

# DEPARTURES

— Travel —

## The Perfect US Winter Escape for Every Travel Palette



Barbara Kraft/Courtesy Montage Deer Valley

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From the outdoor adventure crowd to the snowboarders to the winter wellness enthusiasts, these are the best cold-weather vacations to book this year.

By Maya Kachroo-Levine on November 25, 2020

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Cold-weather vacations in the U.S. really can suit every travel palette—even the palette that wants nothing to do with winter activities. Because as the snow falls, from New England to Oregon, destinations transform into romantic hideaways, wellness centers with [inviting al fresco hot tubs](#), and of course, skiing and snowboarding enclaves. And so, in the spirit of guiding your winter travels to the best cold-weather destinations in the U.S., we found a few spots for every kind of traveler. Whether you're an adrenaline junkie, a traveler scouting the latest luxury trends, or a yogi who's partial to a wellness retreat to soothe their too-cold muscles, here is the Departures' guide to winter in the U.S.

## Après-Ski and Luxury Offerings

### Aspen, Colorado



*Courtesy Hotel Jerome*

We've said it before and we'll say it again: Aspen is where luxury happens in the winter. This season, you can catch the [Giorgio Armani pop-up shop](#) and the newly opened [Aspen Nakazawa](#), a Colorado outpost of the famed NYC sushi restaurant. Not only is Aspen the place to be this season, it's where some of the finest cold-weather luxury stays are, too. We'd recommend [The Little Nell](#), an [American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts](#) property with intimate, five-star accommodations and a brand-new wine bar. Top that off with a stay at [Hotel Jerome](#), [Auberge Resorts Collection](#), also an [American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts](#) property, where you can sip après-ski, 19th century-inspired cocktails at [J Bar](#) and book a suite with a fireplace, freestanding bathtub, and a view of Aspen or Red Mountain.

## Jackson Hole, Wyoming



*Bjorn Bauer/Courtesy Aman Resorts*

Can you really mention luxury ski offerings without mentioning [Amangani](#) in the same breath? We think not. Jackson Hole's ultra-chic accommodations are what really set the luxury bar for cold-weather retreats in the U.S. From the widely fawned over [Caldera House](#), an [American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts](#) property, to endless pampering at fellow [American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts](#) property Amangani, it simply does not get more luxurious. And of course, the backdrop doesn't hurt: skiing the Tetons and staying at the gateway to Yellowstone National Park is a luxury in itself. When choosing a hotel, Caldera is right in Teton Village, and is known for their two- or four-bedroom suites and buyout options. Amangani sits overlooking the Grand Tetons and Snake River Valley from East Gros Ventre Butte and offers private tours of the adjacent national parks, an over-the-top spa, and four- and five-bedroom hilltop villas.

## Deer Valley, Utah



*Stephen Saks/Courtesy Montage Deer Valley*

Deer Valley is often touted as the chicest Utah ski area, which is partially thanks to the [Montage Deer Valley](#), an [American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts](#) property. The Deer Valley Ski Resort itself also offers luxe amenities for skiers as well (there's ample opportunity for Veuve Clicquot *après-ski*). However, Deer Valley is a skiers-only paradise; snowboarders will have to go to the adjacent Park City Mountain Resort. For the skiing couple looking for a romantic vacation filled with winter activities (namely, outdoor hot tubbing), book the Montage Deer Valley's [Peak View suite](#) and enjoy the ski-in/ski-out resort access and endless relaxation at Spa Montage.

## Expert Skiers and Snowboarders

### Telluride, Colorado



*Courtesy Telluride Ski Resort*

Known for moguls and steep terrain, Telluride is ideal for advanced skiers and snowboarders. They also have a terrain park for snowboarders and expansive backcountry for the off-trail crowd, though experts must proceed with extreme caution in only well-marked North San Juan backcountry. A ski vacation in Telluride is first and foremost about the challenging runs through the San Juan peaks, but there is still abundant luxury here, from over-the-top cabins, bookable with [Telluride Resort Lodging](#) to ski-in/ski-out boutique hotel [Inn at Lost Creek](#).

# Big Sky, Montana



*Courtesy Big Sky Resort*

With serious vertical drops and nearly 6,000 acres of terrain, Big Sky skiing and snowboarding isn't for the faint of heart. In the words of the Montana ski resort, they're home to the "biggest skiing in America," which explains why the most ambitious powder chasers keep coming back. Expert skiers and snowboarders at Big Sky Resort can head straight to the [Challenger area](#), which has nine black diamonds and 14 double black diamonds.

## Winter Wellness

Barnard, Vermont



*Courtesy Twin Farms*

New England wellness is at an all-time high during wintertime at Twin Farms, with treatments designed by beauty guru Tata Harper. At The Bridge House Spa, with “glass brick steam rooms” and an ever-rotating array of seasonal treatments, wellness-seekers find endless relaxation against a Vermont winter backdrop. At Twin Farms, luxury lodging and all-inclusive meals and winter activities is part of what makes this retreat so carefree; everything has been thought of and planned for you. For optimal relaxation, book one of the farm’s [freestanding cottages](#)—there are 10 spread over 300 acres—each equipped with their own hot tub and wood stove.

## The Berkshires, Massachusetts

The Berkshires is experiencing a wellness renaissance over the last few years. While cold-weather resorts in Maine and New Hampshire are vying for the New England wellness prize, The Berkshires has come up from behind, recently debuting two new luxury wellness properties: [Miraval Berkshires](#) and [Canyon Ranch Lenox](#), both of which are [American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts](#) properties. Miraval is known for their Ayurvedic practices at Life in Balance Spa and offers farm-to-table dining at Harvest Moon Restaurant, with ingredients sourced from their on-property farm, while all-inclusive Canyon Ranch connects guests with nutrition and fitness experts for a holistic wellness experience.

# Outdoor Adventure Winter Activities

## Alaska

We don't need to explain why the cold-weather abyss of Alaska offers more winter activities than any other state. While, of course, you can ski and snowboard in Alaska ([Alyeska](#) is a popular resort outside Anchorage), an Alaskan winter trip is just as much an opportunity to try the winter activities you don't ordinarily sample. That might be dog sledding (mush!), which you can do in conjunction with a heli-tour via [AK Helicopter Tours](#), or snowshoeing near the Mendenhall Glacier within the [Tongass National Forest](#). Alternately, [adventure travelers in search of the Alaska northern lights](#) could head north to Coldfoot, near the Gates of the Arctic National Park, or might just take a day trip from Fairbanks to scout aurora borealis.

## Mount Bachelor, Oregon



*Lukas Gojda/Courtesy Pronghorn Resort*

Mount Bachelor isn't just an alpine ski area, it's a veritable paradise for winter activities like snowshoeing, winter trekking, cross-country skiing, and more. [Take up residence in Bend, Oregon for a few days](#), where you can snowshoe at [Pronghorn Resort](#), or try tobogganing, tubing, or even snowmobiling on the foothills of the Cascade Mountains.



# Family Ski Vacations

## Park City, Utah



*Justin Olsen/Courtesy Park City Mountain Resort*

For the family who is looking for days spent skiing and snowboarding from dawn til dusk, set your sights on Utah. Park City has luxury amenities and resorts that are well-equipped for an extended family stay (from fun restaurants to great hotels with residences and ski schools for the novice skier), but it's also the largest ski area in the country, which means the terrain is diverse enough for family members of any level. Whether you're bringing four kids under the age of 12 or are planning a multigenerational ski trip, Park City Mountain Resort is Epic Pass-approved and offers an astounding 7,300 skiable acres across 17 mountains.

# Snowmass, Colorado



*Matt Hobbs/Courtesy Snowmass Resort*

What makes [Snowmass](#) perfect for kids? Two words: s'mores trucks—they show up daily during ski season at the base of the mountain and on the Snowmass mall. Snowmass also has kids who grow tired of skiing and snowboarding lessons after two days covered, with tubing on the mountain and an ice skating rink in Snowmass Village. On the same ticket as three other Aspen-area mountains, Snowmass is ideal for families looking to ski regularly this season and get a taste for Colorado alpine skiing.