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## 5 reasons to visit Bryce Canyon in the winter

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**BRYCE CANYON NATIONAL PARK** — Bryce Canyon National Park is a popular summer destination for tourists from around the world, but winter is also a great time to visit this unique park. Here are five reasons why you should consider a family trip to Bryce Canyon this winter.

### **Snow makes it better**

The bright orange sandstone formations that Bryce Canyon National Park is famous for are even more beautiful when they are capped with snow. It's a side of Bryce Canyon that most visitors don't get to see. Be sure to pack your camera.

Roads and overlooks in Bryce Canyon National Park are maintained throughout the winter, so even the most casual visitor can still appreciate the beautiful scenery throughout the park. Most of Bryce Canyon's viewpoints are easily accessible from the main road, and many are just a few steps away from their parking areas. You could spend an enjoyable and leisurely day at Bryce Canyon just driving from one viewpoint to the next.

For more adventurous visitors, Fairyland Road and Paria Point Roads are left unplowed for cross-country skiers. Most trails in the park are open year-round, but snowshoes or other special footwear will be needed when there is snow on the trail. Tennis shoes or other casual footwear are inadequate during the winter months. According to Bryce Canyon's website, snowshoes are not available for rent anywhere nearby.

Bryce Canyon National Park hosts a winter festival each year on President's Day weekend in February. Click [here](#) for more information about the 2014 Bryce Canyon Winter Festival.

### **Year-round Ranger programs**

Bryce Canyon has some of the best ranger-led programs in the national parks system, and they are offered for free, year-round. Here are three great ranger-led activities that are available in the winter.

Snowshoe hikes are offered in the afternoon every Thursday through Sunday when the snow is deep enough. The hike is suitable for beginners and snowshoes are provided.

One of the most exciting ranger programs at Bryce Canyon is the full-moon hike. These hikes are offered about once a month, and free tickets are distributed at the visitor center on the morning of the hike on a first-come, first-served basis. Snowshoes are provided when the snow is deep enough. Hikers must have appropriate footwear, as described on the Bryce Canyon [website](#), and clothing appropriate for the weather.

Bryce Canyon's cool, dry air makes it a great place to go stargazing any time of the year. Ranger-led astronomy programs are offered every Saturday evening through the winter. At these programs, visitors will have access to powerful telescopes and experts will be on hand to explain what can be seen at this time of year.

For more information about Bryce Canyon's winter activities and programs, visit its [Winter Outdoor Activities](#) web page.



### **Lighter crowds**

Winter is the off-season at Bryce Canyon National Park, so the park is not likely to be crowded throughout the cold weather months. It should be easy to find good parking spaces, take great photos, and enjoy the serenity and beauty of nature, uninterrupted.

### **Off-season rates**

Winter is the best time to find deals at hotels near Bryce Canyon National Park. The lodge and campgrounds inside the park are open year-round. There are also several hotels just outside the park entrance. One of best known is Ruby's Inn, which has served visitors to Bryce Canyon since the 1920s. Right now on [KSL Deals](#), you can get two nights at Ruby's Inn for just \$70.

### **It's an easy weekend getaway**

It's easy to visit Bryce Canyon on a weekend. It's just a few hours' drive from Salt Lake City, Las Vegas or St. George, and most visitors will be able to enjoy the highlights of the park in 1-2 full days.

Be sure to pack warm clothing and waterproof footwear. The weather is often sunny and clear, but at elevations of up to 9,000 feet, it can also be very cold. Bring plenty of drinking water and high-energy snacks into the park with you to help guard against dehydration and hypothermia.

If you are considering a winter visit to Bryce Canyon National Park, keep your plans as flexible as possible. Park roads may be closed during or just after a winter storm.

Bryce Canyon National Park is a local treasure, year-round. Consider a family weekend, a romantic getaway or an adventure with friends at Bryce Canyon this winter.

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