

Winter Recreation Guide



Go Ice Fishing

Don't put your fishing gear away just yet. Just because the weather is turning cool doesn't mean the fish won't bite.

It's still possible to enjoy quality family time on the lake during winter months. Ice fishing is a little different than casting in warmer temperatures, but it can be just as rewarding.

Did you know there are even national competitions for ice fishing in America? This is a recreational activity that can become more than a hobby.

Check out the North American Ice Fishing Circuit for more information on enrolling in a tournament. These fishermen take their sport seriously during the months from January to March.

EQUIPMENT YOU'LL NEED

The gear you need to be successful at ice fishing differs a little from traditional fishing. Field & Stream recommends the following items to ensure you will have a safe and comfortable experience.

- **Auger:** This will be the most expensive tool you'll need, but it is incredibly important if you'll be fishing independently. An auger is used to penetrate the ice in

order to access the fish below. If it just isn't in your budget, consider checking with your local equipment-rental service or join a fishing club, which might give you access to pre-cut holes.

- **Clothing:** Not the most expensive but easily the most important. Make sure you're dressing in wind-blocking polyester and waterproof clothing. Don't forget to pro-

tect your hands and face. Cold weather invites serious conditions, such as frostbite and hyperthermia.

- **Line:** You'll want to adjust your fishing gear to more winter-friendly products. Make sure your line is flexible while in freezing water. This makes it easier to feel the bites.

- **Rod and reel:** Bites also might be harder to feel with the wrong rod. Find a bal-

anced rod that includes a spring bobber. Don't forget to lube your reel before trips as, this will ensure it works properly in frigid temperatures.

- **Bucket:** Sitting on an upturned bucket is more about tradition than it is about comfort.

KNOW SAFE ICE LEVELS

It is crucial to know the condition of the ice on which

you plan to perform your fishing excursion. Ice rarely freezes to the same levels throughout a lake.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources states that ice is only safe to walk on and ice fish if it is 4 inches thick. If it less than 4 inches thick, it's best to stay off the ice. Keep you and yours safe this winter while enjoying a new family tradition.



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Winter Wonderland

If you think of vacation as a summer-time activity, you are missing out on incredible experiences during winter months. Take advantage of many different American attractions that only occur when conditions are right for ice.

If you'll be planning a winter vacation, always keep in mind your safety. Before you hit the road, have your vehicle inspected for issues that could cause disturbances to your enjoyment.

Always travel with a winter safety kit that includes road flares, warm clothing and extra cell-phone chargers. Peace of mind on a long trip will only enhance your fun.

Consider talking to your local travel agency to book a trip to one of America's most majestic winter wonderlands.

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

Witnessing the northern lights firsthand is an incredible experience that should find itself on bucket lists everywhere. Fairbanks offers amazing views thanks to the highly active displays and constantly clear skies. You need to see these beautiful dancing lights in person to truly appreciate their jaw-dropping effect.

Don't forget to pack your swim trunks. You read that right. The Chena Hot Springs, located just outside of Fairbanks, are the perfect spot to spend time swimming. Thanks to the incredibly comfortable water temperatures, you can enjoy yourself outdoors with snow falling all around you.

Car buff or not, you can take in a lot of history by visiting the



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Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum. Watch how vehicles have progressed over time in Alaska. The museum does a great job of telling an interesting story.

PARK CITY, UTAH

Are you a lover of film and art? If so, Park City, Utah, is the perfect place to find yourself

when the annual Sundance Film Festival kicks off.

Park City winter activities go far beyond the festival. You'll find yourself wandering down a historic main street to enjoy meals at award-winning restaurants, learning the area's rich mining history and visiting many art galleries.

Before heading to one of the

area's amazing resorts, stop by the Utah Olympic Park and experience a ride on the Comet Bobsled. You'll come home with many stories to tell about Park City.

BEAVER CREEK, COLORADO

Pamper yourself in Beaver Creek by visiting the luxurious

Allegría Spa. After a long day in the cold, relax in a scented steam room with heated loungers.

Before winding down for the night, you can enjoy complimentary s'mores at the Park Hyatt Beaver Creek Resort's community fire pits. It's a great place to make memories and friends.

Invest in a Hot Tub

Experiencing winter weather from the comfort of a hot tub is an amazing way to enjoy the colder months of the year. To ensure safety and reliability, however, there is a level of responsibility to owning these recreational tubs.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Before going out and buying a hot tub, there is plenty of planning required on your part. One of the primary concerns should be where you'll place it. Make sure to find a solid surface, such as a reinforced deck or level concrete pad.

A level area will make certain that each area of your hot tub contains the same amount of water and eliminate the risk of unnecessary strain from an overfilled area.

Another aspect to consider is the availability of electricity. Hot tubs require either 110 volts or 220 volts of electricity.

You might already have a 110V outlet available in your backyard close to where you want to place your hot tub. If this is the case, this type of model will not require any additional electrical work.

If you choose a 220V or do not already have outdoor electricity, call a licensed electrician perform the installation safely.



WINTER MAINTENANCE

It's important to begin hot tub maintenance near the end of autumn — before the frigid temperatures arrive. It is much easier to perform the necessary draining, cleaning and refilling when the weather is nice.

A flush is required before you drain your hot tub for the winter as it will clear pipes of any oily residue, grime or other deposits. Consider hiring a local professional to perform this maintenance and analyze water quality so your tub will be in great condition all winter.

Covering the tub while not in use is a great way to maintain heat retention, saving energy while keeping the water comfortable.

HOT TUB SAFETY

While enjoying your hot tub this winter, keep in mind these

important safety tips from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- Never swallow hot tub water or even get it into your mouth;
- Always shower or bathe before entering a hot tub;
- Follow manufacturer's rec-

ommendations on capacity of bathers allowed at one time;

- Children under 5 should not be allowed in a hot tub; and
- If pregnant, check with your doctor before hot tub use, especially during the first trimester.

Indoor Olympics

Families with young children know very well that they have to be creative to keep kids moving during the winter. When it's too cold to go out, staying in doesn't have to mean sitting still.

Why not make indoor versions of their favorite sports games? You can play just for fun or even hold a competition — your very own Indoor Olympics.

TARGET GOLF

All you need for this game is a cardboard box, some scissors, a golf ball and a golf club.

Cut off the top of the box. Starting from the top edge, cut rectangles of varying widths, from just a little larger than the golf ball to 3-4 inches wide, and about 2 inches tall on one side of the box. Turn the box on its top and have children practice putting the ball into the holes. For a challenge, assign a point value to each hole based on difficulty and keep score.

KEEP THE BALLOON OFF THE GROUND

Blow up balloons and give each child a plastic fly swatter or half of a pool noodle. Then watch the fun as they swat, bop and sweep the balloons into the air.

INDOOR BASKETBALL

Use thin pool noodles as the

“goal.” Cut a toilet paper roll down one side, then roll up the cardboard to fit about halfway into one end of the pool noodle. Attach the other end of the noodle to the toilet paper roll and secure the seam with duct tape.

If you don't have pool noodles, you also can use a foam wreath form, which you can find at a local craft store.

Duct tape the “goal” to the wall at a height that's easy for your children to toss a ball into. Use soft indoor balls, such as Nerf balls, balloons or inflatable beach balls.

PAPER PLATE RING TOSS

Use packaging tape to attach an empty paper towel roll standing up in the middle of a paper plate.

Cut the middle portion out of several paper plates, and let children take turns tossing the paper rings onto the target.

HOPSCOTCH

Use masking tape to make a hopscotch board on hard floor or carpet. Use a beanbag or stuffed animal in place of a rock.



Ice Climbing

Have you ever dreamed of climbing Mount Everest? Learn the ropes this winter by entering the world of recreational ice climbing.

It is not only a great way to strengthen cardiovascular muscles; you also can gain a great sense of accomplishment during the process.

Remember, it's important to take your time while learning, as unsupervised climbs can result in serious injuries.

IMPORTANCE OF LESSONS

Being properly versed on the dangerous conditions and proper safety techniques are crucial before getting on the ice. This sometimes-extreme sport provides participants with great pride but requires serious caution.

The best way to learn the ins and outs is from a professional instructor in your area. You will learn hands-on how to use the right gear, react to questionable situations and safely climb in a controlled setting.

GETTING STARTED

Knowing what gear is required and the proper steps to take before you begin ice climbing is important to your safety. If you know someone who is

already an avid ice climber, consider asking if he has gear you can borrow until you decide climbing is something you'll be interested in.

Obtaining the proper equipment can be an investment. The money will be wasted if you decide not to pursue the sport in following winters.

The American Alpine Institute recommends acquiring these important components before attempting to climb.

- **Helmet:** Protecting your head is important in every sport. Check with the specialists at your local outdoor shop to make sure the helmet you're choosing is certified for ice climbing.

- **Boots:** The most important aspect of a pair of ice-climbing boots is how well they fit. It's important to find footwear that is comfortable when being worn for long periods of time. Also look for proper insulation, flexibility and a three-quarter or full-length shank.

- **Crampons:** These traction devices attach to footwear, great for improving mobility on snow and ice.



Create a Snow Globe

A staple of winter and the holiday season is the snow globe. These are incredibly easy to make at home and are a great way to get the whole family involved for a fun project.

If you have small children at home, they likely have great interest in animated characters featured in books or on screen. Creating snow globes containing figurines depicting their favorites will easily catch their attention and might begin a new winter tradition.

WHAT YOU NEED

Follow this list of ingredients provided by the Public Broadcasting System to ensure you are prepared to create and impress.

- A small glass jar for each of the snow globes you plan to make.
- A plastic figurine to be showcased for individual globes.
- Glycerin is an optional ingredient but it helps the glitter float better than water alone.
- Glitter and water are the next ingredients you'll use to create awesome effects. The color options are endless, and you have the opportunity to make a truly eye-popping creation.

- Super glue or a hot-glue gun is needed to adhere the figurine to the jar lid.

All of these ingredients will be readily available at your local hobby store and are usually relatively inexpensive.

CREATING YOUR MASTERPIECE

The following steps listed by PBS are incredibly easy to follow and make the results you desire easy to achieve.

1. The first step is deciding which figurine you want to showcase in your globe. If creating this with a child, he may insist on featuring several. However, a small jar will look less cluttered with only one toy.

2. Glue your figurine to the inside of the jar lid with super glue or by using a hot-glue gun. Use extreme caution when using either tool around children's sensitive skin.

3. Fill the jar with water (or glycerin if desired) and add 1-2 teaspoons of glitter.

4. Tightly screw the lid to the jar. For an extra safety measure, you also can glue the lid shut.

5. You're done. Shake the jar and enjoy the glittery show.

STOCKING STUFFERS

This Christmas, share your creations with friends and family as stocking stuffers. A personalized item always makes a perfect gift for those you love.



Indoor Snowball Fight

You don't need cold temperatures — or even snow on the ground — to enjoy a good old-fashioned snowball fight. With a few common household supplies and some creativity, you'll be building a fort to protect your turf and hurling snowballs at the other team in no time.

You can buy pre-made kits that include plush stuffed snowballs, but why not use supplies you already have on hand?

SUPPLIES

Gather the supplies you'll need for your snowball fight.

For snowballs:

Socks
Styrofoam balls
Yarn
Cardboard

Other supplies:

Cardboard boxes of various sizes
Packing tape
Printer paper or cardstock
Disposable plastic drinking cups
Large sketch pad or newsprint
Markers
Plastic buckets
Scotch tape
Construction paper

MAKE YOUR SNOWBALLS

There are a few ways to make snowballs. Ball socks up into circles. Crumple up printer paper or cardstock. You also can wrap yarn around a 2-3-inch tall strip of cardboard.

Another method involves using yarn (preferably white). Use scissors to cut a rectangle slot from one side of the strip of cardboard. Use the rectangular opening to tie a knot around the strands of yarn in the middle using another piece of yarn. Cut through all the strands at the top and bottom of the cardboard. This will give you a fluffy ball of yarn tied together by the knot in the center.

FUN & GAMES

Snowball darts: Use the sketch pad or newsprint to draw a target, assigning various point values to each position on the target. Use masking tape to make a line on the floor, then take turns lobbing "snowballs" at the target and see who can get the highest score.

Knock 'em down: Make a pyramid

with the disposable plastic drinking cups. Take turns seeing who can knock down the most cups in one toss.

Snowball toss: Line up plastic buckets or cardboard boxes in a line. Use masking tape to make a line on the floor. Take turns standing behind the line and tossing one snowball at a time into each bucket.

Steal the flag: Divide into teams. Build forts out of cardboard boxes, blankets, pillows, and any other supplies you have on hand. Tape a construction paper flag at the top of each fort. On the count of three, hurl "snowballs" at each other and see which team can steal the other team's flag first.



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