

# The Boston Globe

TRAVEL

## Three weekend escapes in New England for people who love the winter

By Diane Bair and Pamela Wright Globe Correspondent, Updated November 14, 2025, 6:00 a.m.



The New Hampshire Lakes Region is home to Gunstock ski resort, with 49 trails and glades. There's also night skiing and Nordic skiing on 26 groomed trails. Gunstock

Don't hate us, but [we love winter](#). We're like groundhogs in reverse; we come alive when the mercury drops and the snow flies.

You, not so much? We're here to help with this roundup of three winter weekend escapes in New England, with gorgeous scenery, lots of winter activities, and cozy, comforting digs. Time to embrace Old Man Winter — he's coming.

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Winter at the Inn at Hastings Park has its own delights, including outdoor bonfire experiences  
@wearewavecollective/Inn at Hastings Park

## Lexington

Lexington holds a special place in American history and in the hearts of New Englanders. It was here, and along 16 miles of road leading into Concord, that the Colonists waged the first battle of the American Revolution. Minute Man National Historic Park, including battlefields, monuments, structures, and exhibits, draws more than a million visitors each year, especially in summer. Park officials expect that number may jump in 2026, as interest in historic Revolutionary sites grows in anticipation of [America's 250th](#) anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. That's why you should head there this winter, before the party begins. The visitor center is closed from November to mid-April, but the park grounds are open — and beautiful, especially after a recent snowfall.

Meander through the park in relative quiet, as you walk in the footsteps of the colonial militia. There are more than 9 miles of walking trails crossing the 1,034-acre park. Consider the 5-mile or so Battle Road Trail, a relatively flat traverse through farmlands and woods, past historic sites.

The tourist trolleys and tour groups led by costumed guides are gone for the season, which leaves downtown Lexington a pure delight. The center, anchored by the Lexington Battle Green,

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where the first shot of the Revolution was fired, is filled with preserved 18th- and 19th-century architecture, significant sites, one-of-a-kind shops, and cafes and restaurants.



The highly ranked Inn at Hastings Park, open year-round, is the Boston area's only Relais & Châteaux property. @wearewavecollective/Inn at Hastings Park

When it's time to relax, check into the highly ranked [Inn at Hastings Park](#), open year-round and the Boston area's only Relais & Châteaux property. This ultra luxe boutique property successfully straddles a fine line: It pays subtle homage to its historic setting without tumbling into cute. It's also very elegant without being too stuffy. There are 22 rooms and suites housed in three finely restored historic buildings. You can't go wrong; all have plush custom furnishings accented with bold colors, modern baths, and lush linens, many with fireplaces and separate sitting areas. Some have cozy reading nooks and soaking tubs.

The Town Meeting Bistro is a bonus, serving seasonally fresh New England fare, with a bit of French flourish. Expect starters like local oysters, creamy clam chowder, and scallop fritters, and entrees like braised lamb shanks and duck cassoulet.

Ahh, but it's winter, and the folks here love the season as much as we do! That's why they have twinkly-lit igloos for ultra cozy, private dining and private bonfires with s'more making kits (and hot toddies, if you desire.) The igloos, with blankets, faux fireplace heaters, and piped-in mood music, are tucked between the Inn's main building and restored barn, and fit up to six people. Throughout the winter, guests can also book a private outdoor fire pit experience complete with Adirondack chairs, blankets, and a s'more kit. Winter room rates start at \$425.

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The Lake Estate on Winnisquam has 25 fireplaces, perfect in winter for snuggling up and enjoying a beverage. The Lake Estate on Winnisquam

### **Laconia, N.H.**

A centerpiece of the Lakes Region of New Hampshire, this former mill town is set along the shores of Lake Winnisquam, Lake Opechee, and Paugus Bay of Lake Winnepesaukee. It can be crazy during the summer, a hive of buzzing tourists and activities. It slows in winter when the snow falls and the lakes freeze. We like it when the ice shanties go up, the snow machines rev, and the kids are out in force, skating and playing pick-up ice hockey.

If you're a skier or snowboarder, check out [Gunstock](#), with 49 trails and glades. There's also Nordic skiing on 26 groomed trails, and snow tubing. The Prescott Farm Environmental Education Center is a great place for snowshoeing with more than 3 miles of trails through woodlands and fields with views of Lake Winnepesaukee. They offer guided nature tours and moonlit walks throughout the season.

Ever thought of giving ice fishing a try? This is one of the best places in New England for dipping a line in a hole in the ice and landing a rainbow trout! There are several guides who will provide gear and transportation, and plenty of good advice, including [Tim Moore Outdoors](#) and [Catch ya in a Bit Guide Service](#).

If you have kids in tow, there's old-fashioned sledding at the Laconia Sledding Hill, or catch one of the zany Recycled Percussion performances at the [CAKE Theater](#).

Or have a completely different adult experience at the newly opened Lake Estate on Winnisquam. We were excited when we learned the luxury resort and spa, which opened and is already [receiving glowing reviews](#), would also be open throughout the winter. The sprawling resort, reminiscent of a grand mountain lodge — or a very rich relative's vacation manse — is filled with cozy nooks, miles of fancy woodwork, lush furnishings, and sweeping views of Lake Winnisquam, Lake Winni's quieter neighbor. We're guessing you won't leave the property. There

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are 25 fireplaces, including a towering fieldstone one in the lofty lobby, one in the cozy library nook, one in the bar and restaurant, one in the spa lounge, and others in several rooms and all 18 suites. May we suggest the following: Spend a few hours in the luscious spa, before dinner in The Dining Room. The menu here leans toward updated classic dishes, like pan-seared scallops with cauliflower and crispy prosciutto, crusted salmon with quinoa, eggplant and chimichurri, and tagliatelle bolognese with homemade pasta and locally raised beef and pork. After dinner, perhaps you'll have warm drinks next to an outdoor firepit, followed by a movie in the private, on-site theater. You could wake up early to watch the sun rise over the lake and go snowshoeing on resort trails ... or not. Winter room rates start at \$389.



Bethel, Maine, is especially beguiling in winter, when you can smell the scent of wood smoke from the log fires warming country inns and restaurants and perhaps catch sight of a horse-drawn carriage carrying folks across snowy fields. Visit Maine

## **Bethel, Maine**

For sheer natural beauty, it's hard to beat Bethel, Maine, a snug historic village, surrounded by mountain peaks and sliced by the Androscoggin River. It's especially beguiling in winter, when the mountains are snowcapped and the village lies hushed under a blanket of snow. You'll smell the scent of wood smoke from the log fires that are warming country inns and restaurants, and perhaps catch sight of a horse-drawn carriage carrying folks across snowy fields.

There's outdoor recreation galore. Head to the award-winning [Sunday River](#) ski resort, with 139 trails spread across 884 acres of terrain. If you're a cross-country skier, [Carter's Cross-Country Ski Center](#) is a gem, with 55 kilometers of trails running through pristine woods, backdropped by snow-capped mountains. It's peaceful, quiet, and beautiful. It also has a full-service rental shop, warming cabins, and more.



There are miles of snowshoe and hiking trails around Bethel, Maine, weaving through the surrounding woods, often with views of the jagged Mahoosuc Mountain Range. Visit [Maine](#)

There are miles of snowshoe and hiking trails around the village, through the surrounding woods, and flanking the river, with views of the jagged Mahoosuc Mountain Range. For rentals and guided snowshoe and winter hiking tours, join one of the trips offered by [Bethel Adventure Tours](#). They offer a variety of excursions, including an introductory two-hour tour for beginners and a full-day alpine adventure.

Don't miss the [Maine Mineral & Gem Museum](#), home to some 40,000 dazzling gems and minerals and 6,000 meteorites. It has the largest collection of lunar meteorites in the world, including the five largest specimens of the moon on Earth. And those are just some of the highlights; it's worth a trip to Bethel on its own.

The most popular place to stay is the [Bethel Inn & Suites](#), a sprawling complex set on more than 200 acres, with resort-style amenities, including a small fitness club, game room, heated indoor-outdoor saltwater pool and sauna, and an outdoor fireplace. The golf course turns into snowy, rolling fields, for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and fat-tire biking. The on-site Millbrook Tavern & Grille is a convenient stop at the end of the day, offering a full menu of comfy pub grub: soups, sandwiches, pizza, and entrees like fish and chips, cowboy ribeye, and seared salmon. Winter room rates start at \$118.

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