



Winter Sports in Western N.C.

BY: ABIGAIL SUTTON

Whether you prefer to ski, snowboard, ice skate or snow tube, Western North Carolina's ski resorts offer high altitude, low temperature fun for everyone in your group. Here you will find a list of ski resorts in the Appalachian Mountains and what sports they offer to help you plan your next snowy excursion.

Hawksnest Resort, Seven Devils N.C.

Hawksnest Resort is different from other mountains in the area. They offer two unusual yet thrilling sports and focus on making those two attractions the best in the area. They are recognized as the largest snow tubing park on the East Coast, offering 20 tubing lanes in four different areas ranging from 400 to 1000 feet long. Hawksnest has 100% snow making and lighting on all lanes to provide the best possible conditions. No special training is needed to snow tube, just a brief rules and safety orientation and tubers 3 years and up can hit the slopes.

Hawksnest second attraction is open year round and offers a bird's eye view of the beautiful mountain scenery. Hawksnest has 19 zip line cables totaling over four miles of spectacular views and exhilarating fun. Zip lining is available for adults and children 10 years and older and is offered in 'tours', the only requirement to tour is having a friend to share the experience with.

Contact: www.hawksnesttubing.com, 828-963-6561

Appalachian Ski Mtn., Blowing Rock, N.C.

App Ski Mtn. has been providing snowy family fun for 50 years. They offer ski clothing and equipment rentals as well as lessons in both skiing and snowboarding, so you don't have to be a pro to get out in the snow. Between the slopes, three terrain parks, French-Swiss ski college and North Carolina's only Burton Learn To Ride Center, the only thing left to figure out is whether you will need a 1, 2, 3 or 5 day pass!

Offering a full view of the ski slopes on one side, and the Blue Ridge Mountains on the other, A.S.M's outdoor ice skating arena is fully lighted for skating seven days a week from noon to 9pm. Skaters and non-skaters can watch the action and warm up by the rink-side bonfire. Included in the price is skate rental in traditional figure skates or hockey skates.

Contact: www.appskimtn.com, 828-295-7828

Sugar Mountain Resort, Banner Elk, N.C.

If you want it all in one place Sugar Mountain might be your choice. They offer Skiing, Snowboarding, Tubing and Ice Skating, but a unique feature at Sugar is the Snowshoe Guided Tours! Usually offered Monday, Wednesday, Friday and twice on Saturdays, snowshoeing is a great way to get outdoors and stay in shape over the winter. The cost of snowshoeing at Sugar includes snowshoe rental and a one hour guided tour. Adult tours are for 12 years and older and children's tours are for ages 8-11. Group tours are available for groups of 4 to 15 people.

Contact: www.skisugar.com, 828-898-4521

Beech Mountain Resort, Beech Mountain, N.C.

Like the other ski locals listed here Beech Mountain offers skiing, skating and snowboarding and equipment rentals. What sets Beech apart is the 'Alpine Village', the expansive resort complex offers nearly everything you could want or need on the mountain. The village stores include a gift shop with clothing rental, a classic ski shop, and the Roots Rideshop with indoor skate ramp.

Several dining options are also part of the village whether you want a quick snack at 'Munchies', which also has ice skate rental and an arcade, or gourmet coffee at the Beech Mountain Bakery. For a full meal Beech offers the View Haus Cafeteria and the Beech Tree Bar & Grill which often hosts live music. With lodging close by and a selection of amenities, you won't have to leave the ski mountain until it is time to go home.

Contact: www.beechmountainresort.com, 828-387-2011