

TOP-VALUE

Travel



THAT OLD SOFT SHOE
If the slopes aren't calling, why not try a snowshoe hike?

Winter Wonderland

It's Not All Downhill...

Hate to ski? Getting dragged off on a ski trip anyway? Relax: We've found the best ways to enjoy the slopeside scene—without the hassle and humiliation of actually skiing!

BY LAURA DAILY

■ Some of us are just not cut out to be snow bunnies. But when family and friends insist on a ski holiday, we don't want to be a wet, snowy blanket. Luckily, alternative activities abound for accidental ski bums.

■ Tubing and Snow Biking

There *are* sane ways to slide down a mountain. Tubing is one. Multilane tubing hills such as Colorado's Copper Mountain (866-841-2481; coppercolorado.com) use conveyor belt-like "magic carpet" lifts to haul you and your tube to the top after each slide. With 15 lanes, Massachusetts's Nashoba Valley (978-692-3033; skinashoba.com) is the biggest tubing park in New England. Thrill seekers should check out one of the newest skiing alternatives: snow biking. (Think flying downhill on a bicycle fitted with skis.) Durango Mountain Resort in Colorado (970-247-9000; durangomountain.com) offers lessons (one short session should have you out and about) and rents the contraptions for \$44 a day.



IN THE SWIM Visitors stay warm at California's Kirkwood resort.

resort; it's not far from downhill resorts Northstar-at-Tahoe (800-466-6784; northstarat-tahoe.com), Squaw Valley USA (800-403-0206; squaw.com), and Alpine Meadows (800-441-4423; skialpine.com). For blazing your own trail, try snowshoeing: Modern versions of the winter-friendly footwear are lightweight and cheap to rent at ski areas like Maine's Sugarloaf (800-843-5623; sugarloaf.com) and Idaho's

Bogus Basin (208-332-5100; bogusbasin.org). Prefer to stand still? Catch dinner while your pals are on the slopes. Licensed anglers fly-fish dozens of snow-banked rivers, such as Gore Creek (which runs through Vail Village), Utah's Weber and Provo rivers (near Park City-area resorts), or the Frying Pan near Aspen. The water's nippy, but the trout are still biting—and you'll definitely beat the summertime crowds.

■ Cross-country Skiing, Snowshoeing, and Fishing

You like the snow but hate crashing into trees. Try cross-country skiing, which is simple to learn, lets you set your own pace, and provides a killer workout that isn't murder on your joints. Both Colorado's Vail (970-476-8366; vailnordiccenter.com) and Vermont's Killington (800-621-6867; killington.com) boast serious cross-country centers, with groomed tracks, rental gear, and skilled instructors, plus easily accessed backcountry trails. With more than 9,000 acres of land to roam, Royal Gorge (800-500-3871; royalgorge.com) in the Lake Tahoe area is billed as North America's largest cross-country

■ Snow Coaches, Sleighs, and Cruises

If you think wintry mountain scenery looks better from behind a windshield, explore Yellowstone National Park aboard a "snow coach," a comfy heated van equipped with tracks or skis instead of wheels (800-221-1151; yellowstonesnowcoaches.com). In Park City ride along in a snowcat to get a firsthand look at what it takes to groom 3,700 acres (800-525-6200; aspensnowmass.com), or take a taste of Alaska's famed Iditarod dogsled race via a dogsled tour (970-923-3953; krabloonik.com). More leisurely trips are available aboard

FROM LEFT: WOODS WHEATCROFT; BRIDGET BESAW/AURORA PHOTOS

MOTORCYCLE Riders:

Find out what you've been missing in your motorcycle insurance coverage. Check out the AARP® Motorcycle Insurance Program from Foremost today. This program has what you want – money-saving discounts, coverage for your safety apparel and optional equipment, plus the opportunity for towing and roadside assistance coverage.

For your no-obligation quote, call Foremost at: **1-800-752-2461**
Mention code **M082** to get your AARP member rate. Or visit AARPforemost.com.



AARP® | Motorcycle Insurance Program from **FOREMOST** INSURANCE GROUP

Do you own a MOBILE HOME?

If so, check out the AARP Mobile Home Insurance Program from Foremost. With over 55 years of experience, we're the mobile home specialists. We offer superior coverage and low rates.

For your no-obligation quote, call Foremost at: **1-800-752-2461**
Mention code **M083** to get your AARP member rate. Or visit AARPforemost.com.



AARP® | Mobile Home Insurance Program from **FOREMOST** INSURANCE GROUP

The AARP Mobile Home Insurance Program is unavailable in Florida's Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. Both programs are unavailable in some areas of the country, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. AARP member benefits are provided by third parties, not by AARP or its affiliates. Providers pay a royalty fee to AARP for the use of AARP's intellectual property. These fees are used for the general purposes of AARP. Provider offers are subject to change and may have restrictions; please contact the provider directly for details. Foremost Express Insurance Agency, Inc. is a subsidiary of FCOA, LLC, and Foremost Express is a registered trademark of FCOA, LLC. Foremost Insurance Company Grand Rapids, Michigan, Foremost Property and Casualty Insurance Company, Foremost County Mutual Insurance Company, 5600 Beech Tree Lane, Caledonia, MI 49316. 9004252 01/11

VALUE TRAVEL

a quintessentially romantic horse-drawn sleigh at New Hampshire's Bretton Woods (800-314-1752; brettonwoods.com) or on a wintertime cruise on North America's largest alpine lake: Near Heavenly Mountain Resort (800-432-8365; skiheavenly.com), on the California-Nevada border, the paddle wheelers *Tahoe Queen* and *M.S. Dixie II* ply Lake Tahoe (800-238-2463; zephyrcove.com).



YAY FOR NEIGH The horse does the hard part for sleigh riders touring Lake Tahoe.

■ Indoor Adventures

When you pick a resort with cool indoor-recreation activities, adrenaline junkies can get their kicks even if Mother Nature isn't cooperating. Crested Butte (800-810-7669; skicb.com) has an adventure park with bungee trampolines, a climbing wall, and a year-round ice-skating rink. Discovery Ridge Adventure Center at Wintergreen Resort (800-266-2444; wintergreenresort.com), in Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, offers paintball, a zip line, and even a mechanical bull. If your kind of action involves a green felt table, Lake Tahoe's Heavenly Valley is steps from a brace of casinos on the Nevada side of the resort, and Las Vegas Ski & Snowboard Resort (702-645-2754; skilasvegas.com) lies 45 minutes northwest of the Strip. Also credit Vermont's Okemo Mountain Resort (800-786-5366; okemo.com) for

WEIDINGER PUBLIC RELATIONS, OPPOSITE; FROM TOP: ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID COWLES; BIG BEAR ADVENTURES RESORT

MOTOWN'S NUMBER ONE

The country's most passenger-friendly large airport is Detroit Metropolitan, reports J.D. Power and Associates.



helping duffers avoid withdrawal. Its indoor Golf Training Center houses a nine-hole putting green as well as a full-swing golf simulator.

■ Spas and Restaurants

Let the downhillers abuse their bodies on the slopes: You're all about indulging yours. The Spa at the Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch, at Colorado's Beaver Creek (970-748-6200; ritzcarlton.com), gets four stars from the Mobil Travel Guide for its coed rock-grotto relaxation room and aerobics facility with Vail Valley views. Likewise, Vermont's Spa at Stowe (802-253-7355; stoweflake.com) stands out for its massaging waterfall-equipped "Aqua Solarium." Post-massage, grab a bite: The Seafood Buffet in Utah's Deer Valley Resort (800-424-3337; deervalley.com) is rated by Zagat as one of the top U.S. restaurants.

■ Ski-Town Attractions

Think outside the resort and take in dinner and a movie in Park City. Or browse the 1932 & 1980 Winter Olympic Museum in Lake Placid, New York, while your party is schussing down Whiteface (518-946-2223; whiteface.com). Lifelong learners can discover the secrets of guacamole at the Santa Fe School of Cooking, about 20 miles from Ski Santa Fe (505-982-4429; skisantafe.com). Shopaholics flock to Manchester, Vermont, for its designer outlets—and the skiing minutes away at Stratton (800-787-2886; stratton.com). Taos, New Mexico, hosts tastings, seminars, and dinners during its Winter Wine Festival (505-438-8060; skitaos.org). Eleven wineries lure visitors to the Shawangunk Wine Trail (845-256-8456; shawangunkwinetrail.com) in New York's Hudson Valley, home to Belleayre Mountain resort (845-254-5600; belleayre.com).

NO PEAKS? NO PROBLEM

How downhill ski buffs can have fun on flat land

Okay, ski fanatics: Let's say your winter getaway is taking you to a less-than-hilly region. Places like Minnesota and the Dakotas offer cold-weather diversions—from snowmobiling to ice fishing—with nary a mountain in sight. National and state parks remain open all winter (some campgrounds and roads may be closed). Identifying animal tracks in the snow is a fun multigenerational activity,



ICEBERG AHEAD! Robust rafters enjoy a wintertime river trip in Michigan.

as is bird-watching. If you're part polar bear, consider rafting Michigan's Sturgeon River. Big Bear Adventures (231-238-8181; bigbearadventures.com) promises a memorable 90-minute float trip under a canopy of snow-covered evergreens. *Brr... —L.D.*

BARGAIN HUNTERS

WELCOME TO PARADISE



Save up to \$450 on vacation packages.

Book your air plus your hotel together and watch the savings add up. Choose the AARP® Travel Center powered by Expedia®, offering travel services and benefits just for AARP members.



Go to expedia-aarp.com/package or call the AARP Travel Center at 800-997-5157.



AARP member benefits are provided by third parties, not by AARP or its affiliates. Providers pay a royalty fee to AARP for the use of AARP's intellectual property. These fees are used for the general purposes of AARP. Provider offers are subject to change and may have restrictions. Please contact the provider directly for details.

SKI RESORTS JUST FOR YOU

Hitting the slopes this winter? Check out 10 cool spots at aarp.org/skiresorts.