

The Boston Globe

TRAVEL

Three great places in New England to be a first-time cross-country skier

Book a weekend (at least an overnight) and make it a mini vacation.

By **Diane Bair and Pamela Wright** Globe Correspondent. Updated January 1, 2026, 10:00 a.m.



Cross-country ski trails at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park follow a mix of old carriage roads and summer horseback riding and hiking trails through forests and pastures. WOODSTOCK INN & RESORT

“Have you looked at the prices of ski lift tickets lately?” asked one of our avid ski buddies. Yep, downhill skiing is not cheap. “I’m thinking of taking up cross-country skiing,” he said.

He’s not alone. According to a recent Snowsports Industries America study, there were 5.5 million cross-country skiers in the country in 2023-24, and 1.9 million of those were either new to cross-country skiing or returned after a year or more away. There are several factors driving the sport’s increasing popularity, including its relatively low cost, low injury risk, exercise benefits, and the growing availability of trails and equipment rentals.

This could be your year to give it a try. Here's a roundup of three great places in New England perfect for first-time Nordic skiers, offering lessons, equipment rentals, lodging, and other activities. Book a weekend (at least an overnight) and make it a mini vacation.



Nordic skiers are ultra pampered at the Woodstock Inn & Resort with flat trails and scenic views. WOODSTOCK INN & RESORT

Woodstock Inn & Resort Nordic Center

Woodstock, Vt.

Beginning Nordic skiers are ultra pampered at this winter resort, boasting more than 45 kilometers of groomed trails, spread across two distinct areas. Sign up for a lesson first. The Nordic Center features a variety of packages, including private, semi-private, or group lessons, and equipment rentals.

You'll learn on the flat loop trails at the resort's picturesque golf course that meander across snow-covered open fields and meadows, following the pretty Kendron Brook, with views of the white-capped Green Mountains. After you get the hang of it, consider skiing to the 1,080-foot summit of Mount Peg for views of the Ottauquechee River Valley.

Related

- **In praise of the mini-break: Tiny vacations close to home**
- **Skier? Non-skier? Doesn't matter. Put Crans-Montana on your list.**

The resort also maintains an additional 25 kilometers of groomed trails at the nearby [Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park](#). The trails follow a mix of old carriage roads and summer horseback riding and hiking trails through forests and pastures, around The Pogue, a 14-acre pond, and up the slopes of Mount Tom. Make it to the top of Mount Tom's 1,357-foot summit and you'll have views of Woodstock Village and the surrounding Green Mountains. (Both areas also have snowshoe trails).



Flat loop trails at the Woodstock Inn & Resort's snow-covered golf course are perfect for beginners learning to cross-country ski. PAMELA WRIGHT

At the end of the day, check into the [Woodstock Inn & Resort](#), a sprawling Federalist-style historic inn, dating back to 1892. It's consistently ranked as one of the top inns in New England, located in one of the region's prettiest villages. The large lobby immediately impresses with its big fieldstone fireplace, and down the hall, you'll find a cozy, wood-paneled library with books and board games. The inn, with 142 rooms and suites, is classically decorated with lots of warm touches (think: comfy couches and ottomans, handcrafted wood furnishings, hand-dyed blankets). Bird prints, nature scenes, and local art and photography are found throughout the inn, adding to the outdoorsy, quintessential Vermont vibe. There are plenty of modern touches and conveniences, too, like the lovely full-service spa, fitness center, game room, planned activities, and two on-site restaurants. Pop into the [Red Rooster](#) for lamb poutine, classic New England clam chowder, duck confit, and New England cioppino; it's open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, with a pared-down late-afternoon-into-the-evening bar menu, too. The recently renovated [Richardson's Tavern](#), with dark wood tables and chairs, cushioned banquettes, paneled wood walls and beamed ceiling, and soft lighting serves dinner nightly, highlighting local ingredients. On a recent visit, we dined on Parker House rolls, brown butter parsnips, crispy sunchokes, smoked duck breast, and oxtail Mafalda with house-made pasta. We were more than fortified (and satisfied) to give cross-country skiing another try the following morning.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2026/01/01/lifestyle/new-england-cross-country-skiers/?event=event12>