

Top 10 Winter Family Getaways

Winter Wonderland: Upper Peninsula, Michigan

If you're from the midwest, you know what winter *really* means. And you can take it. You may even love it. If your brood embraces even the heaviest snows of deepest winter, Michigan's Upper Peninsula is a can't-miss destination for your family. Yes, only the truly well-shod, hearty and adventurous need apply. But if zero crowds, mile after mile of near-virgin snow and family time in a rustic cabin by a roaring fire sound good to you, then look no further. The UP has everything you're dreaming of.

On center stage at the UP is Ottawa National Forest, rimmed by countless, well-maintained state lands like Porcupine Mountains State Park and Copper Country State Forest. Skiing and snowshoeing here takes you up gentle slopes and down through peaceful valleys. You'll see meadows, lakes, streams and waterfalls, which form spectacular ice sculptures in wintertime. Trails and backcountry are equally littered with deer, fox and snowshoe hare tracks, among others. Hours of fun can be had with the kids learning to distinguish one set of animal tracks from another, finding patterns, and imagining how the animals live their days foraging and frolicking, munching bark and other snowy-weather fare.

The UP is chock-full of quaint little villages and historic mining towns. Lodging is available in any number of inns, bed and breakfasts, and rented cabins. While the former options are most often located within town limits, for some backcountry fun, cabins can't be beat — there's nothing like skiing or snowshoeing out your front door every morning.