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Socially Distanced Winter Adventure in Estes Park

As a mountain town with people-powered ski offerings, Estes is a crowd-free and affordable way to experience a backcountry winter adventure vacation for all skill levels, including beginners

ESTES PARK, Colo. (September 2020) – Known as the base camp to Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) and only 90 minutes from Denver International Airport, Estes Park is an authentic Colorado mountain town beloved by residents and guests alike. With a range of activities and winter adventures either guided by local outdoor experts or done solo, Estes Park is an excellent destination for guests of all ages looking to socially distance and enjoy the winter season.

Below are a few ways to have a safe winter adventure in Estes Park this season.

Guided Outdoor Adventure – Estes is surrounded on three sides by public lands, including Roosevelt National Forest and Rocky Mountain National Park, which makes it an ideal winter destination for families, couples and solo adventurers, even beginners. Backcountry adventurers can head to Hidden Valley, a now defunct ski resort within Rocky Mountain National Park. Even though the lifts are gone, the trees are still cleared, making it perfect for people-powered backcountry sports. Several outfitters throughout town are ready to help get beginners out in the backcountry.

- **Avalanche Training Classes** – The Colorado Mountain School Estes Park location offers avalanche education courses, which teaches more individuals about avalanche safety than any other provider in the United States. The action-packed course combines classroom and field instruction to provide participants with a firm foundation of avalanche awareness and skills including traveling in and around avalanche terrain; design-making strategies; critical planning; travel techniques; and human factors involved in avalanches. It's a must-do course for anyone interested in backcountry winter sports. In addition to multi-day courses, the organization offers scheduled avalanche awareness clinics free of charge.
- **Kent Mountain Adventure Center** – Whether new to winter outdoor adventure or an experienced outdoor winter enthusiast, back-country travelers can enjoy and experience the beauty of Rocky Mountain National Park. The Center offers opportunities for all ages and abilities this winter, including backcountry skiing, split boarding, snow shoeing, cross country skiing, ice climbing, avalanche training and winter camping.
- **Estes Park Rock Climbing's Elkins Snowshoe Tours** – Award-winning Elkins Distillery offers a 4-hour morning snowshoe tour in the picturesque backcountry of Rocky Mountain National Park. After the snowshoe tour, the group will eat, drink and be merry with lunch from one of the best delis in town and warm-up with some of Colorado's finest whisky and whisky cocktails.
- **Snowshoe Trek with Footpaths of The World**: Inn-to-Inn, hotel-to-hotel, hut-to-hut, etc. is a trend that has swept Europe and is starting to trend across the US. One of the first outfitters on the scene, **Footpaths of The World** (based in Estes Park) has offered expertly designed self-guided hiking trips with a focus on inn-to-inn hiking for several years. In the winter, they offer

private guided snowshoe daytrips, with locations dependent on snow conditions, weather and ability level.

- **[Snow Cat Tours with Estes Park Outfitters](#)** – Experience the ultimate winter back-country mountain adventure with Estes Park’s only snow cat tour. Visitors will climb several thousand feet of elevation, ride through miles of remote mountain trails next to incredible mountain vistas with views of Denver and Estes Park Valley leading to a remote, luxury, off the grid mountain lodge located at 9200 feet elevation. Here, visitors can sit by the fire, relax, and take in the sweeping vistas of Twin Sisters mountains while enjoying their favorite food and drinks.
- **[Yellow Wood Guiding Private Tours](#)** – Yellow Wood Guiding is an Estes Park tour guide for snowshoeing, photos safaris, wildlife safaris and nature tours through Rocky Mountain National Park in Estes Park year-round. Yellow Wood Guide tours are a great way to experience and learn about the Rocky Mountains whether it is the first time or 100th time, with each private tour personally customized. Gear is provided from binoculars or snowshoes to heated gloves. Tours are designed for adults and children 12 and up.

Backcountry Adventure: For those wanting to get outdoors on their own, Estes offers a wide range of activities for all levels.

- **Winter Trail Running** – Runners don't have to stop running trails when the snow falls and can train at high altitude year-round by enhancing traction with ice spikes. Popular winter running trails in Estes Park include Black Canyon Trail, a five-mile out-and-back run from Lumpy Ridge Trailhead, and Moraine Park, which features a mixture of road and trail.
- **Ice Climbing** – Rocky Mountain National Park harbors dozens of [ice climbing](#) routes with one of the most notable routes, Hidden Falls. Hidden Falls offers easy access and a scenic setting.
- **[Backcountry Skiing](#) & Splitboarding** – Rocky Mountain National Park and Roosevelt National Forest both offer deep, untracked powder for some of the best backcountry skiing in the Rockies. Hidden Valley, a defunct ski resort in Rocky Mountain National Park, has nearly 1,200 skiable acres that athletes can skin or snowshoe up to take their run.
- **[Cross Country Skiing](#)** – The best local powder is found in Rocky Mountain National Park and Roosevelt National Forest, and sometimes on the Estes Park Golf Course. The most famous way to experience cross country is on Trail Ridge Road, the renowned route through Rocky Mountain National Park. The road is closed to car traffic in the winter, making it the perfect spot to ski up to 12,183 feet.
- **[Snowshoeing](#)** – Snow blankets the trails in the areas surrounding Estes Park, luring snowshoers over snow bridges, through forest and among some of the most stunning winter scenery. Glacier Gorge Trailhead leading to Mills Lake and Loch Vale is a stunning trek. The Loch requires a more experienced snowshoer but features views 1,000 feet higher than other trails.

After a day of adventuring, visitors can enjoy a tasty brew at one of [Estes Park’s breweries](#), a smoked old fashioned at [Elkins distillery](#) or local wine with cheese at [Snowy Peaks Winery](#). Following, adventurers can soothe sore muscles in a hot tub before settling in for the night in a [cozy cabin](#) or [boutique hotel](#).

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