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**FACT SHEET**

**EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WINTER IN WISCONSIN**

**Snapshot**

* Wisconsin outdoor adventure doesn’t stop when the temperature drops; offering an array of snowsports, experiences and events.
* The state offers a less well-known (and more affordable) wintry playground that can compete with other more popular snowy destinations.
* Wisconsin’s geography makes it easy to explore both natural and urban landscapes during the winter.
* Wisconsin winter events and festivals are unique, welcoming – and occasionally a little bit weird.

**Extreme Wisconsin Winter**

*It gets cold up here – but you’ll have no trouble staying warm as you enjoy these high-adrenalin winter activities.*

* [**Fat Tire Biking**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/things-to-do/outdoor-fun/winter-activities/winter-fat-tire-biking) – Mountain biking is a 365-day-a-year pursuit in Wisconsin – thanks to fat tire biking. Fat bikes have extra-wide rims with low-pressure tires making it possible to cruise on soft terrain like snow. Just east of Madison, **Dane Co CamRock Trail** delivers 150 feet of elevation and single-track trails of challenging terrain. **WinMan Trails**, located at the North Lakeland Discovery Center, offers 1,300 acres of fat biking-ready frozen turf.
* [**Skijoring**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/article/skijoring/skijoring-in-wisconsin) – The Nordic sport of dog skijoring (a blend of cross-country skiing and dogsledding) lives on in Wisconsin. The **Justin Trails Nordic Center** provides lessons for those wanting a crash course, as well as a special dog loop for skijoring with your furry friend.
* [**Snowmobiling**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/article/snowmobiling/wisconsins-top-6-snowmobiling-spots) – For those who like to add a little speed to their winter recreation, Wisconsin’s 25,000 miles of trails won’t disappoint. **Eagle River** is known as the Snowmobile Capital of the World, and with good reason: it hosts the [World Championship Snowmobile Derby](https://eagleriver.org/events/world-championship-derby/) every January and is home to the [International Snowmobile Hall of Fame](https://www.ishof.com/). Eagle River also offers a 500-mile groomed network of trails that take riders through a beautiful Wisconsin Northwoods landscape.

**Ultimate Family Friendly Winter Activities**

*Traveling with kids? Check out these Wisconsin activities that will keep everyone happy and entertained on your family winter vacation.*

* [**Downhill Skiing & Snowboarding**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/things-to-do/outdoor-fun/winter-activities/downhill-skiing/snowboarding) – Wisconsin boasts the third-most ski and snowboard resorts in the U.S. You’ll find an endless variety of runs for every experience level, making the state perfect for a family snowsports-centric escape. **Cascade Mountain** in the Portage offers four terrain parks and 10 quick and easy lifts, including the high-speed Mountain Top Express. **Granite Park Ski Area** at Rib Mountain State Park is a favorite among snowboarders, with groomed runs that seasoned shredders love.
* [**Snow Tubing**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/things-to-do/outdoor-fun/winter-activities/snow-tubing) – A great activity for the whole family, snow tubing is easy – and a whole lot of fun. **The Rock Snowpark** in Franklin – the world’s largest tubing park – features 20 lanes of tubing and a conveyor belt that makes it super easy to get back to the top for another run. Meanwhile, **Cascade Mountain** in Portage offers up a 900' chute to glide down on a tube.
* [**Edgewater Ice Rink**](https://www.theedgewater.com/the-ice-rink/) – Right in the heart of Madison, The Edgewater offers a prime ice-skating spot along the shores of Lake Mendota. This 4000-square-foot ice rink also sits in the shadow of the State Capitol, so the views you have no matter which way you spin are extraordinary.
* [**Snow Trains**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/article/tours/all-aboard-wisconsin-snow-trains)– Wisconsin is home to various snow trains, all with their unique and exemplary twists. The Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad in Trego will take you through the winter wonderland of Washburn County (and feed you a delicious dinner, too!). For a romantic wintry ride, snuggle in a cozy cabin of the Mid-Continent Railway’s Snow Train, heated by the train’s traditional stoves.

**Wisconsin Winter Escapes**

*Discover the pristine natural beauty of the Badger State during the winter.*

* [**Winter Cabins**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/article/cabins-cottages/6-romantic-cabins-for-a-warm-wisconsin-winter)– Wisconsin’s cozy cabins offer the chance to escape the everyday, slow the pace of life and enjoy everything that makes the season so special, in a place where getting snowed in is…well, exactly what you want to happen. Cabins here blend rustic with luxury, offering hot tubs, wood-burning fireplaces.
* [**Cross-Country Skiing**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/things-to-do/outdoor-fun/winter-activities/cross-country-skiing/snowshoeing) – For mellower but no less satisfying winter activity, try cross-country skiing in Wisconsin. The 45 miles of groomed trails at **Winter Park** in Minocqua brings upwards of 10,000 cross-country enthusiasts out every season to explore 6,500-acres of pristine wilderness.
* [**Snowshoeing**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/article/cross-country-skiing-snowshoeing/article/cross-country-skiing/snowshoeing/six-great-places-to-snowshoe-wisconsin)– A great workout that anyone can do, snowshoeing is perfect for those looking to explore in the quiet and solitude of the winter season. Hit the trails at **Nine Mile Forest** in Wausau for a heavily wooded blend of snowy, scenic views. Just south of Green Bay, discover **High Cliff State Park**, where seven trails lead to spectacular views.
* [**Ice Fishing**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/things-to-do/outdoor-fun/winter-activities/ice-fishing) – A time-honored winter tradition, the ice fishing in Wisconsin can’t be beat. **Lake Winnebago**, the largest inland lake in Wisconsin, is home to species like walleye, perch, white bass and sturgeon. The lake sturgeon population here is rated as one of the finest in the country.
* [**Ice Caves**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/natural-attractions-and-parks/lake-superior-ice-caves-200124) – Thunderous waves crash into the shore every summer along Lake Superior, but winter weather conjures stillness and awe-inspiring ice caves. Accessible only when Lake Superior is frozen to form a bridge from land to caves, these Wisconsin ice caves look like the work of a snow queen. Thousands of gigantic icicles jut down from rock ceilings, and frozen glass floors reveal the lake below. Additionally, more than 135,000 people visit the Apostle Island National Lakeshore’s majestic ice caves every year. The cold won’t take your breath away if you’re bundled up, but Mother Nature’s artistry will.

**Holiday Events & Festivals**

*The holiday season in Wisconsin takes on a merry glow during an array of festive events all over the state.*

* [**Christkindl Festival**](http://www.blackrivercountry.net/) (December) – This Black River Falls event offers a live reindeer exhibit, traditional wares, unique and hand-crafted gifts, and performances by bell ringers, dancers, theatre groups and local musicians.
* [**God Jul: A Stockholm Swedish Christmas**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/events/fairs-festivals/god-jul-a-holiday-celebration-161623) (December) – Step back in time (and into another country) and wander the charming streets of small-town Stockholm. You’ll experience an old-fashioned holiday featuring Santa, sleigh rides, shopping, plenty of Christmas cookies, and live performances of It’s a Wonderful Life.
* [**Holiday Lights Festival**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/events/fairs-festivals/milwaukee-holiday-lights-festival-42581) (December) – Milwaukee’s downtown boosts the holiday spirit with colored lights and animated displays, among other jolly celebrations.
* [**Christmas in the Ward**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/events/fairs-festivals/christmas-in-the-ward-41534) (December) – Spend the holidays in Milwaukee’s Historic Third Ward. Hop in a horse-drawn carriage and get all of your holiday shopping done in these locally owned shops. You’ll find unique gifts at great prices! The Milwaukee Police Band, Mrs. Claus and her live reindeer, Santa at Jolly’s Outdoor Gingerbread House and fireworks are just a few of the holiday happenings.

**Off-Beat Winter Celebrations**

*The cure for cabin fever is to get a little weird! These only-in-Wisconsin winter events showcase the creative and whimsical spirit of the state’s residents.*

* [**Big Sartori Cheese Drop**](https://www.plymoutharts.org/Event.php?s=big-sartori-cheese-dropnew-years-eve-party-12-31-2018) – Never mind NYC’s ball drop. Ring in the new year in Wisconsin with this cheese-tastic event in Plymouth. At 10pm on New Year’s Eve, a gigantic wedge of Sartori cheese will be dropped during an extremely fun and family friendly festival, with music, bonfires and more.
* [**New Year’s Eve Under Glass**](https://milwaukeedomes.org/new-years-eve)(December) –Warm and wonderful domes in Milwaukee's Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory provide the perfect setting for a family friendly New Year’s Eve extravaganza. The Domes themselves are truly a wonder; add in live music, magic, raffles, food, a balloon drop and a light show, and you’ve got yourself a perfect New Year’s Eve.
* [**Lake Superior Ice Festival**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/events/fairs-festivals/lake-superior-ice-festival-114510) (January) – Taking place at the end of January, the Lake Superior Ice Festival is the perfect event for the whole family. It includes a kids' zone complete with snow slide and Ice Princesses to entertain the young ones! Watch the ice sculptors and get your picture on the ice throne or watch the pond hockey classic. Looking for something less active? Browse the many art and craft booths or warm up by the bonfire and toast a s'more.
* [**U.S. Snow Sculpting Championship & Winterfest**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/events/fairs-festivals/winterfest-u-s-national-snow-sculpting-competition-40077) (January-February) – With a full roster of events spanning nine days, Lake Geneva’s Winterfest includes a winter carnival, snow race and chili cook-off. The main event is the ever-popular snow sculpting competition featuring 15 teams from all across the U.S. vying to be champion.
* [**Fish Creek Winter Festival**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/events/fairs-festivals/fish-creeks-winter-festival-40070)(January-February) – Candlelight skiing, ice bowling— and a costumed extravaganza known as the Fruit Loop Run highlight this annual event. Don’t miss the Stumpf Fiddle Contest and dazzling fireworks show, either. Fun and games include minnow racing, chocolate sampling, and free trolley rides to the cherry pit spitting contest at Orchard Country Winery & Market.
* [**Hudson Hot Air Affair**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/events/fairs-festivals/hot-air-affair-39172)(February) –Hot air balloons – in the middle of winter? The Hudson Hot Air Affair features all kind of action – balloonists shooting bursts of fire into the night, kazoo marching bands, fireworks over the river – and spectacular sunrise balloon launches, all making for some very Instagrammable photo ops.
* [**Minocqua Ice Cold Beer Festival**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/events/fairs-festivals/ice-cold-beer-fest-113506)(February) –A Wisconsin Brewers Guild-sponsored annual festival, this beer fest is held on an island in frozen Lake Minocqua under a heated big-top tent. Brewers from Wisconsin and its neighboring Midwestern states offer over 250 different beers.
* [**Slumberland American Birkebeiner**](https://www.birkie.com/ski/events/birkie/) (February) – North America’s largest cross-country ski race is a homecoming for cross-country ski racers from around the globe. Skiers from 49 States and 22 countries participated in 2019.
* [**WinterFEST**](https://www.travelwisconsin.com/events/fairs-festivals/bayfield-winter-festival-41100)(March) – With skiing, tubing, plunging into the frozen lake and much more, Bayfield (which gets more than 100 inches of snowfall annually) knows how to do winter festivals right. Locals celebrate the season with a whole weekend devoted to winter’s chill. And if you really want to fit in? You might want to check out the whitefish liver eating contest—a “famous, local tradition.”