

Explore the Top Eight Ski Areas near Major Metro Cities for Unforgettable, Close-To-Home Winter Fun

Enjoy a Vast Network of Midwest Resorts Offering the Perfect Day Escape and the option to Take a Trip out West, All on the Epic Pass

Nov. 22, 2023 – As winter approaches, snow enthusiasts are gearing up to embrace the snow at some of the finest ski resorts conveniently located near major metropolitan areas. These ski destinations offer an ideal combination of accessibility, affordability, and abundant winter fun. Whether you are new or looking to learn or a seasoned skier and rider looking to get your legs warmed up for a mountain trip, here is a preview of the top eight ski resorts near major metro areas in the Northern and Southern Midwest and Ohio.

"The Midwest ski culture is rich and vibrant, offering the perfect blend of accessibility, affordability, and genuine hospitality," said Tim Harris, VP of the Midwest Region. "We are a great option for guests looking to try something new and also for our seasoned guests looking to for an excellent ski experience close to home."

1. Afton Alps: Celebrating 60 Years (Nearest Major City: Mpls/ St. Paul, MN)

Located just 25 minutes from St. Paul, Minnesota, Afton Alps is the largest resort in the Twin Cities area, covering 300 acres of skiing paradise. Established in 1963, it started as a dream of local farmers and has become a cherished ski retreat. With breathtaking valley views, unique features like a tunnel run, and a welcoming small-town atmosphere, Afton Alps is the perfect place to ignite your passion for skiing and snowboarding.

Afton Alps offers a variety of events throughout the season, from ULLR Fest to exclusive First Tracks events for Epic Pass Holders. Don't miss the Valley S'mores Gondola fire pit for some delicious s'mores every Saturday and Sunday afternoon.

2. Mt Brighton: How Detroit residents 'Brighton' winter (Nearest Major City: Detroit, Michigan)

Celebrating 60 years in 2021, Mt Brighton provides winter fun for Detroit residents and beyond. As one of the highest points in Livingston County, it offers stunning sunset views from the top of chairs 2 or 3. Whether you prefer a coffee at Brighton Early Coffee Shop, a beer at Bruhn's Bar, or a burger at Ski Hill Grill, Mt Brighton covers all your après-ski needs.

Enjoy unique events like the Duct Tape Derby, Sunday S'mores, and the epic Slush Cup to close the season. Mt Brighton also participates in Winter Blast, a community celebration to expand access to skiing and snowboarding for young people in a Detroit suburb.

3. Wilmot Mountain: The Heart of the Heartland (Nearest Major City: Chicago, Illinois)

For 86 seasons, Wilmot Mountain has been the heart of the heartland, providing warmth and winter adventures to thousands. In addition to skiing and snowboarding, Wilmot Mountain offers 22 lanes of tubing, each over 1,000 feet long, ensuring exhilarating fun for all.

Don't miss Weekend Kringle Afternoons, a nod to Wisconsin's culinary history, and savor the state's official pastry, the Kringle. Walt's Tavern serves classic Midwest fare, and the resort now partners with bubly to refresh its tubing park for even more enjoyment. Wrap up the season with a splash at Spring Fling, which includes a pond skim for unforgettable memories.

4. Hidden Valley, MO: The Hidden Gem of St. Louis (Nearest Major City: St. Louis, Missouri)

Hidden Valley is a true hidden gem located just a short distance from St. Louis. This regional destination provides family-friendly fun with state-of-the-art snowmaking to ensure a winter wonderland even when Mother Nature has warmer plans. Hidden Valley is known for being the home hill to highly decorated US Ski Team athletes and even served as a filming location for rapper Nelly's show, Nellyville. Guests can also enjoy scenic views of the St. Louis Arch and skyline from the mountain's top.

Explore the newly rebranded 'T-Rav Way' trail, named after the St. Louis classic, Toasted Raviolis, and savor this local delicacy at the resort. Tubing is also available for added excitement.

5. Paoli Peaks: Just North Enough (Nearest Major City: Louisville, Kentucky)

Where the South looks for winter, to earn and play – Paoli Peaks is a great destination for skiing, riding, and tubing. This season Paoli Peaks is celebrating 45 years! New for the 2023-24 season, Paoli Peaks introduces a reimagined beginner area, making it even more welcoming for those new to the sport. The resort offers a unique opportunity to watch your children learn to ski from the deck, providing a perfect view of the learning zone.

Paoli Peaks offers complimentary popcorn daily at sunset. Which sparks the question, are you even in Indiana if you're not snacking on popcorn? We think not.

6. Snow Creek: Gateway to the West (Nearest Major City: Kansas City, Missouri)

Just a short distance from Kansas City, Snow Creek serves as a winter outpost for outdoor recreation. Nestled in Weston, MO, this resort celebrated its 35th season recently, offering a range of ski and snowboarding challenges, as well as the adrenaline-rushing Tornado Alley Tube Park.

Snow Creek is the last stop before hitting the mountains, making it the true Gateway to the West. It's known for its unique location, with activities like trekking across the Oregon Trail and zipping through Tornado Alley.

7. Boston Mills | Brandywine | Alpine Valley: Celebrating 60 Years (Nearest Major City: Cleveland, Ohio)

Celebrating 60 years in 2023, Boston Mills and Brandywine are dual resorts located in the scenic Cuyahoga Valley National Park, one of the country's most highly visited national parks. A single lift ticket allows guests to visit both resorts in one day.

We are continuing to celebrate last season's TWO New Lifts! In 2022, two new lifts at Boston Mills and Brandywine were installed, enhancing reliability and the overall guest experience. Vail Resorts invested in the Buena Vista lift at Boston Mills, a new fixed-grip, 4-person chair to replace the former Lift 5 double. At Brandywine, the new RAM Quad is a fixed-grip, 4-person chair that replaced the Lift 3 triple. Boston Mills boasts the steepest pitch in Ohio with the 'Tiger' trail.

Both resorts have enhanced the guest experience with new lifts, offering greater reliability and efficiency. Bonus: Brandywine will be open until Midnight, every Saturday in February. Brandywine is home to the very fun, and very exhilarating Polar Blast Tubing Park. Our snow tubing park offers an adrenaline-pumping experience that is perfect for children and adults (42" height requirement). We provide the tubes and a massive two-lane conveyor belt that ascends you to the top of the tubing lanes. From there, you have the option to choose between one of many tubing lanes, including super lanes for a heightened tubing experience!

Ohioans know that Whitey's Chili is the go-to brand that delivers on the ultimate comfort food. Making you feel like you are back home with mom, when you are actually slope side at Boston Mills, Brandywine or Alpine Valley. If you are brand new to the sport, visit Alpine Valley, which is ideal for beginners.

Alpine Valley's terrain is designed to spread out guests and allow them to have ample space during their ski excursion and offers perfect gentle pitches.

8. Mad River Mountain: The Largest Ski Resort in Ohio(Nearest Major City: Columbus, Ohio)

Mad River Mountain is Ohio's largest ski resort, offering a range of on-snow challenges, from gentle beginner areas to steeper pitches and a terrain park. The Loft Bar features live music and spectacular ski hill views, making it the perfect spot for après-ski enjoyment.

For those seeking excitement, Mad River Mountain's bubly Tubing Park is Ohio's largest, promising family-friendly thrills.

News Across Vail Resorts:

How to Maximize Your Season Get Your Epic Pass Today Before the Go Off Sale!

If you are planning to ski or ride this season, you have less than two weeks to lock in your Epic Pass. Epic Passes – including the Epic Day Pass (1-7 days), which provides up to 65% savings compared to lift ticket prices – go off sale at 11:59 p.m. MT on Sunday, Dec. 3. Lock in a pass now and you can decide later when and where to ski and ride this season.

Whether planning to hit the slopes one day or every day, by purchasing a pass now, guests will get the best value, plus flexibility and benefits not offered with traditional lift tickets. That includes 20% off on-mountain dining, group ski and ride lessons, lodging, rentals, and more with Epic Mountain Rewards.

Skiers and riders can also use the new Mobile Pass technology on Vail Resorts new My Epic app this season – allowing them to skip the ticket window and get scanned hands free with their phones (read more below).

Those who buy their pass now will also unlock access to discounted lodging rates through Vail Resorts' Pass Holder Exclusive Cyber Sale from Nov. 21 – 27. The Pass Holder Exclusive Cyber Sale will offer up to 20% off lodging rates this winter season, plus an additional 20% off with Epic Mountain Rewards. Pass Holders will have discounted lodging options across Vail Resorts' portfolio of hotels, condos and premier vacation residences.

The New My Epic App New this season, the My Epic app with Mobile Pass and Mobile Lift Tickets is now available to download, allowing guests to use their phone as their ticket to the slopes. Mobile Pass and Mobile Lift Tickets is a hands-free option for skiers and riders to use at all 36 of Vail Resorts' owned and operated U.S. resorts for the 2023/24 season.

It allows guests to buy their pass or lift ticket online, activate it in the new My Epic app, put their phone in their pocket, and get scanned, hands-free in the lift line using Bluetooth® technology designed for low energy usage to minimize the impact on a phone's battery life.

This season, to ensure a smooth transition, the company will continue to provide physical cards for passes and lift tickets to all guests. For guests choosing to use Mobile Pass this season, watch this video for some tips. The My Epic app also offers a range of guest-favorite features, including interactive trail maps with GPS location tracking, and mountain and resort alerts, including operational information like grooming updates, terrain status, snow reports and conditions.

Slope Days-After School Ski School

This year, bring your school or youth group to the slopes to learn to ski and ride or enhance your skills! Our new program is designed to welcome new kids into the sport, by giving students the experience of a lifetime in a three to six-week program. This is an all-inclusive program that includes a day-specific lift ticket, rental package, and an hour-long lesson, all at a value rate.

Epic for Everyone – Youth Access and Growing the Sport

The future of winter sports is inclusion. Through investments and partnerships, Vail Resorts is committed to ensuring that all feel welcome, invited, and included. Our Epic for Everyone youth access programs serve thousands of youth annually who may not have had access to the sport. Our programs provide free on-snow sessions, including lessons, meals, rentals, mentorship, an introduction to careers in snow sports, and more.

This winter, several of our Midwest region resorts will be hosting non-profit organizations for a series of visits.

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About Vail Resorts, Inc. (NYSE: MTN) Vail Resorts is a network of the best destination and close-to-home ski resorts in the world including Vail Mountain, Breckenridge, Park City Mountain, Whistler Blackcomb, Stowe, and 32 additional resorts across North America; Andermatt-Sedrun in Switzerland; and Perisher, Hotham, and Falls Creek in Australia. We are passionate about providing an Experience of a Lifetime to our team members and guests, and our EpicPromise is to reach a zero net operating footprint by 2030, support our employees and communities, and broaden engagement in our sport. Our company owns and/or manages a collection of elegant hotels under the Rock Resorts brand, a portfolio of vacation rentals, condominiums and branded hotels located in close proximity to our mountain destinations, as well as the Grand Teton Lodge Company in Jackson Hole, Wyo. Vail Resorts Retail operates more than 250 retail and rental locations across North America. Learn more about our company at www.VailResorts.com, or discover our resorts and pass options at www.EpicPass.com.



Little Shredder at Afton Alps

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