

Winter Recreation





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Go Stargazing

While being outside on a cold night may not seem like the most excellent idea, stargazing throughout the winter can open your eyes to extraordinary views.

Plan a trip to a public forest or rural area with a clear perspective of the sky. Be sure to grab your friends and loved ones along with extra blankets and hot chocolate for a unique experience.

According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), specific con-

stellations are at their peaks during Northern Hemisphere's winters. Some gorgeous sights to take in include:

- Orion.
- Taurus.
- Andromeda Galaxy.
- Double Cluster in Perseus.

Since these are only a few of the famous views you can expect, grab a stargazing map before your trip to know what to look for based on your location.

Take into account these tips from NASA to enjoy your time outdoors, even while the temperatures are less than comfortable.

DRESS WARM

While a heavy winter coat will be a

welcome companion during your outdoor adventure, experts suggest dressing in layers beneath the jacket.

Be sure to include an insulated sweatshirt, wind-resistant items and protect your feet and hands. If available, buy heating packets that provide instant warmth if your attire isn't suitable for the actual temperatures.

It's also necessary to equip your feet with waterproof boots and warm wool socks. Depending on how far you plan to navigate to a cleared area, you may find yourself traveling through snow. According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information, feet, hands, lips and ears are most prone to developing frostbite.

CLEAR THE GROUND

Try to pack equipment that you can use to clear the ground of snow or leaves and branches. A shovel or rake is efficient tools that will come in handy. Before laying blankets or mats on the ground, ensure it is free from moisture or obstructions that may damage your photography devices and floor coverings.

HEAT-INSULATING THERMOS

Don't forget a quality thermos to keep your favorite hot beverage warm for the duration of your visit. Look for drink containers that advertise as heat insulated so each sip will maintain a temperature that provides your body with warmth.

Try Ice Climbing

If you're an adrenaline hound who has trouble scratching that itch during the winter months, consider trying ice climbing.

The activity evolved from rock climbing and includes scaling icy glaciers, mountains or even professional courses. If you're new to the sport, work with an expert to learn the ropes before trekking on an adventure alone.

According to the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation, the first known ice climbing competition dates back to 1912. The meeting was first held on the Brenva glacier in Courmayeur, Italy.

Today, events are featured across the world, including places like France, Austria and Russia. With the right skills and mindset, participants turn their hobbies into careers that take them to exciting and exotic locations.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT GEAR

One of the first tools to master for climbing beginners is called crampons. This essential equipment straps to your boots to gain traction while ascending ice and creates ledges. When researching different models, make sure it's intended use is for ice climbing, many units are

made for simply walking on ice or scaling rocks.

Safety equipment is also essential. Invest in a quality helmet and harness to protect yourself if you wind up in harm's way. Before making a purchase, make sure they fit while you're wearing your gear. Warm clothes and spa-

cious backpacks are other must-haves before attempting to climb.

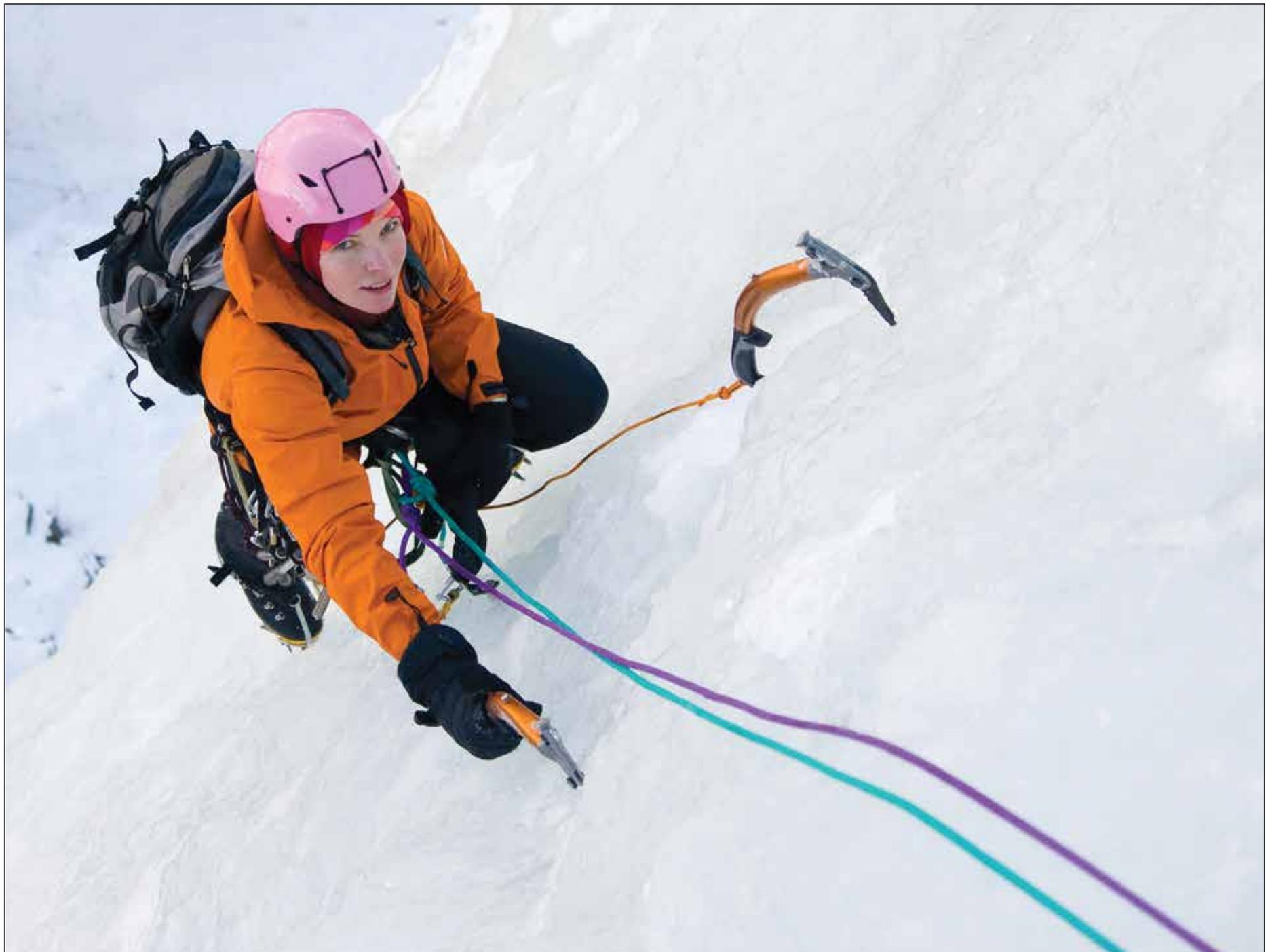
FINDING CLIMBING LOCATIONS

Try to find a facility in your community that offers lessons that teach proper techniques and climbing safety. The

training is imperative and will teach you how to react to emergencies that commonly occur. Once you gain the confidence to begin the adventure, you should know how to find ice walls to conquer.

In addition to asking your trainer about favorable locations for your skill level, speak

with peers about their favorite places to climb. It's a good idea for your first trip to travel with a group of thrill-seekers in case danger arises. Have an emergency plan in place that includes reaching medical professionals, a surplus of food and water and a physical map of the area.





ANDREW RUSSELL/CREATIVE COMMONS

Ice Cave Tours

Don't let the cold winter climate stop you from exploring epic locations in your community or around the country.

The chilly temperatures can actually make for a perfect time to get out for your next family adventure. Celebrate the chilly temperatures by taking a guided tour of natural formations like ice caves.

There are numerous wonders to view in the United States that will provide a unique perspective of the

world around you as you continue to learn and explore.

Ice caves have been known in history since at least 1900. According to the Glacier Hub, American explorer and scientist Edwin Balch reveals an in-depth explanation of the developments in his book, "Glaciers or Freezing Caverns." Since their discovery, experts have determined that liquid water's horizontal movement through glaciers is responsible for causing ice caves.

Today, the caverns are widely praised as exciting tourist attractions for thrill-seekers. Check out two of the most popular locations in America that are open to the public.

MENDENHALL GLACIER, JUNEAU, AK

The 12-mile long glacier located in Mendenhall Valley is truly a sight to see. The blue ice caves' glorious views are only accessible after a daring kayak trip to the edge and a climbing excursion over the glacier. It's advised to take a professionally guided tour of the cave to ensure the entryways are safe and secure.

Unfortunately, the natural wonder is slowly degrading. Experts say since 1958, the glacier has receded almost 2 miles due to warmer climates. Previously, it only reduced size by half a mile according to records kept since the year 1500.

BANDERA VOLCANO, NEW MEXICO

The Bandera volcano, located in New Mexico, is thought to have erupted approximately 10,000 years ago. Its result ultimately led to a magnificent ice cave that formed in a collapsed lava tube. Tourists are invited to take an estimated 20-minute tour to witness the natural phenomenon after a visit to the historic Ice Cave Trading Post.

The site includes ancient artifacts recovered from the cave and surrounding areas that are 1,200 years old. It's a unique destination for history buffs and those seeking a new experience.

Camp Out Indoors

A wholesome family activity during the winter involves creating a camping atmosphere in your living room.

You'll want to find a pop-up tent that fits in nicely without taking up too much space for activities. Move out the furniture for the night, think of fun games to play and tasty snacks to help the kids feel less cooped up while the outdoors are too cold for comfort.

If you're unable to invest in a tent, you can quickly build a substitute with items around the house. Form a perimeter with your kitchen chairs and drape a blanket or sheet over it to create a covering.

Fill it with comfortable sleeping bags, sheets and pillows to create a comfortable place for slumber. Consider adhering glow-in-the-dark star stickers to your ceiling to pull off a more realistic effect.

Here are more tips to make your indoor camping event a success and something the whole family will look forward to on winter weekends.

CREATE A MENU

If you have a fireplace, you already have the advantage of creating a traditional campfire classic. Grab the marshmallows, chocolate and graham crackers to build epic s'mores.

You can alternatively bake them in the oven or zap the dessert in your microwave. Hot



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dogs are another staple for camping trips because of their versatility and simplicity of preparation. After cooking, serve them with a bamboo skewer to mimic the experience of roasting weenies.

SET THE MOOD

While camping with television isn't exactly "roughing it," take advantage of your home's WiFi signal and streaming services to create an outdoor atmosphere. Look for shows or

videos that offer sights and sounds of nature that you would notice during a real trip. Before resting for the night, turn on a crackling fireplace or campfire for a familiar campout experience.

INVITE FAMILY PETS

One advantage of camping inside is that your furry pals can tag along. Kids can camp with their best friends, and you won't have to worry about leash laws or their pup getting lost.

Navigate Winter Activities in Style

This year, complete activities from your winter bucket list in style by looking your best.

Winter weather creates plenty of opportunities to express yourself with layers of clothing, accessories and make-up options. Check out some of the most popular trends for the chilly weather of 2020-21, as suggested by Vogue's fashion experts.

PUNK SPIRIT

Plaid, leather and fishnet tights dominated winter fashion show runways this year. Compliment your punkish outfit with oversized jackets, slouchy blazers and bold necklaces or bracelets. If black leather coats are in your wardrobe, pair them with aggressive dark-colored pants that feature rips or bleach stains. The sophisticated punk outfit is tied together with tall stilettos or chunky boots.

Don't forget the accents like heavy make-up, chokers and a grungy, chopped hairstyle.

DON'T CALL IT A COMEBACK — THE '80S

Fashion in the 1980s stood out due to bold style, colors, silhouettes and, of course, permed hair. Experts expect

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the timeless statement to make a big comeback this year and become a popular trend, especially during the winter.

Famous design teams like Fendi, Vuitton and Givenchy are inspiring the trend with classic twists on biker shorts, puffy shoulder pads and shimmering ensembles

Fashionistas are also aiming to brighten up cold winter temperatures with fluorescent pullovers and jackets with amazing neon knits.

SHEARLING COATS

Shearling material jackets don't only offer warmth during the cold, their timeless design is incredibly chic. The coats were popular in the '70s due to their fuzzy appearance, but 2020 fashion shows were loaded with re-imagined designs.

Expect to find winter wear featuring muted, neutral colors, like light brown or cream palettes. Many soft tones are complemented by dark cuffs and hems to pull off an elegant and comfortable look.

While a high-quality shearling coat may be an investment compared to your other jackets, the garment will become a wardrobe staple during the cold. Since the material is so sensitive, it's imperative to follow the designers washing instructions. With proper care, it can become a go-to accessory that works for casual or professional events.



Join a Winter Sports League

While the gym provides a great way to stay in shape during the winter, look for local teams seeking new members.

Sports offer excellent opportunities to encourage physical activity and companionship while working together. There are likely numerous groups of like-minded people in your area who use sporting events to get through the bitter cold.

If you're unfamiliar with any leagues in your community, take advantage of social media to find prospects.

When there is a lack of current interest, consider recruiting a team by expressing your ideas about forming a community club. You may have to compromise on the sport or rules to accommodate more players for the game. Check out some entertaining indoor activities to keep yourself engaged during the cold.



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BASKETBALL

Finding enough players for a full-on game of hoops may prove to be challenging. In professional basketball, teams of five compete on the entire length of a court. Use your imagination when creating a league with fewer teammates and include three-on-three matchups or playing half-court competitions.

It would help if you tried to

coordinate events based on other schedules—for instance, form teams of players with the same free time or days off from work. If your season ends with a championship tournament, give everyone plenty of notice so they can attend.

BOWLING TEAM

Joining a bowling team provides players with a sense of

satisfaction while performing light physical activity. When you're immersed in a league, it's common to build wholesome relationships with other players that exist outside of the lanes.

Another incentive for taking up the sport are the cash rewards and prizes that come from winning tournaments. Keep in mind, teams are typi-

cally required to pay fees to join a league, so you should ensure that playing is in your budget.

HOCKEY

If you're pretty good on a pair of skates, playing hockey is an engaging way to keep in shape and play a highly competitive game. Travel your community and find ice-

skating rinks to brush up on your skills and network with those already enrolled in a league. With ample stickhandling practice and increased speed, you can find yourself leading the winning team.

Once winter is over, don't let your new passion fade. Look for opportunities to play field hockey or chase the puck outdoors on rollerblades.

Fun Things to do in the Snow

The theme of 2020 thus far includes an intense urgency to social distance and avoid large gatherings.

While many families have used the circumstances as a chance to spend more time together and grow stronger, staying at home may cause some to go stir crazy.

Fortunately, the approaching winter snow offers an opportunity to explore your creative side, all while keeping your distance from large crowds of people in enclosed spaces.

In addition to traditional snowmen and snow angels, give some of these fun and exciting ideas a try.

SNOW GRAFFITI

Use the fresh snow as an endless pallet to express yourself. Avoid using spray paint loaded with chemicals and instead fill squirt bottles with water and food coloring. Try to use containers with tips that offer multiple spraying ranges to give yourself more tools to create exciting artwork.

If you have young children, consider making it a competition where the winner gets first dibs on hot chocolate or chooses a movie to watch as your family warms up inside.

BUILD SNOW FORTS

Set the scene for an epic snowball fight arena by build-



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ing forts across your property. To begin, you'll want to mark the perimeter of the structure with a stick or shovel. Next, use packed snow from a drift to create the walls and leave space for an entrance. Don't forget to fill the bunkers with

freshly packed snowballs, so participants have ready access to ammo.

The process of tearing down the forts during a friendly competition can be more enjoyable than the work you put in during construction.

SNOW VOLCANO

Give a classic science project a fun winter twist by forming snow into the shape of a volcano. Leave a space on top large enough to fit a mason jar inside.

Ask your children to help

you fill the container with two spoonfuls of baking soda, a spoonful of dish liquid and their choice of food coloring. Once the mixture is inside the volcano, pour in vinegar to begin the eruption and get a mini science lesson.