



## choose your own winter adventure

A little cold-weather hibernation is good for the soul. But when you're ready to come out and play, choose one (or more!) of these five fabulous winter weekend getaways.

By Jayme Moye

Sip by the fire while soaking in the mountain views from the tasting room at Veritas.

PHOTO: STEVEN MORRIS

### VINE HOPPING

**PLAY:** Steer clear of the droves of warm-weather tourists by doing your wine tasting in the winter. The 20+ wineries clustered around Charlottesville make for an ideal day trip or a weekend wine extravaganza. Plan your route using [MonticelloWineTrail.com](http://MonticelloWineTrail.com), which details the trail named for Thomas Jefferson's estate where he started making wine in the 1770s. The trail is divided into four sections of about a half-dozen wineries, each section doable in a day by car. Central Virginia wineries produce all your favorite varietals, from Chardonnay to Zinfandel, and about a dozen rarities like Muscat of Alexandria, a white grape believed to be one of the oldest unmodified vines still in existence.

**STAY:** Spend the night at the Barbooursville Vineyard ([barbooursvillewine.net](http://barbooursvillewine.net)). The estate's one-of-a-kind inn, built in 1804, offers four stunning suites outfitted with priceless furnishings and art. Or choose from one of three charming cottages complete with wood beam ceilings and fireplaces.

### TRAVERSE THE TRAILS

**PLAY:** You don't have to be a downhill skier or snowboarder to go play in the powder. West Virginia's Elk River Touring Center ([ertc.com](http://ertc.com)) offers 150 acres chock full of scenic trails for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Nestled at the headwaters of the Elk River adjacent to the Monongahela National Forest, the center provides all the rental equipment you need for \$20 a day. Check their website for the latest seasonal specials. If you're new to either sport, start with the 5-kilometer trail bordering the national forest next to the center. For more of a challenge and picture-perfect mountain views, you'll find 35 kilometers of trails criss-crossing the Highland Scenic Highway (closed to motor vehicles during winter).

**STAY:** Make a winter wonderland weekend of it with an overnight stay at the charming Elk River Inn, dinner at the Inn's gourmet restaurant, a Nordic skiing or snowshoeing lesson, and equipment rental, starting at \$160. The charming cedar-built Inn has five guest rooms, each featuring a spacious deck. Or grab a

group of girlfriends and book one of Elk River's four comfy cabins ranging from quaint to modern.

### GO WITH THE FLOW

**PLAY:** Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina, you'll find the Highland Lake Inn ([hlinn.com](http://hlinn.com)), an ideal place to relax and rejuvenate. Only five minutes outside of Hendersonville, this intimate retreat, tucked into 26 wooded acres beside a lake, offers yoga classes up to three times a day. Fred Brown, the director and primary teacher, has been teaching for nearly 40 years. His classes, attended by guests as well as locals, are appropriate for all ages and ability levels. If you're feeling particularly adventurous, one of Fred's specialties is the use of yoga "furniture", including a Whale back-bending bench, yoga swings by Gravotonics and slacklines.

**STAY:** Choose from a romantic hidden cabin, a room in a mountain lodge or a poolside cottage. Each accommodation, from the smallest room in the historic lodge to the 16-room Woodward



The spa at Wintergreen.

House, has been lovingly detailed by the owners, Jack and Linda, who live on the property.

### SKI + SPA

**PLAY:** For the best of Blue Ridge Mountain skiing, head to Virginia's Wintergreen Resort ([wintergreenresort.com](http://wintergreenresort.com)) offering 26 slopes and trails suitable for all ability levels. Make it a three-day weekend in order to catch one of the resort's Friday women's clinics starting in January. Geared for gals looking to improve their skiing and riding skills, the

clinics run from 9:30am-2pm every Friday, cost \$109 and include lunch. For a full weekend of instruction, register for the annual Wintergreen Women's Weekend (February 4-5) with World Champion Extreme Skier Alison Gannet. Après ski spa specials change monthly (check the website) and include therapeutic massages, body wraps, hydrotherapy baths, reflexology, skincare treatments, and hair and nail care. Or make it a whole day in the spa, starting with a steam or sauna followed by a facial, mani and pedi, all for \$250.

**STAY:** You'll be fully equipped in one of Wintergreen's 300 villa-style condos or rental homes. From studios to houses big enough to hold all your friends, each comes with a full kitchen and fireplace

### COOL RUNNING

**PLAY:** Travel south to a happening (and warmer!) city hosting a race this winter. One such run is the crowd-pleasing Savannah River Bridge Run ([savannahriverbridgetrun.com](http://savannahriverbridgetrun.com)) on

December 3rd. The race draws more than 2,000 runners looking to tackle the Talmadge Memorial Bridge spanning 1.4 miles across the river. Choose from a 5K or 10K course, or make it a "Double Pump" by racing the two routes back-to-back. The post-race party starts when the first 5K finisher crosses the line, and includes live music by The Train Wrecks and complimentary Brunswick stew and brew. A costume contest dangling a \$400 first place prize, \$200 second, and \$100 third, brings out the zany side of Savannah locals better known for their Southern charm. After the race festivities, enjoy Savannah, a city internationally known for its architecture and history, and rated one of the Top 10 Favorite American Cities last year by *Travel + Leisure*.

**STAY:** The race is in the Historic District, full of boutiques, galleries and restaurants. For an unforgettable stay, splurge for the chic Mansion on Forsyth Park ([mansiononforythpark.com](http://mansiononforythpark.com)), a historic 1888 manor retrofitted with all the modern luxuries.



Because backpackers and businessmen both pack a toothbrush. Taquito, \$25, [timbuk2.com](http://timbuk2.com)



The foldable, packable, here-to-there comfort shoe. (Think flip-flops for winter.) Mush Frio MJ Mesh, \$45, [teva.com](http://teva.com)

