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Five Cool Things to do in Gaylord this Winter



By Paul Beachnau

So winter is here and your normal outdoor routine is shelved. It is cold and there is snow and you're just not crazy about it. There are many of us crazy folks that LOVE winter. It is quiet, it is pretty and with the proper gear, you can stay warm and cozy! Don't have a snowmobile? No problem. You skied once as a kid and had a bad experience? Not to worry. You can't afford expensive gear right now? Gotcha covered!

Here are five really fun and, excuse the pun, cool things to do in **Gaylord, Michigan** this winter:

Snowshoeing

Let me just say that **snowshoeing** is a blast. You never need a groomed trail, you can go with 6 inches of snow on the ground or 60 inches of snow on the ground – snowshoes work the same. All you need are some public or private **trails**, a pair of boots, a hat, gloves and snowshoes. Poles are optional. A pair of snowshoes that are 20 years old will work just as well now as they did when they were brand new. Snowshoes don't go out of style, except for maybe bindings, but the technology is the same. You walk on the snow. You get a great workout and you can literally go anywhere. Once you start moving, you warm right up. Most novices actually *overdress*. With no leaves on the trees, you see vistas, valleys and streams that you would never see during other times of the year, which is just cool.



Take a Downhill Ski Lesson

Most non-skiers have tried **downhill skiing** and had a bad experience or just gotten out of it. Well, take a lesson. Both **Otsego Resort** and **Treetops Resort** have rental equipment and experienced, fun ski instructors. This is a great activity to do with a friend or your children. Usually, within a few hours, the instructor will have you stopping comfortably, making gentle turns and safely getting on and off the chairlift. As a long-time skier, knowing the basics is worth the price of a lesson in enjoyment. Equipment has come a long way since I was a kid (hint – think 1970). It is more comfortable, warmer and carved skis literally turn themselves.

Winter Rafting

No, I am not daft and I did not make this up. Gaylord has two outfitters in the area that will take you and up to 5 of your friends or family members **winter rafting** down the Sturgeon River! The Sturgeon is the fastest river in the Lower Peninsula and does not usually freeze over. This is not tubing or **kayaking** and you get into a raft big enough not to tip. You actually sit on the sides and everyone helps paddle. Winter rafting comes with an experienced guide who makes sure you have an outstanding experience. Excursions last an hour or two and you dress like you would for any outdoor winter activity. You will see parts of northern Michigan that are not seen in summer, as there are no leaves on the trees. There are numerous wildlife sightings as animals come to the river for water (other lakes are frozen over, so this is where they go!). Winter rafting is great for a group of friends or families with kids. It is something memorable you can all experience together.



Wine Walks & Moonlit Wanderings

There is nothing like taking frequent breaks while you are out enjoying winter, right? I can't think of a more perfect stop than gourmet food and beverage stations along the way. With exceptional scenery and a flair for food, **Otsego Resort** has added a Winter Wine Walk to their schedule throughout the winter, allowing guests to explore their lovely property while indulging their taste buds. Both **Treetops Resort** and Otsego Resort are also known for magical moonlit tours after the sun goes down. If you don't have gear, both resorts have rental equipment. Well experienced guides ensure you don't get lost while exploring these sprawling resorts.

Extreme Tubing

This is nothing like the days of sledding down the local hill when you were a kid. Going “down the hill” has taken on a whole new meaning! The tubes are provided, the course is smooth and a lift attachment pulls you and the tube back up the hill! Pretty great, huh? Both **Treetops Resort** and **Otsego Resort** offer downhill tubing. The only thing you need to do for this activity is dress warm and figure out how to get the grin off your face when you are done. This is a great activity for anyone in the family, including the whole family. It is also a blast with friends. Tubing is done in timed sessions, so you will need to sign up in advance.

