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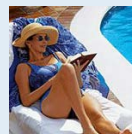
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Winter Girlfriends Getaway to Michigan

By: [Jan Ross](#)

Thursday, March
13th, 2014



credit: WanderlustWonder

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My first choice for a girlfriends getaway is normally a beach, pretty much any beach, anywhere, anytime. But I may have to change my opinion after spending several days in Michigan enjoying the fabulous, deep, fluffy snow and all the activities that go along with it. Because we are not complete heathens when we travel who have no desire to stay in a cold, musty cabin in the woods and we also like fabulous food, great spa experiences, and lovely resorts along with our snow fun, we made arrangements to visit three equally marvellous resorts in northern Michigan.

Snow Time in Michigan!

Snow in Michigan is nothing like the pitiful amounts of snow in our home state of Kentucky. We realized this as we drove deeper into Michigan and 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](#). 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. The resort is owned by the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and is wonderfully maintained, looking as new and pristine as when it was first built. It's actually a very popular summer destination as well and they offer some world famous golf courses along with tennis and beautiful beaches on nearby Grand Traverse Bay. They also have a wonderful spa, shopping in a darling little shopping center in the tower where we stayed, great dining, and lots of winter fun.



The Spa at the Grand Traverse Resort

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 either before or after your spa experiences. 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. Since 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 stayed in a large room with a great view 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 bay which would be perfect for a summer girlfriends getaway.

Things to Do on a Winter Day in Michigan

The Grand Traverse Resort offers pretty much any winter sport you can think of including

snowmobiling, cross country skiing, (downhill skiing is also available nearby), snowshoeing, snowboarding, ice skating, and dog sledding. Dog sledding? Yep. A local group called [Second Chance Musers](#) is a Siberian Husky and Alaskan Malamute rescue group which trains the dogs to pull sleds but also offers some of them for adoption. Rides are offered on the snowed-in golf course and zipping along in the sled with the dogs running furiously ahead of you, baying with joy, is quite an experience.

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 beautiful blue Grand Traverse Bay definitely put this on our list of future travels.



Crystal Mountain Ski Resort

From Traverse City, we continued with our snowy getaway to [Crystal Mountain](#), a ski resort in Thompsonville, Michigan. Crystal Mountain is an absolutely idyllic location hidden away down several, snow covered country roads 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 stayed in a two bedroom cottage at Waters Edge which was a perfect location as it was just a short walk to the spa, restaurants, shops, snowshoe and bike rental, ski runs, and pretty much anything you could want to do during a visit. It was also extremely homey with a full kitchen and a fireplace in the living room which we enjoyed whenever we were home taking a break from the snow. It's so nice to have a kitchen when you travel to stock with drinks, snacks, and the

makings of light meals to save money instead of eating out.

However, when you do want to eat out, head to The Thistle Pub and Grille for lunch and dinner and the Wild Tomato Restaurant and Bar for breakfast, where everything is delicious. Snowshoeing is easy at Crystal Mountain; just rent your snowshoes and head out on one of the many groomed trails. You can also snowshoe through the Michigan Art Legacy Park which we did. 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.

You should also try fat tire biking as they have plenty of these bikes to rent and they are only \$10 an hour. We had never heard of these bikes as they are a fairly recent innovation with wide, fat tires perfect for biking in the snow. They are easy to ride but not so easy to get through the snow. Our guide told us a half hour ride on these bikes is equivalent to an hour on a regular bike so prepare yourself for a good workout! Of course, skiing is a big draw at Crystal Mountain although we are not skiers and they also offer dog sledding, ice skating, horse drawn surrey rides, snowmobiling, and even guided fishing trips.



credit: WanderlustWonder

The Homestead in Glen Arbor

Our last stop on our visit to 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 of offer in both 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 girlfriends getaway.

We had a roomy suite at Little Belle 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, an Italian restaurant which is warm and welcoming with a cozy fireplace. It's only a short walk from the suites at Little Belle.

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 and would be a great summer destination. Although the resort offers skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, and ice skating, we decided to take it easy on our last day of vacation and spent the afternoon relaxing and getting pampered. First, we paid a visit to 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. Then we spent the rest of the afternoon at Lillyjade, the lovely little salon at Little Belle, getting a wonderful manicure and pedicure.

It was the perfect, relaxing end to what turned out to be the perfect winter girlfriends getaway. I may have to alternate beach trips with snow trips from now on!

Jan Ross is a freelance travel writer who has been traveling the world since way back before she can even remember. Her dad was in the Marine Corps so she is used to packing up at a moment's notice! She loves writing hotel and restaurant reviews since it means she gets to stay in fabulous places and eat wonderful food. She especially loves writing spa reviews because that means she gets phenomenally pampered and, seriously, who does not like that? She has visited lots of places but still gets a thrill of excitement when she boards a plane, steps into a new hotel room, or sees a new location for the first time. And she hopes that thrill never, ever goes away.

For more information on Jan, visit her website at WanderlustWonder.com.

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