

LEARN HOW TO SKI TIGHT LINES

START SMALL, THINK BIG AND STICK TO THE EDGES

SKI

THE MAGAZINE OF THE SKI LIFE



BIONIC COAT
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25 EASY ADVENTURES

COOL PLACES
CLASSIC TOURS
& A LITTLE
BIT OF DANGER

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TRAVEL

**AMERICA'S
MOST
POPULAR SKI
RESORT?**

THE ANSWER MIGHT
SURPRISE YOU—
SEE PAGE 64

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LIFE IS SHORT—AND THERE'S A BIG WORLD BEYOND YOUR LOCAL SKI HILL. NO MATTER YOUR SKILL SET OR MINDSET, WE'VE GOT A GREAT WINTER ADVENTURE FOR YOU. NOW GO. EXPLORE.

DIFFICULTY DIAL »





« **HELI 101** You don't have to be hardcore to heliski. If you can handle a blue run with powder on it, you're qualified. The following programs will hold your hand the whole way down.

CMH Powder Intro

Get the feel for deep snow with two trained guides who provide hands-on, all-day instruction. From \$4,700 per week; canadianmountainholidays.com

CMH Family Week

If you have kids—or a spouse—who aren't yet up for seven days of ripping, no problem. CMH groups them appropriately, cuts kids a price break, and shows everyone a good time. \$4,700 per adult per week; \$2,700 per child

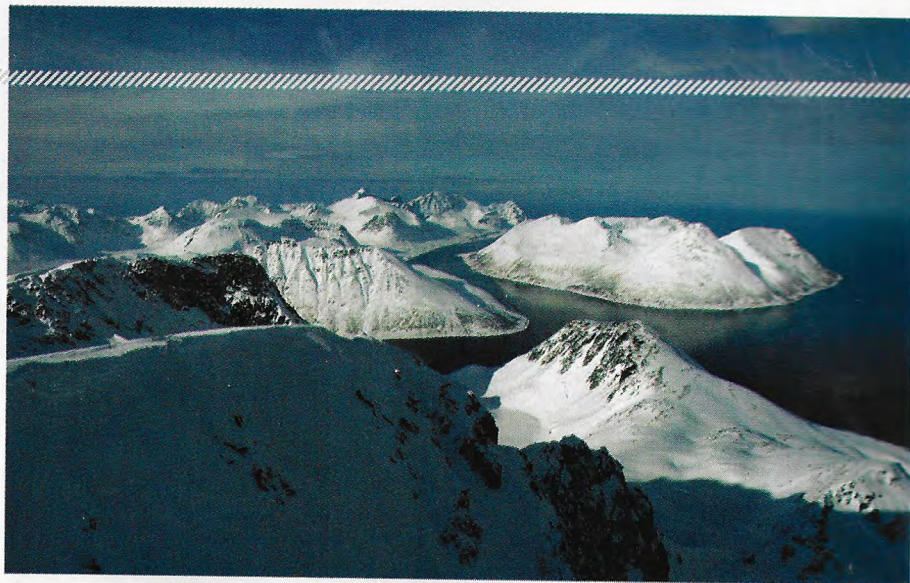
Wiegele's Intro to Powder Week

Wiegele's, located in B.C.'s snowy heart, offers a three-day snowcat, four-day heli trip that gradually introduces guests to powder. The snowcat mountain is partially groomed, and the guides are all certified instructors. From \$6,000 per week; wiegele.com



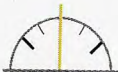
HELISKI THE HIMALAYAS //

The people who live in the crown of the Himalayas call it the land of gods and goddesses. When you step out of the mouth of a helicopter atop a 21,000-foot peak to rip down long, white robes of untouched powder, you won't wonder why. Remote Lands runs a five-day trip that begins in Manali, India, with two full days of heliskiing at the top of the world. The real highlight of the trip comes on the last day, when the helicopter drops guests in Dharamsala, seat of the Tibetan government in exile, for a private audience with the Dalai Lama. From \$1,000 per person per day; remotelands.com



« **CRUISE NORWAY'S FJORDS**

Breathtaking. Spectacular. Awesome. Our well-thumbed thesaurus fails to describe either Norway's Lyngen Alps—an archipelago of spiny peaks that drop, one virgin powder field after another, into the blue Arctic Sea—or the experience of skiing them. The Lyngen Lodge, perched on a fjord 300 miles inside the Arctic Circle, is Norway's newest—and most luxurious—backcountry adventure hub. The lodge transports skiers by speedboat (helis are verboten by the Norwegian government) to more than 60 otherwise inaccessible peaks with vertical drops nearing 4,000 feet. Mountain guides lead groups equipped with alpine-touring gear (available at the lodge) to treeless swaths of pure, dry powder. Then the boat whips everyone back to the lodge for an elegant feast. Speechless? You'll have plenty of time to search for words from the outdoor hot tub—if you can turn your attention from the Northern lights. \$2,760 per week; lyngnelodge.com



SKI TRAIN TO CANADA //

Recapture the romance of skiing's golden age: Book a ski safari aboard *The Canadian*, a 50-year-old train replete with luxurious dining cars, sleeper cars and chic art-deco décor that chugs through some of the Canadian Rockies' most spectacular terrain. The trip begins in Edmonton, Alberta, and ends in Vancouver, B.C. Along the way, you can enjoy lift-served goods at Marmot Basin and Sun Peaks, heliski at Mike Wiegele's, catski with Cariboo Snowcats or make the drive to Revelstoke Mountain Resort, where you can either buy a lift ticket or hire Mica Heliskiing. For the last leg of the journey, from Kamloops back to Vancouver, you'll want to spring for a private cabin; the trip is at night, and there's that romance to get back to. From \$350; viarail.ca



« **ALASKAN KINGS AND CORN**

Heliskiing in Alaska's Tordrillo Mountains with ski legends Tommy Moe and Jeremy Nobis is pretty cool. But follow that with heli-fishing—yes, heli-fishing—for 50-pound king salmon in a remote stretch of the world's most scenic waters, and you've got yourself a trip to dream about. With Chugach Powder Guides' five-day Kings and Corn package, you carve up soft corn in the mornings, hook up giant salmon in the afternoons and then tell fish tales over a gourmet Alaskan feast at a luxurious backcountry lodge in the evenings. Your life list just got shorter. By a lot. \$8,200 per person; chugachpowderguides.com





« HAUTE ROUTE

Bookended by Europe's most iconic peaks—France's Mont Blanc to the west and Switzerland's Matterhorn to the east—the Haute Route is alpine ski touring's most legendary hut-to-hut interconnect. The route has several variations, many starting with a descent of the Vallée Blanche. Most tours—including the popular Verbier variation—require high levels of endurance and advanced downhill skiing ability. Although previous ski-touring experience (uphill skinning) is recommended, it doesn't need to be extensive; there is more downhill skiing than uphill travel on the seven- to 13-day 75-mile trek. Some itineraries build basic ice-ax and crevasse-rescue training into the first couple days. At night, you'll enjoy hearty meals, cocktails aplenty and deep sleep in the high alpine. American guides Kathy Cosley and Mark Houston, who live in the Chamonix Valley, offer ski tours throughout the Alps—including the Haute Route—in April and May. \$2,800–\$3,450; cosleyhouston.com

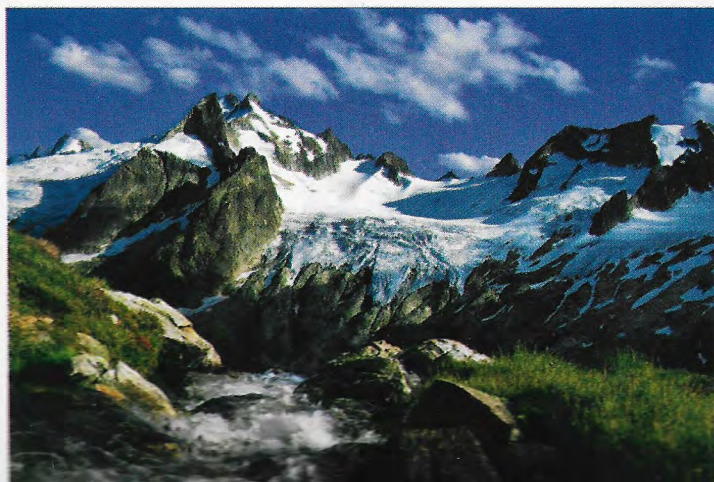


VALLÉE BLANCHE

Any discussion of classic alpine routes should, arguably, start with the Vallée Blanche on the Aiguille du Midi, a granite up-thrust towering over Chamonix, France, the cradle of European mountaineering. With a vertical drop of 9,200 feet, it's Europe's longest downhill ski run and one of the world's most famous, sharing billing with the Hahnenkamm and the Lauberhorn. The tram (once the world's highest) and the crampons-and-harness-required, quarter-mile knife-edge climb that follows deliver the biggest thrills of the trip—before you've even clicked into your skis. It's an undertaking for strong intermediates or better. The biggest challenges—more than the Vallée Blanche's generally moderate pitches—are variable snow (no grooming up here), unmarked hazards and the sheer length of the descent. Hire a guide on the spot through the local *bureaus des guides*, or book in advance with a reputable private outfit. chamonix.com



SIERRA CREST // The centuries-old stone cabins, dressed beds and prepared meals along Europe's Haute Route might seem like haute luxury compared to what is often considered its North American equivalent. Sierra Mountain Center's Classic High Route traverses 37 miles of high-alpine ridgeline and serves up 3,000 vertical feet of bowl skiing daily. But the means of transport (alpine-touring or telemark gear) and breathtaking views are where the similarities between the two trips end. "This is a wilderness ski tour," explains SMC owner and guide S.P. Parker. You'll carry your own gear, make your own food and sleep in a tent each night, so winter camping and mountaineering skills are required (\$1,450, including airfare). Not quite ready? Warm up with one of SMC's introductory or intermediate ski tours (\$400 and up). sierramountaincenter.com



« PTARMIGAN TRAVERSE

Neophytes need not apply. Clients should be experienced backcountry travelers and adherents of the Leave-No-Trace ethic. Level 1 avalanche and ski-mountaineering training are also requisite. But the Ptarmigan Traverse is ample reward for all that preparation. Considered the best ski tour in Washington's North Cascades, it's a mixed-terrain route. [Ptarmigan.com](http://www.Ptarmigan.com)

skinning, ice climbing and roped glacier travel, not to mention the ability to ski ungroomed glacier descents while carrying 40 to 60 pounds on your back. Along the way, Mountain Madness guides teach terrain management skills, glaciology, crevasse pattern prediction, alpine ecology and hazard assessment. Sleep in a tent and cook your own food. In other words, earn your turns...and



SKI WITH A STAR //

Need new names to drop? Sign up to ski with any of the several former ski film stars who offer clinics and guided skiing experiences. Among our favorites:

Kim Reichhelm

We still love her best for The Greatest Ski-Flick Crash Ever (*License to Thrill*), but this former racer/big-mountain champ still rips. Her speciality: all-girl boundary-pushing clinics. *From \$2,100; skiwithkim.com*

Deslauriers/Egans

Eric and Rob, John and Dan: Vermont boyhood friends who went on to ski-film stardom. Now they'll show you how to rip even harder at venues around the world. (We especially like Eric's how-to-huck-

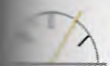
anything clinic at Sugarbowl, Calif.) *From \$170; allmountainskipros.com*

Dean Cummings

U.S. Ski Teamer, H2O heli guide, World Extremes champ, first descents.... Yeah, Dean can ski. He can also show you how to bring Snowbird to its knees. Throw in a day of heliskiing: Now *that's* a ski trip. *\$2,160; snowbird.com*

Chris Anthony

Another former elite racer turned ski movie star, Chris is a familiar face to Warren Miller fans. Check out his Chile adventure camp with Shane McConkey. (*From \$1,950*.) Even better, head to Italy with him for the "Wine and Dine with a Skiing Problem" camp. *From \$4,400; chrisanthony.com*



THE OTHER ASPEN ^ Aspen takes a lot of flack for being so precious, but there's nothing soft about the mountains that ring it. When you're ready to see the rougher side of America's jet-set retreat, sign on with Aspen Expeditions. "Every trip is custom," says Dirk Bockelman, guide and general manager—from lift-served, low-angle spins through the backcountry for the less fit and/or uninitiated to more challenging and technical stuff for experienced off-piste adventurers. Repeat customers typically graduate to cooler things than they ever expected. *From \$230 per person; aspenexpeditions.com*



SKI THE GRAND TETON // OK, so summiting and skiing the Grand—a two-day project requiring superior fitness, skill and weather—is decidedly aspirational. But maybe it's a goal tucked in the back of your mind as you master rudimentary mountaineering skills under the tutelage of Exum Mountain Guides, one of the nation's oldest and most capable outfitters. Exum offers a full range of guided backcountry experiences for almost any level of fitness and skill. Kitted out with ice ax, crampons and touring skis, you'll cover the basics of ascents, belaying, rappelling, snow safety, etc. in the mountains around Jackson Hole, Wyo. Naturally, you'll ski some sweet lines, too. And when you're ready for the Grand? Exum is, too. *exumguides.com*



FRENCH CONNECTION >>

What better place to take on new challenges than in the country that gave us extreme skiing? And what better mountain than La Meije, a legendary spire with a charming and ancient village (La Grave) at its feet? La Meije should not be skied unguided. There are no trails, per se, and any control is limited on its 7,100-vertical feet of spectacular terrain. La Grave is one of a number of destinations served by Extremely Canadian, a capable Whistler-based outfitter that leads adventures worldwide. *\$3,250 per person; extremely-canadian.com*





⤴ **ICE CLIMBING** It may sound daunting, but sign on with a reputable outfitter and you'll be Spidey's ice-scaling doppelganger faster than you'd think. The Appalachian Mountain Club's intro course covers how to read the ice, where common hazards lie and how to belay, rappel and tie knots. All with the frozen crags of New Hampshire's dramatic Crawford Notch as your playground. *March 6-8; \$545; outdoors.org.* Or try a waterfall-climbing course in the stunning Ouray Ice Park, outside Telluride, Colo., with Mountain Madness. Its basic course is aimed at people with little or no experience. *Feb. 7-8; \$400-\$780, depending on group size; mountainmadness.com*



⤴ **STOWE AWAY** ⤴ There's undeniable appeal to a night spent atop a mountain with little more than a wood stove and whatever you carried with you in your rucksack. The Stone Hut, at the top of Stowe's Mt. Mansfield, offers just such an experience. Built by the Conservation Corps of Engineers in 1936, the Stone Hut, accessible via the high-speed quad, served as the resort's original warming hut. The hideaway welcomes overnights from mid-November to mid-April, though reserving a stay is like winning the lottery—literally. Hopefuls send in payment (\$150 per night) and cross their fingers that their name gets called. It may not be this season or next, but every good New Englander knows a thing or two about persistence. *vtstateparks.com*



⤴ **WINTER DRIVING 101** // There's speed on snow, and then there's *speed on snow*. For the latter, the protection of alloy and airbags trumps a helmet any day of the week. At the Bridgestone Winter Driving School in Steamboat Springs, Colo., learn everything from basic winter-driving safety to speed-on-ice performance, gleaning driving tips and tricks used by rally car racers. Classes are taught on one of three ice tracks, each with different elevation changes, varied surfaces and banked turns. The "Fastest Ride on Ice" workshop (Feb. 9-10), for instance, focuses on cornering, acceleration and even braking—because even speed demons need to know how to shut it down. *\$270-\$2,250; winterdrive.com*



⤴ **ASPEN AIR** Blowing down that front face groomer on your last run of the day may feel like flying. But if you *really* want to catch some air, Aspen Paragliding's tandem paragliding pilots have been launching off the slopes of Aspen Mountain for nearly 20 years (flights are also available from Snowmass). Paragliders ride the Silver Queen gondola to the summit, ski down to the launch zone and hook into a harness with their pilot. (The pilot flies in the back, the guest in the front—the best seat in the house.) Then the two take a flying leap—literally—off the side of the mountain. In-air time is about a half-hour, but the rush lasts far longer. No experience necessary. *\$225; aspenparagliding.com*



⤴ **WYOMING WILD** // There are hundreds of thousands of reasons to visit Yellowstone National Park in the winter. (Chief among them: missing the hundreds of thousands of summer visitors.) The quiet contemplation of the snow-covered meadows, valleys and forests is unparalleled. The easiest way to see it? From the heated seats of a snowcoach. It's like a bus turned into a giant snowmobile, and it hits all the must-see spots as well as the hidden gems, such as the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone at the park's northern boundary. Joining you along the way: Yellowstone's famous wolves, bison, elk, bald eagles and maybe even a black bear or two. *\$109-\$119; yellowstonesnowcoaches.com*