

CROSS-COUNTRY SKI GETAWAYS

*A Guide to Great Resorts, Lodges,
and Groomed Trails in North America*



Jonathan Wiesel

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Introduction

Would you like to see some of the most magnificent winter scenery in the world... enjoy unforgettable meals... and stay in beautiful lodging? Then a cross-country ski getaway may be perfect for you.

There are hundreds of cross-country ski areas in North America, from lodges to guest ranches to grand hotels. They vary a lot in size, services, quality, and fun factor, which can make it tough to figure out where to go.

Cross-Country Ski Getaways makes it easy to choose your destination, whether it's near home or a thousand miles away. This online edition gives you all the information you need on more than 90 of the best areas across the U.S. and Canada. Big or small, resort or B&B, I've been lucky enough to visit almost every significant cross-country area in both countries and have created this selective list.

I've been swept away by the beauty of these places... had lots of seconds on desserts... soaked myself till I felt like a prune in hot tubs, under the stars... and skied literally thousands of kilometers. And I wish the same for you.

Book overview

If you're deciding where to go for your first cross-country ski vacation, this is a valuable resource. If you're looking for a family-friendly destination, ditto.

There's a lot of diversity in this information – whether you want great powder snow, enormous trail systems, alpine skiing and snowboarding as well as cross-country, a very private getaway, what's good within easy driving distance of your home, even where to ski with your kids or your dog!

In many ways, this online edition is a new creation. The last print edition of *Cross-Country Ski Getaways* (then called *Cross-Country Ski Vacations*) came out in 1999, and there've been a lot of changes since then. There are some fantastic new areas here, while quite a few places described in earlier editions (sadly) no longer exist. There have even been significant changes this fall (2008), with several areas losing parts of their trail systems or deciding to open on a part-time basis for the coming winter.

The information here can guide you to the vacation of your dreams. You'll find great skiing, that's a given. But more than that, these places are *fun*, with wonderful staff, services, scenery, and things to do in the neighborhood.

Trail keys

This book covers how many kilometers (“km”) of trails there are at an area, difficulty ratings for the trail systems, whether trails are groomed for both track skiing and skate technique, what ski services are available, including equipment rental and instruction, and altitude (some people take longer to acclimate than others). That's important information, whether you're going cross-country skiing for the first time or have been skiing for a long time.

If you're an avid cross-country skier, *Cross-Country Ski Getaways* will tell you the best places to go, given that you want a lot of trails to track-ski, skate, or both. (For instance, most areas in the West groom all their trails for both skating and track skiing, while Québec tends to have more track than skating.) You'll also find out whether you'll be dealing with a lot of vertical change – hills are great for some people and not so welcome for others.

Other things to do

There are self-contained destinations here that deliver everything – food, lodging, groomed trails, instruction, guide service, equipment rental, clothing retail, and more. But people often want to know about the *taste* of a place – whether it's beautiful, fun, even quirky.

And for a lot of skiers, lodging can be really important, too. So I'll introduce you to wonderful choices – from cabins to condos, inns to vast hotels – where most of the time you can step out your door, put on your skis, and just take off on groomed trails.

If dining is a key part of your vacation, I've included impressions on types and quality of cuisine (it's all good, and some is world-class, with chefs who love to talk with guests about their creations).

Finally, I figure that most people won't spend *all* their time cross-country skiing, so a lot of places were chosen partly because there are so many things to do either on site or nearby – snowshoeing, alpine skiing, sightseeing, sledding, shopping, ice climbing, snowmobiling, even casinos.

Rates

There's a big range of lodging rates here, from modest (but very pleasant) accommodations to elegant destinations. In a number of cases, areas don't have lodging right on site, but they're such great places to visit that I've recommended nearby unaffiliated lodging.

Rather than list specific rates, which can change frequently, I've given prices (based on double occupancy per night) for the *least* expensive accommodations for every destination. Each "\$" indicates a \$50 increment ("\$" means less than \$50, "\$\$" means \$50-\$100, etc.).

Much of the time, rates refer to per-night lodging only, or lodging with breakfast. You'll also see some extraordinary packages that can include guiding, instruction, equipment, spa services, wines, even cooking classes.

I wish you joyous winters!