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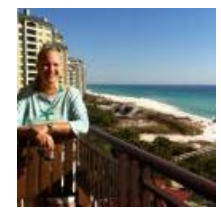
Skiing and Dog Sledding and Snow Shoeing, Oh My! A Winter Getaway to Northern Michigan

Travelled by [Jan Ross](#) on 24 February 2014 | [0 Comments](#)



Travelled By

[Jan Ross](#)



Jan Ross has been traveling since she was an infant as her father was a career Marine Corps officer and her family traveled the globe. ...[Find out more!](#)

My husband and I love snow. But, unfortunately, we live in the southern state of Kentucky where an inch or so of the white precipitation can cause the city of Lexington to go into a state of emergency in which the grocery shelves are cleared of bread and milk and the residents hunker down like an endless nuclear winter has begun. This meant that to find snow – actual deep, beautiful knee high or higher snow, we had to head north. So we made arrangements to visit three equally fabulous resorts in northern Michigan and set out to find some of the white stuff.

We realized we were heading in the right direction as we got closer to Michigan and the snow by the sides of the road got deeper, whiter, and fluffier. Our first destination was Traverse City, Michigan where we were booked into the luxurious [Grand Traverse Resort and Spa](#). Our first sight of the resort was a soaring tower in the distance which we realized as we drew closer was indeed our final destination. The Grand Traverse Resort is situated on 900 acres of gorgeous green rolling hills, woodlands and beach, which are surrounded by Lake Michigan and lush orchards and vineyards. All of which were covered by fabulous white, puffy snow – exactly what we had been looking for! The resort is owned by the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and is wonderfully maintained. It was truly one of the most well maintained resorts we have ever visited and the Public Relations Manager, Mike DeAgostino, informed us that they spend millions of dollars every year to keep it that way. They offer golf, tennis, a wonderful spa, shopping, dining, and great winter fun, which we were totally ready to experience.



But first we handed our luggage off to the bellman and dashed to the spa because we had arrived just in time for our scheduled massages. The spa at The Grand Traverse Resort is tucked away by the fitness center, tennis courts, an indoor pool and plenty of other activities to keep you moving and fit but we bypassed those as we were all about relaxing after our long car trip. They offer an amazing array of services including facials, scrubs, manicures and pedicures but one of their signature offerings is a cherry infused massage which was absolutely phenomenal. As cherries are renowned as one of Michigan's most famous offerings, the cherry infused massage was a perfect choice. The lovely cherry smell really added to the wonderful massage and, by the time it was over, I was ready for a nap in our room. We were settled into a room high in the Tower but the resort also offers rooms

in their original hotel and a number of condominiums scattered all over the property, some of which are right on the shore of the lake.

In the evening, it was time to check out the Aerie Restaurant and Lounge for dinner. Conveniently located on the 16th floor of the tower, the restaurant has huge windows wrapped all around the perimeter and incredible views of the area. The food was just as amazing. Using locally sourced ingredients as much as possible with local wines and microbrews, everything we tasted was better than the last item. We also had breakfast both mornings at the Sweetwater American Bistro which is more casual but also had great food; we really enjoyed the fresh omelets.

The Grand Traverse Resort was the place where we learned that we do not like cross-country skiing but absolutely love dog sledding. That's right, they offer dog sledding adventures with a local group called [Second Chance Mushers](#), a Siberian Husky and Alaskan Malamute rescue group which trains the dogs to pull sleds but also offers some of them for adoption. We spent an afternoon with this incredible group, sledding around the snowed-in golf course and loved every minute. We also spent approximately 20 minutes attempting cross-country skiing but between trying to balance on the miniscule skis and falling on our butts several times, we decided it was not for us. Hey, at least we gave it a try!



We also spent a day in the nearby, quite lovely town of Traverse City which was just enough to make us realize we need to return for a much lengthier stay. Even though the beaches were snow covered, we could see enough to realize this would be a great summer family destination. Great little shops, interesting restaurants, the surrounding vineyards for wine tasting, and the beautiful blue Lake Michigan definitely put this on our list of future travels.

From Traverse City, we headed to [Crystal Mountain](#), a ski resort in Thompsonville, Michigan. It was ironic in a way that we were going to a ski resort since we are not fans of skiing, but we do love other winter sports and they had plenty of snow – the primary reason for our trip. Crystal Mountain is an absolutely idyllic location with lush evergreens and snow covered mountains perfect for exploring. They have an amazing variety of accommodations from rooms at the Inn to bungalows, cottages, condominiums and even larger rental homes. We felt a little wistful about the Mountain Tops condominiums and their incredible views of the ski lifts and skiers until we realized our two bedroom cottage at Waters Edge was a short walk to the spa, restaurants, shops, snowshoe and bike rental, and pretty much everything we wanted to do during our visit. It was also extremely homely with a full kitchen and a fireplace in the living room which we enjoyed whenever we were home taking a break from the snow.

We had some great meals at the Thistle Pub and Grille, as well as breakfast at the Wild Tomato Restaurant and Bar and everything was delicious. I especially enjoyed my hot chocolate every morning with the snow falling outside – it was liking being in a postcard! We spent an afternoon snowshoeing with a guide in the Michigan Art Legacy Park which was just amazing. Although you might be able to see the sculptures better without a coating of snow, the 30-acre park filled with sculptures depicting the history of Michigan was a winter wonderland and the perfect place to snowshoe.

We also spent an afternoon – or at least a half hour or so – learning how to ride fat tire bikes. We had never heard of these bikes, as they are a fairly recent innovation with wide, fat tires perfect for biking in the snow. We love to bike ride but these bikes are not for the casual rider, as they require quite a bit of stamina to plow through the snow. Our guide told us a half hour ride on these bikes is equivalent to an hour on a regular bike so about twenty minutes was good for us!



Our last stop on our whirlwind tour of snow resorts in Michigan was [The Homestead](#) in Glen Arbor, Michigan near the Sleeping Bear Dunes

National Lakeshore. Beautifully situated on rolling hills covered with a variety of trees, this resort has a lot to offer in winter and summer. With several hotels, plenty of condominiums, and rental homes, many of which are located on the pretty beach fronting Lake Michigan, the resort is the perfect place for a family getaway. We headed to our roomy suite at Little Belle but were a little stymied by the deep snow that blocked the path to our room. Snow had fallen overnight and was literally everywhere but no problem as the resort immediately sent someone to shovel a path for us! Our suite was incredible with a separate living room and fireplace and a huge Jacuzzi tub in the bedroom which felt wonderful after a day in the snow. We had one of the best meals of our trip at Nonna's Ristorante which was a short walk from our suite through the newly cleared paths.

Little Belle also features a nice little shopping area, a small country store where you can buy coffee and fresh pastries, and a ski lift. The next day,

we checked out Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore which was beautiful covered with deep snow, then spent the afternoon getting pampered at Spa Amira. The small but luxurious spa is perched on a hill and has an incredible view of Lake Michigan along with a pool which would be lovely in the summer. I then spent the rest of the afternoon at Lillyjade, the salon at Little Belle, getting a wonderful and relaxing manicure and pedicure. I picked up some sandwiches from the country store and we spent the evening enjoying our fireplace and winding down from our fabulous snow getaway.



We were sad to head home to next day and leave all the wonderful, deep snow and great experiences behind but luckily it was snowing when we arrived home. Although it was not knee deep and there was nobody snowshoeing through our neighborhood, it was still nice to find a little snow on the ground!

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