



## Let It Snow? Absolutely.

Embrace the season by strapping on skis, horseback riding through the woods, or just cozying up to a very large fire.

Published Oct 26, 2008

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Lake Placid Lodge.  
(Photo: Frederic Lagrange)



Taos Ski Valley resort.  
(Photo: Courtesy of Taos Ski Valley Resort)

### Taos, New Mexico

*Four nights + hot-spring hike + red-hot chili = \$406 for a long weekend.*

If you really want to understand free-spirited, off-the-grid Taos, rent one of the subterranean, solar-powered rooms in the Phoenix (from \$100; [earthship.net](http://earthship.net)). At 5,400 square feet, it's the biggest of the town's recycled-material Earthship homes, and the best one available for overnight stays. Everything you touch is eco-appropriate: The sink water irrigates the herbs in the living room; banana trees sprout indoors; tilapia and goldfish swim in the indoor pool. Get even closer to nature by hiking to a hot spring at the bottom of the 800-foot-deep Rio Grande Gorge, or venture 30 miles to the extreme steeps of Taos Ski Valley (lift tickets from \$40; snowboarding now permitted; [skitaos.org](http://skitaos.org)). For a warm-up, sample the three varieties of chili (red, green, and veggie) at Michael's Kitchen (\$6; [michaelskitchen.com](http://michaelskitchen.com)), the best lunch spot in town.

### Milford, Pennsylvania

*Two nights + horseback ride + 50 rifle rounds = \$201 for a two-nighter.* Break out the boots and flannels, and pack the family off to the Malibu Dude Ranch—the oldest working horse ranch in the East (\$195 for the weekend, kids 6 to 16 half-price, under 6 free; [malibududeranch.com](http://malibududeranch.com)). Watch for bears and wild turkeys as you and your horse clomp along the Pocono foothills. Round out the western experience by firing off 50 rounds (\$6) at the rifle range, then tuck into spaghetti or burgers in the dining hall. Put the kids to bed, then amble over to the on-site Saloon, where a belt of whiskey costs just \$3.50. The accommodations are more summer camp than ecolodge (sagging mattresses; lots of taxidermy), but where else can you ride, shoot, and drink (legally) within two hours of midtown?

### Lake Placid, New York

*Two nights + goose-egg scramble + soaking tub = \$1,200 for a two-nighter.*

Three years after it burned to the ground, the Lake Placid Lodge ([lakeplacidlodge.com](http://lakeplacidlodge.com); no kids under 14) has risen again, more Adirondack chic than ever. If you can ditch work for a few days, opt for the Cabin Fever package (\$1,200): You'll save \$100 (roughly the price of gas, round-trip) on a two-night midweek stay in one of nineteen cabins, each equipped with wood-burning fireplaces and soaking tubs. A full breakfast (scrambled goose eggs, hash browns) and afternoon tea are included. If you can't take off

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midweek—or you just want to go cheaper—the Mirror Lake Inn is offering a mountain-view room, two ski passes to Whiteface Mountain, breakfast, and a \$50 spa or dining credit (from \$290; opens November 28; [mirrorlakeinn.com](http://mirrorlakeinn.com)).

**Methow Valley, Washington**

*Four nights + cross-country skiing + buffalo burger = \$554 for a long weekend.*  
 Located 230 miles northeast of Seattle in the North Cascade Mountains, Methow Valley isn't exactly convenient, but it is wallet-friendly and spectacularly foreign for East Coast skiers. The undulating, glacier-carved valley is laced by 120-plus miles of groomed Nordic ski trails (\$20 for one day; \$45 for a three-day pass; [mvsta.com](http://mvsta.com)) for cross-country and skate-skiing. In Winthrop, upgrade to a king room at the Chewuch Inn (from \$125, including breakfast; [chewuchinn.com](http://chewuchinn.com)), so you can laze by your own fireplace. Mingle with the locals (a liberal-leaning crew of farmers and hunters) over buffalo burgers and microbrews at nearby Twisp River Pub ([methowbrewing.com](http://methowbrewing.com)).

**Middlebury, Vermont**

*Two nights + dirt- cheap skiing + stuffed moose = \$328 for a two-nighter.*  
 Catering mostly to broke undergrads with \$28-a-day ski passes and \$4 hamburgers in the lodge, Middlebury College's 115-acre mountain is modest in size but blissfully uncrowded (gear rentals \$30; 802-388-4356). Of the fifteen winding trails, Allen is the fastest, used by high-school and college teams as a racing and training site. Two miles away, at the Rikert center (from \$14 a day), tamp down fresh powder on 26 miles of cross-country trails. The Waybury Inn's rustic quarters have a friendly pub downstairs with moose heads on the walls and local Otter Creek on tap (rooms from \$150; [wayburyinn.com](http://wayburyinn.com) or 800-348-1810).



The Jackal Hut in backcountry Aspen.  
 (Photo: Courtesy of Huts.org)

**Aspen, Colorado**

*Two nights + toasty mountain huts + sore thighs = \$1,350 for a two-nighter.*  
 To really ditch the Aspen crowds, lose yourself (without getting lost) in the backcountry. Hire Aspen Alpine Guides for a three-day, two-night trip (\$1,350; [aspenalpine.com](http://aspenalpine.com)) along Aspen's 10th Mountain hut system in Colorado's White River National Forest ([huts.org](http://huts.org)). They're responsible for navigating and cooking all your meals. You just have to huff up steep inclines at an oxygen-deficient 11,000 feet. You'll park your gear at one of 29 toasty huts (Margy's, overlooking Spruce Creek Valley, has the best view) before doing some laps on nearby Mount Yeckel. For a (slightly) less strenuous experience, the outfitter is debuting a snowshoe day trek starting at the summit of Burnt Mountain, descending 3,000 feet, nearly seven miles, to Buttermilk ski area (around \$345 for two people). Sleep on the cheap in a shared-bath room at St. Moritz Lodge & Condominiums (from \$96; [stmoritzlodge.com](http://stmoritzlodge.com)).

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