

## OLD-FASHIONED OUTDOOR WINTER FUN

Get off the couch!  
You don't need a lift  
ticket to enjoy the  
thrills of the season

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**B**OSTON – Maybe your first inclination in winter is to hunker down inside and wait for spring, but in New England, you'll be waiting a mighty long time.

Instead, why not pull on your long johns and snow pants and head into the great outdoors? You don't have to ski or snowboard to have fun in the cold. These winter family activities will give you rosy cheeks and cheer you up during those dark nights. Remember, there's always hot chocolate to look forward to.

### MASSACHUSETTS

If you have kids who wonder about the "olden days" (and we're not referring to your youth) head to Old Sturbridge Village, the Northeast's largest outdoor history museum, which depicts a rural New England town of the 1830s. Roam around and inside more than 40 original buildings, each carefully restored. While there are special events for the holiday season, just visiting on a regular day is a treat. There is always something going on, and the museum in winter looks as pretty as a postcard. Talk to the authentically costumed staff, visit the potter or make a craft at the visitors center. Your kids will learn how their counterparts occupied their time in winter way before television and the Internet.

The museum gets gussied up in holiday finery in December for "Christmas by Candlelight," including on Dec. 15 and 16. Meet Father Christmas and

Santa Claus (they are different!). You may even be able to take a horse-drawn sleigh or wagon ride if the weather cooperates. 800-733-1830; [www.osv.org](http://www.osv.org)

### MAINE

New England Dogsledding offers something most people have only read about, the chance to yell "mush!" to a pack of sled dogs while you race through the woods.

Take a late afternoon or evening one-hour ride at Great Glen Trails at the base of Mount Washington, or try a longer trip (two to three hours) into the White Mountain National Forest. On the longer trip you'll get a chance to learn how to handle the dogs yourself and have more time to take in the scenery.

New England Dog Sledding is based at the Telemark Inn, an Adirondack-style wilderness lodge near Bethel. For more time with the gorgeous and intelligent huskies, book the National Forest Dogsled Ride Weekend Package. It includes two nights' lodging, all meals and a National Forest dogsled ride. 207-836-2703; [www.newenglanddogsledding.com](http://www.newenglanddogsledding.com)

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

For a sleigh ride with an awesome view of Mount Washington Valley, head to New Hampshire and the Darby Field Inn. The inn is ideally located, just six miles from the hubbub of North Conway. Take a ride in an antique sleigh, pulled by either Welsh Cob mares or Spike, an 18-year-old Belgian gelding. After the ride, warm up with cider and homemade cookies by the woodstove. Or, book a ride-and-dinner package, which includes a four-course meal.

If you want to make a weekend of it, book the "Sleigh and Stay" package, which includes two nights' lodging, breakfast, dinner one night and the sleigh ride. If you do stay, take advantage of other activities, including snowshoeing. 800-426-4147; [www.darbyfield.com](http://www.darbyfield.com)

### LOCAL ICECAPADES

For skaters, wintertime in New England means time to strap on your skates and channel your inner Olympic contender (or visions thereof). Skating indoors is one thing, but to truly enjoy the magic of the season, you need the bite of fresh air on your face as you glide (or fall) around an outdoor rink.

Combining ice-skating with lunch, a museum or shopping makes an outing everyone in the family



can enjoy.

In downtown Boston, head to the Frog Pond ([www.bostoncommonfrogpond.com](http://www.bostoncommonfrogpond.com)), where the gold dome of the State House gleams in the background. If you bring your own skates, you get a great deal. Kids under 13 get free admission, while adults pay just \$4. Skate rental is \$8.

In Cambridge, the Charles Hotel converts its outdoor patio into a rink each year, making Harvard Square a great destination for skaters (and shoppers). Admission is \$5 for adults, and \$3 for kids, with skate rentals \$5.

## **VERMONT**

For more than 20 years, the Adams Family Farm has offered traditional sleigh rides through the Vermont woods to an old log cabin where you can warm up by a wood fire with hot chocolate. On the 1½-hour trip, the sleigh is pulled by two Belgian draft horses. While the sleigh rides are a relatively new offering, the farm has been in the Adams family since 1865. Make sure to pick up some maple syrup, which the family has produced for decades.

Go on a Wednesday night for fondue. Dip fruit into the family's traditional chocolate fondue made with homemade fudge. Schedule time before or after to visit the indoor livestock barn, where kids can pet and feed horses, calves, goats, sheep, donkeys and llamas, not to mention alpacas, chickens and pigs. 802-464-3762; [www.adamsfamily-farm.com](http://www.adamsfamily-farm.com) offers guided snowshoe tours for families with kids ages 6 and up.



PHOTO COURTESY NEW ENGLAND DOGSLEDDING

**Get cool this winter with some dogsledding in Maine or myriad other outdoor activities around New England.**