiing promotions for young guests under age 8 and seniors age 75 and older. Resort rooms offer the convenience of ski-in/ski-out access, with budget accommodations lining U.S. 2 as it winds through the nearby city of Iron Mountain. The on-site Famers Restaurant and Sitzmark Bar are popular apres-ski options. pinemountainresort.com

— Susan Stapleton



PROVIDED BY LUTSEN MOUNTAINS

6

Lutsen Mountains, Minnesota

Located in the jagged terrain of Lake Superior's North Shore, Lutsen Mountains is about 95 miles northeast of Duluth, Minnesota. The trip to the north country is worth it for many, though, because the ski resort offers "a true mountain destination," said Jim Vick, general manager of the ski area. "Formed by volcanic and tectonic forces rather than glacial debris, the four mountains at Lutsen provide both vertical and variety to explore for days." Lift tickets for adults range from \$85 to \$119, with the lower prices offered early (Nov. 18 through Dec. 25) and late (April 13 through April 30) in the season. The resort offers a variety of lodging choices, and there are more available in the nearby towns of Lutsen and the larger Grand Marais. Lutsen.com

— Keith Uhlig

Chestnut Mountain, Illinois

Long a favored destination for intermediate skiers, while not forgetting the needs of beginner or advanced thrill-seekers, the Chestnut Mountain Resort is also home to The Far Side, a snowboarding terrain park designed with rails and sculpted features. Previous season's lift tickets were \$50 per day, with free ticket options for kids age 6 and under. Check the mountain's website for the latest prices. Non-skiers are encouraged to enjoy the atmosphere and views from the resort's slopeside rooms and a lodge equipped with an indoor pool, sauna and Jacuzzi. The town of Galena sits eight miles away and provides affordable accommodations, from well-known hotel brands to quaint bed and breakfast destinations. chestnutmtn.com

— Susan Stapleton

7



PROVIDED BY CHESTNUT MOUNTAIN RESORT

WEST

REGION OFFERS VARIETY OF BUDGET-FRIENDLY WINTER SPOTS



1

PROVIDED BY BRIAN HEAD RESORT

Brian Head Resort

Brian Head's laid-back, family-friendly vibe makes it a top pick for a stunningly beautiful ski vacation that won't break the bank. Located high in the Utah desert about three hours from Las Vegas, the slopes are some of the least-crowded in Utah, owing to the resort's remote nature. The relaxed atmosphere extends to apres ski, which centers around music, bonfires and festivals appropriate for the whole family. Lift tickets purchased in advance start at \$29 and kids 12 and under ski free all year long. Rentals are affordable, too, about \$25 for children and \$35-\$45 for adults. Families who make the trek can maximize their experience with side trips to nearby Bryce Canyon National Park or Zion National Park. brianhead.com

— Kate Franco



2

PROVIDED BY LEE CANYON

Lee Canyon

Lee Canyon is located at 8,600 feet in the scenic Spring Mountain National Recreation Area of Nevada. Boasting more than 300 days of sunshine a year, this ski area is on the smaller side with 445 acres of terrain (195 acres are lift-served, the other 250 acres offer hike-in opportunities). Other snow play options at Lee Canyon are limited to snowshoeing at nearby McWilliams Campground, but the proximity to downtown Las Vegas (about an hour drive) means entertainment and family-friendly lodging options abound. Lift ticket pricing varies, but planning ahead can pay off as those who purchase in the pre-season can buy daily passes for as low as \$19 per day for non-holiday mid-weekdays. leecanyonlv.com

— Kate Franco



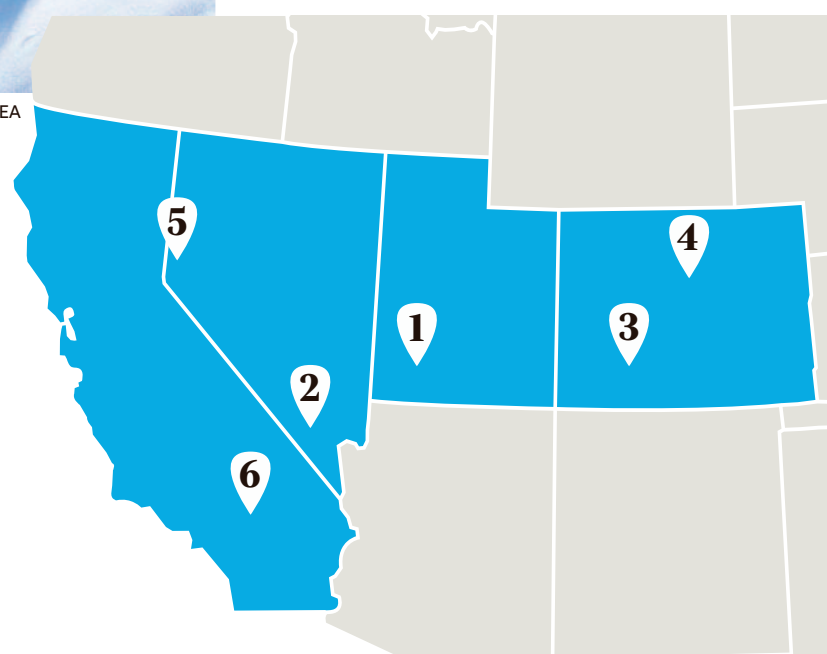
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PROVIDED BY WOLF CREEK SKI AREA

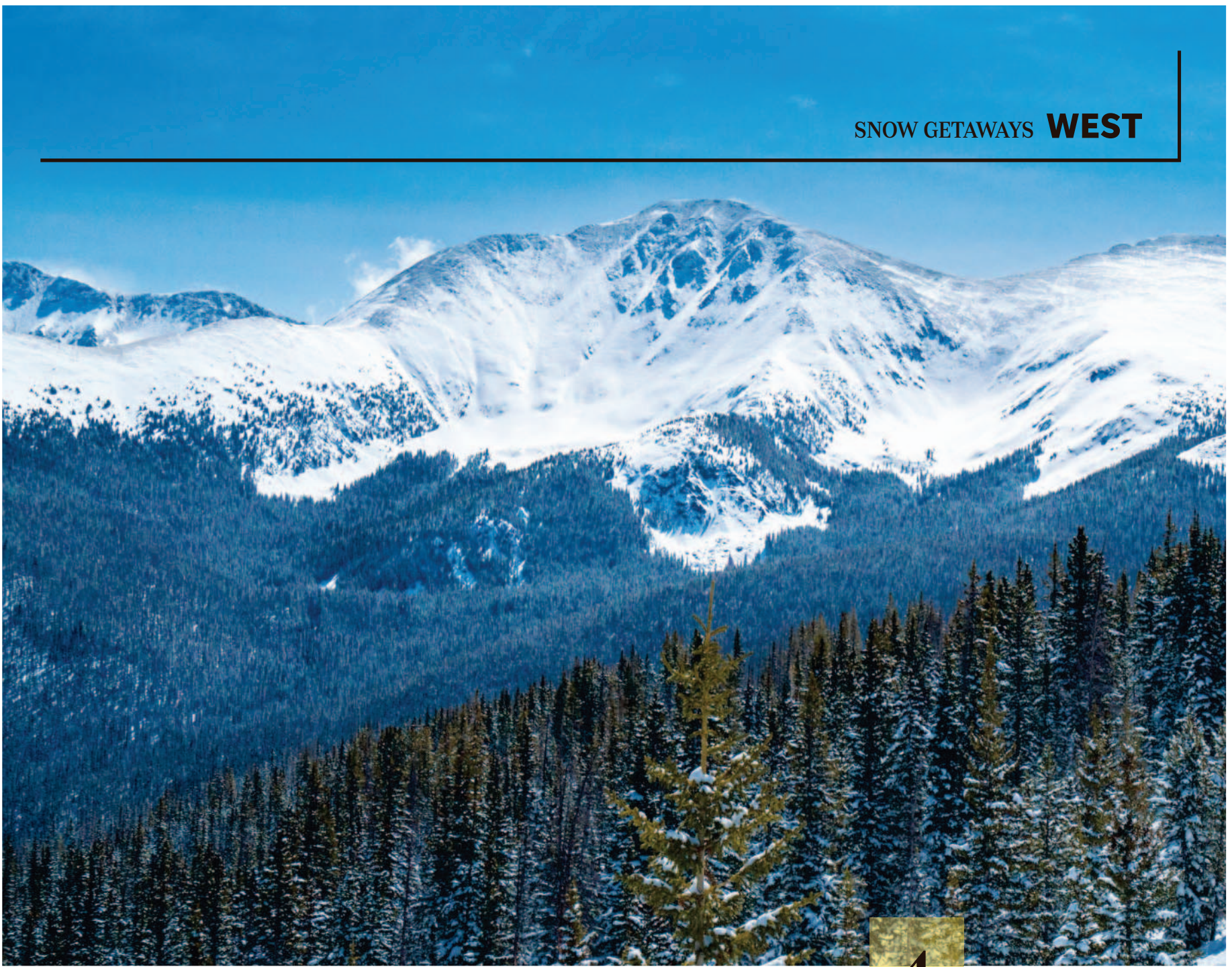
Wolf Creek Ski Area

Wolf Creek Ski Area boasts the most annual snowfall in Colorado and offers plenty of terrain for every level of skier at affordable prices. The ski area is located 23 miles east of Pagosa Springs, which offers a variety of inexpensive lodging and, like its name suggests, steaming hot springs to relax the whole family after a chilly day on the slopes. On the other side of Wolf Creek Pass are even cheaper lodging options in South Fork, but alas, no hot springs. Adult (ages 13-64) lift tickets start at \$85 and \$95 during peak periods. Children (6-12) start at \$42. Seniors passes start at \$54. wolfcreekski.com

— Ray Rivera



SNOW GETAWAYS **WEST**



PROVIDED BY WINTER PARK RESORT

4

Winter Park Resort

If the Colorado Rockies are calling your family, Winter Park Resort is a great value with varied terrain, a family-friendly vibe (you'll hear many locals say this is where they learned to ski) and good proximity to Denver. You can be on the slopes in less than a two-hour drive from the airport, or take the Winter Park Express train that departs from Denver Union Station. Winter Park offers a variety of condo rentals, which means families can eat in rather than break the bank by going out. Flex lift tickets are priced from \$89 per day, and once activated, you can ski or ride Winter Park Resort for two to four consecutive days of your choosing without locking in dates at time of purchase. winterparkresort.com

— Kate Franco



JASON BEAN/RGJ

5

Mt. Rose

Perched high above Lake Tahoe, Mt. Rose boasts the highest base elevation of any Tahoe-area resort at 8,260 feet and plentiful Sierra snow that means the ski season usually extends well into spring. But its spectacular views of Lake Tahoe, combined with its proximity to Reno's more economical lodging and food options (only 22 miles to downtown), make it an easy choice for families looking to get into the snow. Mt. Rose caters to skiers of all skill levels with 1,200 acres of terrain and 1,800 vertical feet: The Chutes is for the experts who can handle 1,000 feet of north-facing slopes with pitches topping off at 55 degrees; the rest of the hill is great for those with beginner or intermediate skills. Pricing is dynamic, but mid-week deals plus affordable lodging in Reno will keep the tab down. skirose.com

— Kate Franco

Big Bear Mountain Resort

If variety is what you are looking for in a family vacation — snowboarders and skiers of various skill levels — then Southern California's Big Bear Mountain Resort is the ticket. Boasting three mountains — Snow Valley, Snow Summit and Bear Mountain — the resort is over 640 acres with 38 lifts and upward of 87 runs combined. If terrain parks are key to your crew's happiness, Bear Mountain mainly caters to a young, snowboarding crowd. Snow Summit is popular with families, especially those with a mix of skiers and riders. Even non-skiers can get into the snow at Snow Summit's Grizzly Ridge Tube Park. Check the resort's website for 2023-24 lift ticket prices. Last year, adult full-day tickets ranged from \$64 to \$75 when purchased online. Tickets are most affordable mid-week and in the early and late season. bigbearmountainresort.com

— Kate Franco

6



PROVIDED BY BIG BEAR MOUNTAIN RESORT

WEST

REGION OFFERS VARIETY OF BUDGET-FRIENDLY WINTER SPOTS



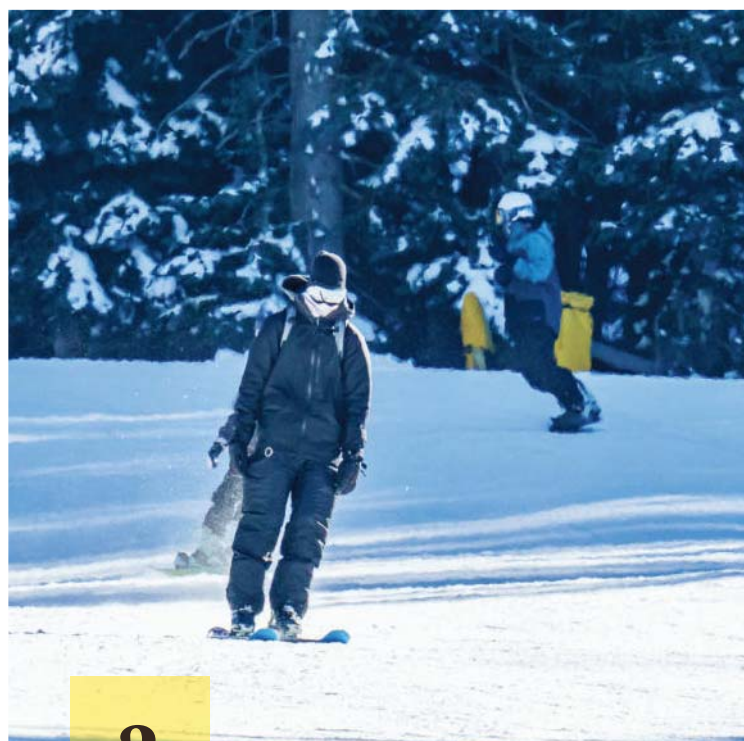
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PROVIDED BY SUNRISE PARK RESORT

Sunrise Park Resort

A 220-mile trek east of Phoenix through the back roads of the Arizona desert might not be likely to lead to a snowy mountain, but when ski season comes, the Fort Apache Reservation delivers. Sunrise Park Resort in the White Mountains is a hidden gem for cold weather thrill-seekers in the West, boasting 67 trails along 1,200 skiable acres and an average snowfall of 250 inches per season — enough to make it competitive with neighboring states like Utah, Colorado and New Mexico (whose state line is about 40 miles from the resort). Day passes cost \$70 per person in the 2022-23 season; pricing for 2023-24 will be available soon. Most available hotels near Sunrise Park are in Greer, about 20 miles away; and Springerville, about 27 miles away. Book early if you plan to go, especially on a weekend. sunrise.ski

— Michael Salerno



2

KYLE SAWATZKE/SPECIAL TO THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Arizona Snowbowl

Arizona Snowbowl lies on Arizona's highest peak, located on the western slope of Mount Humphreys in the San Francisco Peaks north of Flagstaff. It's just under three hours from metro Phoenix, and the Grand Canyon is about 80 miles northwest. Snowbowl boasts more than 700 acres for skiing and snowboarding, a 2,300-foot vertical drop and the Southwest's largest beginner course. Lift tickets are priced based on demand, as low as \$19 per adult. The cost and demand are highest on weekends from late December to February, with lift tickets just under or just over \$100 per adult. Ski and snowboard equipment rentals cost extra and the price also varies based on demand. Children 12 and under and seniors 75 and over can ski free. Cabins close to Arizona Snowbowl are available at the Basecamp at Snowbowl, about 7 miles away, but most lodging is in nearby Flagstaff, a 15-mile drive from the resort. snowbowl.ski

— Michael Salerno

3

Purgatory Resort

"Fun as Hell," reads the website for this Durango, Colorado, resort named for Purgatory Mountain along the San Juan Mountains where the resort lies. The resort averages 260 inches of snow a year and features more than 1,600 acres of terrain suitable for skiing. Lift tickets are priced to demand, averaging from \$29 to \$49 per adult, but a handful of late November and April dates offer \$9 tickets. Other popular activities at Purgatory include mountain biking, snowshoe tours and snowmobile rides, while the Durango Hot Springs Spa offers rejuvenating treatments to relax the body after a day of skiing. Purgatory Resort has vacation rentals on-site for the ski season from studios to 3-bedroom units, starting around \$227 per night. But more affordable lodging can be found driving U.S. 550 in Durango, located 26 miles from the resort. Purgatory.ski

— Michael Salerno



PAUL CATALA

4

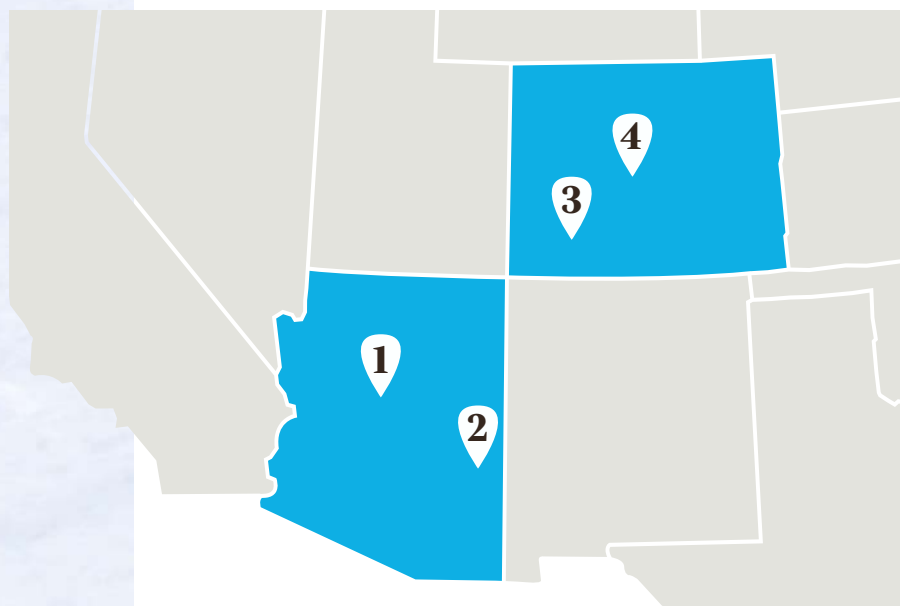
Monarch Mountain

About 20 miles west of Salida, Colorado, and 128 miles west of Colorado Springs, Monarch Mountain is one of Colorado's oldest ski areas. It opened as a resort in 1939 and was built by Works Progress Administration workers during the Great Depression. Monarch Mountain is also one of the snowiest ski areas in the state — its website lists an average of 350 inches annually — allowing for ample uphill and downhill ski adventures for skiers of every level, from beginners to highly skilled experts who can brave the "extreme" backcountry trails. The resort also features a snow tubing park for sliding down the slopes in a tube. Monarch Mountain has one hotel, Monarch Mountain Lodge, but plenty of affordable lodging can be found in Salida. skimonarch.com

— Michael Salerno



PROVIDED BY MONARCH MOUNTAIN



The *best* ski boots of 2023



Rebecca Boniface Reviewed.com

It's tough to have a great time skiing when your feet are uncomfortable. Whether you're a casual skier or a regular on the slopes, having your own ski boots guarantees your feet will be comfortable each and every time you pop them on. Unlike the uncertainty of rentals, owning your own gear helps increase your skill and your comfort when doing any sport. Ideally, buying the same brand and manufacturer that you've rented in the past ensures a great fit. But if that's not possible, the next best option is to shop our recommendations. • To help choose your boots, you need to know your shoe size as well as the flex you've used in the past. Flex refers to the amount of movement the boot can accommodate: the newer the skier, the lower the flex. There isn't an industry standard for flex, so using different brands of boots will give you a better idea of what flex works for you. In addition to flex, your boots must be compatible with your bindings. • To help you find the right pair, we dug through thousands of reviews for a variety of ski boots available online. Based on our research, these are the best ski boots you can get right now.

Prices were accurate at the time this article was published but may change over time.

Tecnica Mach Sport HV 80

A warm, wide, and easy-to-customize boot with a flex for beginner skiers, the Tecnica Mach Sport 80 HV is an excellent beginner boot. As one reviewer noted, the boots are a comfortable fit and warm — everything a new skier wants. With such a soft flex, a slightly stiffer boot might serve over a longer period of time if you graduate to more challenging skiing. Otherwise, if you're looking to move from rental gear to your own boots, the Tecnica Mach is easy for your bootfitter to customize, and sets you up for a comfortable time. \$349.95 at Evo.com

Pros

2-year warranty
Easy entry and exit
Comfort liner

Cons

Generous fit
Soft flex



Salomon X Access 70 Wide

As a popular ski brand, Salomon is well recognized for their ski footwear. The Salomon X Access offers great value to beginner and intermediate skiers with a comfortable, warm boot. Reviewers noted the flex was appropriate for blue and smooth black runs, with several users commenting on comfort. One shopper noticed there were only two settings for the calf strap, so calves wider than 20 inches might have issues with fit. At 1.65 kg, the boots are on the lighter side. Given the price, several reviewers said only a couple of trips would make the boots worth the money saved on rentals. \$299.95 at Amazon

Pros

1-year warranty
Flex for intermediate skiers
Great value

Cons

No walk mode
Only 2 calf settings

Fischer RC4 The Curv GT 130 Vacuum Walk

If you've ever wanted a tailored boot created for you, the Curv from Fischer is probably the closest you'll ever get in a ski boot. The boot board, belt, tongue, and liner are all customizable in this boot designed for aggressive skiing. With a stiffness of 130, these are intended for expert skiers looking to hit their next personal best. Reviewers were impressed with the excellent performance here. \$240 at Amazon

Pros

Professional quality
Line includes range of widths
Highly customizable

Cons

None that we could find
Heavier boot



Rossignol Evo 70

As a beginner to intermediate skier, you're looking for comfort first. After all, skiing should be a fun sport rather than an uncomfortable slog. The Rossignol Evo 70 Ski Boot keeps your time on the slopes comfortable — so you can build your skill — by offering a slightly stiffer boot that doesn't pinch your feet. Reviewers noticed the boot was surprisingly light, and deemed it a great value. A couple of reviewers commented on the range of sizes the boots fit, including skiers with larger calves and larger foot sizes. The boots are also available in two colors. \$219.95 at Amazon

Pros

Extra comfortable
Lightweight
Great value

Cons

Beginner- and intermediate-friendly



Rossignol Pure Comfort 60

For casual skiers prioritizing comfort and value, the Rossignol Pure Comfort 60 Ski Boots are exactly what you're looking for. A reasonably light boot with a liner that can be customized for fit at home, the Pure Comfort lives up to its name. Reviewers have described being able to wear the boots all day, with no pain in their feet. The toe box has a bit more room than other boots, as well, adding to the comfort and warmth. While reviewers noted they skied a bit less aggressively with this boot, the trade-off in comfort was worth it. \$269.95 at Amazon

Pros

Extra comfortable
Great value
Customizable

Cons

Beginner- and intermediate-friendly



Things you need to make the most out of a ski trip

Valerie Li Stack Reviewed.com

Skiing can be expensive — but it's for a good reason. Investing in the best supplies and gear will make your time on the slopes safer and more comfortable. But whether you're traveling far for some fresh, powdery snow or taking a weekend trip to a nearby ski resort by car, it can be difficult to make sure you've considered all the skiing costs and necessities. While we've talked about what to wear on the slopes, there are other things you might not even realize you need. • As a person who skis on the icy northeast slopes with their varied — sometimes extreme — weather conditions, I've experienced many regrettably dramatic moments on the slopes, which could have been prevented by proper packing and preparation. Based on these experiences, here's my advice about what to pack to make your next ski trip smooth, pleasant, and anxiety-free.

A pair (or pairs) of toe and hand warmers in case of frigid weather

Cold weather usually doesn't stop skiing from being enjoyable — except when the temperature drops to single digits. There was a time I desperately needed toe warmers because it was freezing outside, but the base lodges were completely sold out. And if you have cold feet or hands, you should always prepare yourself with some toe and hand warmers regardless of the weather conditions.

A pro tip I learned from a stranger I met while skiing: Put your toe warmers on top of your socks instead of the bottom as instructed. This will give the pads greater exposure to oxygen, allowing them to work more effectively.

HeatMax Toasti Toes Foot Warmers, 40-pair on Amazon for \$29.74

HotHands Hand Warmers, 72-pair on Amazon for \$29.98

Some glove and sock liners to keep you sweat-free

Although we can probably all agree that there are too many ski garments to keep track of, liners are so crucial for maximizing comfort and warmth while skiing. As someone who is guilty of skipping liners for convenience, I've found them extremely helpful on cold days — they can keep my hands and feet dry throughout the day. When I ski without liners, I can sometimes feel my hands drenched in sweat, which is unpleasant when evaporation takes the heat away.

Before you purchase a pair, make sure the liners are thin enough so you can comfortably wear mittens over them. The same goes for sock liners — you want to fit them with your ski boots on.

Terramar Thermasilk Glove Liners on Amazon for \$17.04

Terramar Thermasilk Sock Liners on Amazon for \$16.74



A portable cooktop that helps you grill and sauté with ease

Regardless of how much we adore our favorite multicooker, it has its own limitations. This sleek-looking, portable induction hot plate can grill meats, flip pancakes, fry eggs and sauté vegetables, which gives you some more versatility beyond the Instant Pot. The hot plate base comes with fitted pans and accessories for different cooking tasks. Its compact size makes it ideal for travelers to bring on the road without taking up too much space in the car.

A4Box for \$249



An Instant Pot that can cook for an entire family

Food is one of the biggest costs on a ski trip when traveling with a family. If your rental has a kitchen, chances are it's not fully equipped to make cooking easy. With an Instant Pot, or one of the other best multicookers we've tested, you can cook breakfast, lunch and dinner in one device without worrying about needing other kitchen tools. If you're not sure what to make, Instant Pot recipes with five or fewer ingredients can help you come up with a menu.

Instant Pot Ultra, 6-qt on Amazon for \$109



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Some shin pads for the ones with new boots

Getting a new pair of ski boots is always exciting, as the newer models are equipped with advanced technology to improve performance. Unlike breaking in a pair of new shoes that sometimes results in minor annoyance, trying to break in new ski boots can be agonizing to watch.

Though the best suggestion is to go see a boot specialist, not all ski resorts have professionals on site to look after skiers in pain. In situations like this, shin pads can, in the short-term, alleviate the pain so you won't waste an expensive lift ticket. If you have old boots and they fit perfectly, there's still a chance you may need shin pads because of swollen legs from traveling.

Calf Support Shin Protectors, 2-pack, on Amazon for \$17.99

Some winter car necessities in case of a storm

This is not strictly ski-related, but no matter which means of transportation you're taking, it's likely you'll be behind the wheel at some point. Oftentimes, snowstorms can be unpredictable, so you may want to bring a snow brush, scraper and other winter gear so that you can get your car up and running after it's covered in snow and ice. In the past, I've had our car buried in snow and frozen in ice. Both were no fun — but thanks to these tools, we were able to get out of these situations relatively quickly and safely.

Get the Subzero Snow Brush and Scraper on Amazon for \$8.29

Some reusable sandwich bags for on-the-go snacks

Whether you're packing snacks for short stops or you're bringing sandwiches for lunch on the slopes, using reusable bags can reduce waste and help save the environment. These sandwich bags from Lunchskins are the best ones we've tested — they're easy to use and can hold up over time. They're also dishwasher-safe and quick-drying, which is ideal for ski trips when you don't have a lot of time.

Lunchskins 2-piece Reusable Sandwich Bags on Amazon for \$10.99

A bathing suit for après ski relaxation

I think I need to tattoo "bring bathing suits" on my forehead based on how often I manage to forget them when I go on ski trips. As many accommodation options — from budget-friendly lodges to luxury chalets — have some form of a fitness center that may include a pool or sauna, you should bring a bathing suit so you can reward your exhausted body after a strenuous day on the mountain.

Men's Quick Dry Bathing Suits on Amazon for \$18.99

Women's One Piece Swimsuits on Amazon for \$25.98

A pair of pole tips to protect your stuff

As the tips of ski poles are made of sharp metal that can dig into the snow easily, they can pose some danger to the other garment and gear that you pack with them. Putting a pair of rubber tips on ski poles can greatly reduce the chances of the sharp tips piercing your expensive snow gear.

TrailBuddy 6-piece Rubber Pole Tips on Amazon for \$6.75